

Specific investigations to rule out a physical disorder

Consider whether any investigations are required to rule out other organic causes for depression. Also consider what opportunistic testing might be appropriate according to risks identified (family history, sexual activity etc.) and screening recommendations.[1]

Testing will depend on a thorough history, including the psychological assessment, as well as physical examination findings and specific risk factors.

If the young person is presenting with a clear mental health or psychosocial issue, with an absence of red flags, then a period of monitoring without any investigations is usually appropriate.[2]

Laboratory testing in the absence of clinical indicators or red flags may have negative consequences including: a low yield; anxiety and; a risk of false positives. Where indicated testing should be targeted to the history and examination.

Baseline investigations to consider include:

- Full blood count (FBC)
- Urea, electrolytes and creatinine (UE&C)
- Liver function tests (LFTs)
- Thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH)
- Blood sugar level (BSL)

It may also be worth considering the following:

- Iron (ferretin)
- Vitamin D
- Vitamin B12
- Folic acid

Where the predominant symptom is severe fatigue, general malaise or where there are also other symptoms identified there are a number of other investigations that may be considered, for example:[3]

- EBV serology
- Erythrocyte sedimentation rate (ESR)
- C-reactive protein (CRP)
- Autoimmune serology for rheumatologic symptoms
- Coeliac screen, haemachromotosis screen and/or referral to a gastroenterologist for gastrointestinal symptoms
- Referral to a neurologist for other neurological symptoms (eg multiple sclerosis)

References

1. The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners. [Guidelines for preventive activities in general practice](#) 8th edn. East Melbourne: Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, 2012.
2. Wilson J, Morgan, S, Magin PJ, van Driel ML. [Fatigue – a rational approach to investigation](#) Aust Fam Physician 2014;43:457-461 [Accessed 9 February 2016]
3. National Prescribing Service. Medicinewise. Investigations for fatigue: are they really necessary? 2014 [Accessed 9 February 2016]
4. McDermott B, Baigent M, Chanen A et al. *beyondblue* Expert Working Committee 2010. [Clinical practice guidelines: Depression in adolescents and young adults](#). Melbourne: *beyondblue*: the national depression initiative.