

News of Health

Climbing Out Of Depression

(NAPSA)—One man is scaling each continent's tallest mountain to heighten global awareness of depression.

Twenty years after the suicide death of his father, mountain climber Joe Lawson formed Expedition Hope to help raise awareness of depression and the risks of letting the illness go untreated.

Lawson's father battled depression his entire life, until he decided to put an end to his suffering when Joe was just 16 years old. After struggling to understand his father's suicide, Lawson developed an interest in mountain climbing and has since traveled the world in search of new adventures and personal challenges. One of these personal challenges includes Lawson's attempt to climb the highest mountain on each of the seven continents.

Up to 19 million Americans suffer from depressive disorders, including major depression. Although it is one of the most frequently seen psychiatric disorders in the primary-care setting, it often goes undiagnosed or is undertreated. This may be because depressed patients often discuss their physical symptoms rather than emotional complaints. In fact, in one study about 70 percent of patients diagnosed with major depressive disorder (MDD) presented with only physical complaints. Pain is present in approximately 45 to 75 percent of patients with MDD, and can include headache, back, shoulder and abdominal pain.

"My father's depression left him feeling isolated and estranged, making it hard for him to seek help and talk about his condition,"



Mountain climber Joe Lawson is on a worldwide journey to raise awareness of depression.

said Lawson. "Had he had the proper treatment, his life might have been saved."

With the help of Eli Lilly and Company, Lawson began his journey last May by climbing Alaska's Mt. McKinley, the highest peak in North America. However, after injuring his knee while on the mountain, Lawson had to turn back. Instead of giving up, Lawson went on to summit Mt. Kilimanjaro, the highest peak in Africa, in September 2005, and Mt. Kosciuszko, the highest peak in Australia, in November 2005.

"Like mountain climbing, persons suffering from depression may face extreme challenges, but help, treatment, and relief from symptoms are attainable with appropriate assistance," said Lawson.

This year, Lawson will attempt to summit Mt. Elbrus, the highest peak in Russia, and Mt. Vinson Massif, the highest peak in Antarctica.

Visit www.ExpeditionHope.org for more information.