

BLUE MONDAY TRANSCRIPT

Date: Monday 23 November

Speaker: Sue Pavlovich

- 18:46 Lumie: Welcome Lumie's second live Blue Monday SAD clinic. Starting in five minutes, Sue Pavlovich from SADA, will be available to answer your questions. Speakers for the coming weeks also include a representative from the MET Office and scientific experts working in the field, so make sure you add these dates to your diary, too. Thank you for taking the time to log-in, we hope this evening's session is of interest.
- 19:00 Sue Pavlovich, Spokesperson for SADA: The role of SADA - The SAD Association (SADA) is a voluntary organisation and the UK's only registered charity dedicated to Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) - It informs the public and health professionals about SAD and supports and advises people who have SAD - SADA's aim is to ensure that SAD is recognised and accepted throughout the UK, and that those with SAD can maintain a productive life with the support of doctors, employers, family and friends SADA Members' Benefits • Information Pack free of charge on joining • Quarterly newsletter • Discounts on products such as light boxes • Details of specialist NHS SAD clinics • Updates on new research and treatments • Details of light therapy equipment manufacturers • Contacts for telephone support How to contact SADA • SADA, PO Box 989, Steyning, BN44 3HG • www.sada.org.uk Choosing the right light therapy - Certified as a medical device - Manufacturer should supply details of lux output (measurement of intensity of visible light received at a given distance) and distance at which lux level applies - lux distance measurements should be independently verified - Check manufacturer's recommendations for usage time and distance - Screen to filter out harmful UV light - Light should either be proved in clinical trials or its efficacy should be based on the predicate device used in the clinical trial - Available on home trial? SADA recommends trying before buying - SADA does not recommend clear blue light - No VAT payable if using box for medical reasons - Check light conforms to European Standards (evidenced by CE mark relating to medical device) Recognising SAD in yourself and others - SAD may begin at any age but the main age of onset is between 18 and 30 years - It is far more common in women - The symptoms of SAD usually recur each winter, starting between September and November and continuing until March or April - A diagnosis can be made after three or more consecutive winters of symptoms which include: - Depression - Sleep problems - Lethargy - Over-eating - Loss of concentration - Social problems - Anxiety - Loss of libido - Mood changes
- 19:01 Purple Ivy: Are there dedicated 'SAD' clinics? If so, how does one get a referral?
- 19:02 Sue Pavlovich, Spokesperson for SADA: Yes, there are. If you join SADA, you will receive details of specialist NHS seasonal affective disorder clinics, to which GPs can refer patients.
- 19:02 Sue Shaw: I have chronic fatigue syndrome or M.E. During the summer

months I have plenty of energy. From the hour change in October through to February I struggle. I am looking for another way to boost my energies during this period. Would the reading light be suitable?

- 19:03 Sue Pavlovich, Spokesperson for SADA: I do not know about the treatment of ME. However, light therapy is helpful for many conditions. Many light box manufacturers will allow you to try out a light box for a set period before you commit yourself. It might be worth a try. As far as reading lights are concerned, this might be helpful in conjunction with a light box. Look for the light level that the product provides. 10,000lux at a reasonable distance is usually considered an appropriate level.
- 19:04 purple ivy: What is the chance of actually getting referred to a clinic? Are they grossly oversubscribed?
- 19:05 Sue Pavlovich, Spokesperson for SADA: You will need to talk to your GP. Good luck!
- 19:06 Alan Crouch: I have always suffered extreme tiredness in the shortest days in the year and on grey days any other time of the year. I hit a wall about 2.30pm when I'm almost overwhelmed and just want to sleep. I use a Lumie Body clock for a sunrise effect getting up in the morning and at night I always use the sunset setting to get me off to sleep. What can I do at the crucial time in the afternoon to stop the awful tiredness that hits me about 2.30pm apart from taking honey for a bit of a boost. Thank you AI.
- 19:09 Sue Pavlovich, Spokesperson for SADA: You do not say if you think you have SAD. Tiredness is a common symptom in SAD and winter blues. SADA recommends light therapy as the first approach to try in the treatment of both these conditions. If used regularly according to the manufacturers' instructions it is helpful in up to 85% of cases. You may find that light is more beneficial than eating sugary foods which can lead to weight gain.
- 19:14 Jess: Hi, I was sacked from my job in January and am currently in the tribunal process, although I informed my company of my illness they ignored this fact and sacked me on grounds directly linked to my illness, lateness, inability to manage workload (which they kept increasing) I am having to prove that my sad is severe enough to be classed as a disability and as such I was discriminated against. So far we have been unable to find any similar cases, is this something that you have come across before? Do you think sad should be considered a disability (to protect us in the workplace)? Can you suggest anywhere to get further help with my case, ie experts we could consult or in getting medical evidence, my GP is helpful but we could do with someone more knowledgeable in this field.
- 19:19 Sue Pavlovich, Spokesperson for SADA: I don't know of any similar cases. As I am not a lawyer I cannot give you specific advice. A solicitor specialising in employment law should be able to say whether or not your condition falls within the DDA. Amanda Cross, until recently SADA's Science & Technical Officer, says:

'We are unable to give specific legal advice in respect of individual circumstances. A person may be disabled for the purposes of the DDA if they suffer from a mental or physical impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities, including amongst other things on their memory, ability to concentrate, learn or understand.'

- 19:26 Sue Pavlovich, Spokesperson for SADA: Another thought that might help Alan and others like him: If you can, it'd be a good idea to go for a walk every morning or during your lunch break if you're at work. Try to be out of doors for at least half an hour or longer if you can. Early morning light is especially helpful. Try sitting by a window on sunny days if you can't be outside.
- 19:27 George: How much does it cost to join SADA and can you tell me what the benefits are as a member
- 19:31 Sue Pavlovich, Spokesperson for SADA: It costs £12 a year to join or £5 for concessions. This includes an information pack that's full of information about SAD and how to treat it. You also get a newsletter four times a year that keeps you up to date on research and new developments in the treatment of SAD. You get discounts on products such as light boxes. And details of SAD clinics as discussed below. We also have a telephone support service available to members.
- 19:32 Pete: I have been looking into sad and came across a website www.sad.org.uk is this a charity like you
- 19:34 Sue Pavlovich, Spokesperson for SADA: SADA is the UK's only registered charity dedicated to SAD. It is in no way linked to or affiliated with www.sad.org.uk. www.sad.org.uk is owned by a company called Internet Fusion, who also own a profit-making website, www.sad-lighting.co.uk, which sells light boxes for those affected by SAD. The similarity between the website addresses of SADA, (www.sada.org.uk), the charity, and Internet Fusion, (www.sad.org.uk), which has commercial links, remains a regrettable source of confusion for the public. Any light therapy products or treatments for SAD which SADA recommends are in no way influenced by commercial considerations.
- 19:36 Paula: I think my Dad suffers from SAD he often becomes withdrawn during the winter months and doesn't want to do much apart from sleep, Do you think he could be suffering from SAD and if so, do you have any advice to offer
- 19:42 Sue Pavlovich, Spokesperson for SADA: If you suspect that your Dad has SAD you could find out as much as you can about it and try talking to him to see what he thinks. If in doubt, consider suggesting to your Dad that he sees his GP. A number of treatments are available. However, not all GPs are well informed about SAD. You could also try out a light box to see if it helps. SADA provides lots of information on SAD. See our website for a list of symptoms www.sada.org.uk
- 19:42 Vanessa: In the winter I often feel lethargic and find it very difficult to remember things, could this be a symptom of Sad?

- 19:45 Sue Pavlovich, Spokesperson for SADA: Lethargy and difficulty in thinking and remembering can indeed be symptoms of SAD. But of course that does not mean you have SAD. If you are worried, please consider some of the suggestions in my previous answer.
- 19:49 Laura: What are your thoughts on blue light?
- 19:53 Sue Pavlovich, Spokesperson for SADA: SADA recommends white light. This is because there is not as much research into blue light as there is into white. In addition we do not know if clear blue light might be harmful to the eyes.
- 19:54 Jenny: I used to live in a sunny climate and moved to the UK during the last four years, I have really struggled with depression during this time, Do you think I am more susceptible because I was brought up in a sunny climate?
- 19:58 Sue Pavlovich, Spokesperson for SADA: I am sorry you are having this experience. I do not think it is a matter of where you were born. People do sometimes find that when they move to a new place they develop symptoms of SAD. The further you are from the equator, the more likely this is to happen. As you say, the amount of sunshine is an important factor. I hope you will be able to find help with your depression.
- 20:00 Simon Prince: I have recently purchased a lightbox and am experimenting the best time of day to use it, is morning normally the best time?
- 20:04 Sue Pavlovich, Spokesperson for SADA: I believe that research has shown that early morning is the best time to use light therapy. It is certainly a good idea to experiment and see what works for you. Some people use light at different times of day. For example, if you use light in the early evening, it may help you to feel more awake in the evening or to sleep better at night.
- 20:05 Jed Sullivan: I have read a lot about the Sad syndrome. I often feel down in the Winter, I am a very busy person with a physical job so don't have much time to spare, I read you have to sit still in front of a light box and as an active person, would find this difficult, any suggestions?
- 20:08 Sue Pavlovich, Spokesperson for SADA: I sympathise with your problem. If you can bear to, you could get up earlier to use a light box before you go to work. You can eat your breakfast and read the paper while you do this. You could try a dawn simulator. You might also consider a visor that can be worn as you move about.
- 20:13 Sue Pavlovich, Spokesperson for SADA: I should have said before that it is generally not recommended to use light therapy after 8pm.
- 20:14 Sally: Is there any link between lack of light in winter and low cortisol levels? How does light therapy affect cortisol levels?

- 20:19 Sue Pavlovich, Spokesperson for SADA: I am not qualified to answer this question. However, I am aware of research that appears to show a link between cortisol levels and SAD. If there is such a link, light therapy first thing in the morning may be beneficial in increasing cortisol levels, which in turn may alleviate symptoms.
- 20:24 Lumie: Hi all. Just to pre-warn you, we have five more minutes left of Sue's time...
- 20:29 Sue Pavlovich, Spokesperson for SADA: Thank you for all your interesting questions. It's been a pleasure to chat to you. My very best wishes for a happy winter.
- 20:29 Sally: I have ordered a visor that appears to give out 1000 lux (as opposed to 10000 - the number I keep hearing about). How long is advisable to wear a 1000 lux visor per day for an effect?
- 20:30 Sue Pavlovich, Spokesperson for SADA: You'll need to check the manufacturer's instructions.
- 20:31 Lumie: Blue Monday has now come to an end for another week - we would just like to say thank you for taking the time to log-on - we hope it was of interest to you. We also want to say a huge, big thank you to Sue Pavlovich from SADA for giving up her time to help answer everyone's questions. If you have any feedback on tonight's clinic, we'd love to hear from you - please email lindsay@lumie.com. Next week's Blue Monday expert is Andrew Lane, a Professor of Sports and Psychology at the University of Wolverhampton – Professor Lane will be taking questions about exercise and the effects it has on mood – we look forward to receiving your questions.