



News: Clinical Studies Show Promise in Use of Saunas for Treatment of Depression

Donna Jolly | May 17, 2024

Depression is a pervasive and often debilitating mental health condition affecting millions worldwide. Traditional treatments, including pharmaceuticals and psychotherapy, have helped many, but there remains a significant need for alternative therapies. Recently, the potential of sauna therapy as a treatment for depression has come into the spotlight, offering a new frontier in mental health care.

As featured in the recent *Wired* article by [Max G. Levy](#), UC San Francisco Osher Center for Integrative Health clinical psychologist, Ashley Mason, discussed how research conducted during 2005 and 2016 trials on the use of infrared saunas to treat depressive disorders led her to conduct broader research and a study on the potential tie of how body temperature plays a role in depression, and why sauna usage may be a modality to further combat the effects. Although more research is needed to harden the findings of the limited trial, when assessed holistically one can draw an assumption as to why sauna usage continues to be a wellness modality that has stretched across centuries and populations. Saunas have long been associated with various health benefits, including improved circulation, detoxification, and relaxation. However, their impact on mental health, particularly depression, could further boost their recommended use and support alternatives to those seeking non-pharmacological treatment.

FAQs

- **What is the relationship between body temperature and depression?** Higher body temperatures have been observed in individuals with depression, and fluctuations in temperature regulation may correlate with the severity of depressive symptoms.
- **How does sauna therapy compare to traditional treatments for depression?** Sauna therapy offers a non-pharmacological alternative that is more accessible and may be easier to undertake for individuals with severe depression or physical disabilities.
- **What were the main findings of Ashley Mason's clinical trial?** Mason's trial found that sauna therapy, combined with cognitive behavioral therapy, significantly reduced depression severity and negative automatic thinking in participants.
- **Are there any risks associated with sauna therapy for depression?** While generally safe, individuals should consult with a healthcare provider before starting sauna therapy, especially if they have underlying health conditions.
- **How can I get started with sauna therapy?** Many gyms and wellness centers, like [HaloHeat Sauna Studios](#), offer sauna therapy. If you have space, it's also possible to install a sauna within your home for convenient access.

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