

THE SILENT DANGER OF WINTER: BEWARE OF SEASONAL DEPRESSION!

As the weather gets colder, the days grow shorter, and sunlight decreases, not only nature but also our mood is deeply affected. According to experts, Seasonal Depression—which emerges especially during the autumn and winter months—is not just a passing sadness, but a mental health condition that can have serious consequences if left untreated. Asst. Prof. Selcen Yetkin Özden, Assistant Professor at Istanbul Gelisim University, Faculty of Economics, Administrative and Social Sciences, Department of Psychology, explained the causes, symptoms, and coping strategies for seasonal depression.

WHAT IS SEASONAL DEPRESSION?

Asst. Prof. Özden defined seasonal depression as a subtype of major depressive disorder and stated:

“This condition is characterized by depressive symptoms that begin every year, particularly in autumn or winter, and disappear during spring and summer. In other words, there is a recurring seasonal fluctuation in a person’s mood.”

She noted that in cases of winter-onset seasonal depression, symptoms such as excessive sleepiness, craving carbohydrate-rich foods, weight gain, low energy, social withdrawal, and poor concentration become prominent—highlighting the differences between this disorder and classic depression.

THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF REDUCED SUNLIGHT ON MOOD

Emphasizing that the main underlying cause of seasonal depression is the decrease in daylight duration, Asst. Prof. Özden explained:

“After the autumn equinox, the days start to get shorter. Reduced sunlight disrupts the body’s biological clock. This imbalance lowers the production of serotonin—known as the happiness hormone—while increasing melatonin secretion, which regulates sleep. As a result, people may experience fatigue and lack of motivation even during the day.” She also added that serotonin transporter proteins become more active in winter, reducing serotonin levels between nerve cells, which directly contributes to depressive symptoms.

AT-RISK GROUPS: WHO IS MOST VULNERABLE?

While anyone can be affected by seasonal depression, Asst. Prof. Özden pointed out that some groups are at higher risk, including:

- Women (four times more likely than men)
- Young adults (particularly in their 20s)
- Individuals living in northern regions far from the equator
- Those with a family history of depression
- People previously diagnosed with depression or bipolar disorder

“The likelihood of developing Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is higher among these groups, and symptoms tend to be more severe,” she said. She emphasized that the recurrent nature of these symptoms, even if they disappear in spring, can significantly reduce one’s quality of life.

LIGHT, THERAPY, AND MOVEMENT: EFFECTIVE APPROACHES TO TREATMENT

Discussing current treatment approaches, Asst. Prof. Özden stated:

“Seasonal depression is a treatable condition. Many people make the mistake of simply waiting for it to pass. However, with timely intervention, quality of life can be greatly improved.”

According to her, the most effective treatment methods include:

- **Light Therapy (Phototherapy):** This method involves exposure to special 10,000-lux light devices for 20–30 minutes in the morning and is among the most effective treatments.
- **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT):** Adapted specifically for seasonal depression, CBT aims to change negative thought patterns and reduce social withdrawal.
- **Medication:** Antidepressants from the SSRI group may be prescribed in severe cases or when other treatments are insufficient.

HOW DAILY HABITS INFLUENCE MOOD

Asst. Prof. Özden emphasized that lifestyle changes play a vital complementary role in treatment, offering the following recommendations:

- Maintain a consistent sleep schedule to protect biological rhythm.
- Maximize exposure to natural sunlight to boost serotonin production.
- Engage in regular physical exercise to release mood-enhancing neurochemicals.
- Strengthen social connections to reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation.
- Eat a balanced diet to control carbohydrate cravings and prevent vitamin D deficiency.

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT SEASONAL DEPRESSION: “WAITING FOR SPRING IS NOT ENOUGH”

Asst. Prof. Özden addressed common myths about seasonal depression:

- “It’s just temporary sadness.”

No, it’s a defined, recurring form of depression that disrupts daily functioning.

- “Normal indoor lighting is enough.”

Light therapy devices are about 20 times brighter than household lights. Ordinary lamps cannot achieve the same effect.

- “Vitamin D supplements alone are sufficient.”

While helpful, vitamin D cannot replace comprehensive treatment.

- “It can’t be treated; you just have to wait it out.”

Scientifically proven therapies can greatly reduce symptoms and restore functionality.

RAISING AWARENESS FOR LONG-TERM MENTAL WELL-BEING

Asst. Prof. Özden emphasized that seasonal depression should not be underestimated: “Experiencing the same cycle each year can damage self-esteem and quality of life. If left untreated, it may evolve into more severe depressive episodes or trigger bipolar disorder. Experts underline that preventing seasonal depression requires not only individual effort but also collective awareness. Combining light therapy, psychological support, social connection, and regular lifestyle habits creates a strong shield for maintaining both mental and physical health during the winter months. Asst. Prof. Selcen Yetkin Özden of Istanbul Gelisim University calls on individuals to recognize the symptoms and seek timely professional help to protect their mental well-being throughout the colder season.

NEW ACADEMIC BRIDGES FROM ISTANBUL GELISIM UNIVERSITY IN IRAQ

Istanbul Gelisim University (IGU) continues to develop new partnerships worldwide in the fields of education, research, and cultural exchange. Within this scope, an IGU delegation signed a Cooperation Protocol with Al-Kunooze University, located in Basra, Iraq, to strengthen academic collaboration between the two institutions. Through this protocol, the two universities aim to take joint steps in various areas, including student and faculty exchange programs, collaborative research projects, scientific publications, online education programs, and community-oriented sustainability initiatives.

“IT WILL ALSO CONTRIBUTE TO STRENGTHENING CULTURAL TIES”

IGU representatives stated that this collaboration would not only contribute to academic progress but also to the strengthening of the deep-rooted historical and cultural ties between Türkiye and Iraq. They emphasized that the shared cultural heritage of the two countries would foster mutual understanding and academic interaction through these higher education partnerships. The agreement aims to elevate academic relations between Türkiye and Iraq in the field of higher education to a deeper and more sustainable level.

ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENTS WITH IRAQI UNIVERSITIES AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

As part of the visit, the IGU delegation also met with the Consulate General of the Republic of Türkiye in Basra and visited several higher education institutions in Iraq, including Al-Farqadein University and Iraq University, among others.

During these meetings—attended by IGU Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Serdar Egeli, Head of the Department of Public Relations and Publicity Asst. Prof. Bülent Deyirmenci, and Lecturer Mohammed Abdulqader—comprehensive discussions were held on topics such as student and faculty exchange programs, joint research projects, education models based on international standards, and sustainable academic collaborations.

As a result of the meetings with both Al-Farqadein University and Iraq University, the parties expressed their mutual goodwill and commitment to cooperation in education and research and agreed to take joint steps toward future collaborations.

EXPANDING THE VISION OF “INTERNATIONALIZATION”

While Istanbul Gelisim University continues to broaden its vision of internationalization, its global academic engagements enable the mutual exchange of knowledge, experience, and culture—thus contributing to the development of a universal language in education.

With its approach centered on learning, producing, and sharing, IGU continues to build a sustainable higher education ecosystem both regionally and globally.

PROJECT PAINTING EXHIBITION BY PROF. MUSTAFA ISIK OPENED AT ISTANBUL GELISIM UNIVERSITY

As part of the art events organized by the Istanbul Gelisim University Art and Design Application and Research Center (SATMER), a project painting exhibition by artist Prof. Mustafa Işık was opened at the Istanbul Gelisim Art Gallery. The opening was attended by Vice-Rector Prof. Necmettin Maraşlı, Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts Prof. Şükran Güzin Ilıcak Aydınalp, and SATMER Director Asst. Prof. Mustafa Günay. The exhibition attracted great interest from art enthusiasts.

“CARRYING THE TRACES OF ANCIENT CULTURE”

Curator of the exhibition, SATMER Director Asst. Prof. Mustafa Günay, emphasized the aesthetic and cultural values of the exhibition, stating:

“Through the artist’s unique voice and visual language, we delve into the depths of cultural and social themes. The rich history and cultural heritage of Istanbul, the capital of our ancient culture, are presented to viewers with distinctive interpretations, offering a profound aesthetic experience through the lens of history. The exhibition aims not only to provide a visual feast but also to create emotional and intellectual layers. Each piece invites viewers to reflect and relate it to their own lives.”

“ART IS A LOVE”

At the opening, artist Prof. Mustafa Işık explained the role of art in his life and the meaning of the exhibition:

“Art is a love. We make so many sacrifices for art in our lives that we often neglect many material, spiritual, and social aspects. Under the title of this project, we undertook this work for our country, our people, and our future. I created these works so that the legacy left by our ancestors remains in the memory of young people. This exhibition especially speaks to the younger generation.”

“SCIENTISTS AND ARTISTS DEVOTE ALL THEIR TIME AND EFFORT TO THEIR WORK”

Vice-Rector Prof. Necmettin Maraşlı, in his speech at the opening, highlighted the dedication of scientists and artists in their creative processes:

“You will rarely find someone who is both highly social and highly successful as a scientist or an artist, because these individuals devote all their time and effort to their work. Therefore, Prof. Mustafa Işık is not alone. We are in the second year since the establishment of SATMER. There were some challenges during its founding, but the results are very positive. We are very pleased that our center hosts events like this.”

AN EXHIBITION INSPIRING YOUNG GENERATIONS

The project painting exhibition by Prof. Mustafa Işık, reflecting his unique interpretations and deep respect for Istanbul’s ancient culture, offers viewers a unique artistic experience. The exhibition serves as a cultural gathering point for both the university community and art enthusiasts.

3RD INTERNATIONAL DICLE DOCUMENTARY AND SHORT FILM FESTIVAL KICKS OFF IN DIYARBAKIR

Held under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism as part of the Diyarbakır Culture Road Festival, the 3rd International Dicle Documentary and Short Film Festival has opened its doors to cinema enthusiasts in Diyarbakır. Organized in collaboration with Istanbul Gelisim University, SineAkademi, and Dicle University, the festival will take place between October 14–17, 2025, featuring film screenings, panels, workshops, special talks, and social responsibility events — bringing four days of vibrant cultural and artistic activity to the city.

ISTANBUL GELISIM UNIVERSITY AIMS TO CONTRIBUTE TO TURKIYE’S CULTURAL PRODUCTION CAPACITY

As one of the festival’s key partners, Istanbul Gelisim University (IGU) ensured strong representation at the opening ceremony. The event was attended by IGU Rector Prof. Bahri Şahin, Head of the Department of Public Relations and Promotion Dr. Lecturer Bülent Deyirmenci, Dicle University Rector Prof. Kamuran Eronat, Dicle University Vice Rector Prof. Aytaç Coşkun, Diyarbakır Provincial Director of Culture and Tourism İrfan Tekin, Lilafix Founder Mehmet Cansız, GNP Mekatronik General Manager Gülcan Hamkan, legendary Yeşilçam actor Ediz Hun, actress Gülser Tuncer, and her husband, director-screenwriter Engin Ayça.

The festival is coordinated by IGU Faculty of Fine Arts Lecturer and Deputy Head of the Department of Public Relations and Promotion, Ahmet Bikiç, and organized in collaboration with SineAkademi, Dicle University, and the Diyarbakır Governorship.

Through this major event, IGU aims to support the creative works of young filmmakers, strengthen art as a universal language of communication, and contribute to Türkiye’s cultural production capacity.

OVER 1,000 SUBMISSIONS AND A PRESTIGIOUS JURY PANEL

This year, the festival received more than 1,000 short film and documentary submissions from various countries. After a meticulous pre-selection process, the finalists were announced through the festival’s official channels. The jury panel consists of distinguished figures from the world of cinema:

Documentary Jury: Coşkun Aral, Osman Nuri Yüce, İrfan Tekin, Ahmet Bikiç, Assoc. Prof. Zuhale Akmeşe

National Short Film Jury: Ediz Hun, Uğur İçbak, Gülsen Tuncer, Erdem Yılmaz, Filiz Zengin

International Short Film Jury: Ediz Hun, Uğur İçbak, Filiz Zengin, Ömer Sinir, İlhan Elmacı

The jury — which includes the legendary Yeşilçam actor Ediz Hun — will play an important role in evaluating both national and international productions. The festival also provides a platform for emerging filmmakers to present their works alongside established industry figures.

FOUR DAYS FILLED WITH CINEMA

Throughout the festival, audiences will enjoy short film and documentary screenings, talks with renowned artists, cinema panels, and hands-on workshops. Additionally, as part of its social responsibility focus, the festival will host special documentary screenings in correctional facilities.

Coordinator Lecturer Ahmet Bikiç and Festival Executive Ahmet Cemal Yakut emphasized that the festival continues to grow each year, strengthening Diyarbakır's cultural and artistic identity and earning increasing recognition in both the local and international film community.

The festival will continue to bring together cinema lovers in Diyarbakır until October 17, celebrating the unifying power of culture, art, and film.

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON THE BLACK SEA AND CASPIAN BASIN COUNTRIES HELD AT ISTANBUL GELISIM UNIVERSITY

Hosted by Istanbul Gelisim University (IGU), the International Symposium on the Black Sea and Caspian Basin Countries brought to the forefront key issues such as regional cooperation, energy policies, and the future of the Turkic world. Opening remarks were delivered by Abdülkadir Gayretli, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Istanbul Gelisim University; Prof. Necmettin Maraşlı, Vice Rector of IGU; and Prof. Volkan Öngel, Rector of Istanbul Beykent University.

A UNIFYING FORCE IN REGIONAL COOPERATION

Speaking to the press prior to the symposium, IGU Chairman of the Board of Trustees Abdülkadir Gayretli emphasized Türkiye's unifying role in regional collaborations, stating:

"The Turkic Republics have now become an inseparable brotherly part of Türkiye. Just as our bond with Azerbaijan is defined by the motto 'two states, one nation,' the same holds true for other Turkic Republics as well."

“RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND TURKIYE’S LEADERSHIP IN THIS PROCESS ARE CRUCIAL”

Delivering a message of unity and solidarity, Gayretli continued:

“What matters most is Türkiye’s revitalization and success in economic and political fields. The only way to achieve this is through unity. Türkiye’s goal is not only its own development but also the shared advancement of the Turkic world. Natural gas and petroleum resources play a crucial role in the Republic of Türkiye, along with valuable elements and reserves that hold great importance. Türkiye possesses these resources, though many remain untapped. With the extraction of natural gas in the Black Sea and oil in the Southeast, Türkiye has significant potential in both surface and underground resources. The key lies in developing these resources and Türkiye taking the lead in this process. Our goal is to see wealthier and more prosperous Turkic Republics in the near future.”

He concluded his speech by highlighting Türkiye’s pivotal role for the Turkic Republics, stating: “The Turkic Republics are no longer alone. Türkiye’s success means the success of the entire Turkic world.”

“WE TRULY NEEDED SUCH A SYMPOSIUM”

Prof. Necmettin Maraşlı, Vice Rector of IGU, underscored the geopolitical and economic importance of the region, saying:

“When we look at the countries in the Black Sea and Caspian regions, we see an area of great importance in terms of economics and international politics. We truly needed such a symposium. The topics discussed here will also help provide solutions to various social challenges.”

A PLATFORM FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION AND ACADEMIC EXCHANGE

The International Symposium on the Black Sea and Caspian Basin Countries made a significant contribution to regional vision by academically addressing critical themes such as energy security, geopolitical balance, cultural interaction, economic development, and international cooperation. Bringing together distinguished academics, decision-makers, and strategic actors, the symposium served as an important platform that further strengthened Türkiye’s unifying role in the region.

IGU PARTICIPATED IN THE NATIONAL COMPETENCY INITIATIVE INTRODUCTION PROGRAM

Turkey's defense industry is on the verge of a new breakthrough, driven by a highly qualified workforce. The "National Competency Initiative" (NCI) Project, launched under the leadership of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan during the Defense Industry Executive Committee (SSİK) meeting on August 6, 2024, is being rapidly implemented to strengthen the country's technological independence.

STRATEGIC COLLABORATIONS IN THE DEFENSE INDUSTRY: NCI MEETS WITH UNIVERSITIES

As part of the National Competency Initiative, critical collaborations are being established with universities to train the human resources that will shape the future of defense technologies. In line with this objective, an important introduction program was held on Thursday, October 16, 2025, at 13:00 in the Conference Hall of the Presidential Nation's Library of the Republic of Türkiye.

During the half-day program, Career Center Directors and Heads of Health, Culture, and Sports Departments from universities across Türkiye were briefed on the NCI Project. Potential partnerships and projects to be developed with universities were also discussed.

STRATEGIC PARTICIPATION FROM ISTANBUL GELISIM UNIVERSITY

Istanbul Gelisim University was represented at the National Competency Initiative Introduction Program by Uğurcan Doğukan Hanbaba, Head of the Department of Health, Culture, and Sports, and Asst. Prof. Mustafa Özan, Director of the Career Guidance Application and Research Center.

The IGU representatives evaluated strategic plans to contribute to the development of a skilled workforce for the defense industry and engaged in discussions on strengthening university-industry collaborations.



AN INVESTMENT IN THE FUTURE FROM IGU: SHAPING TOMORROW WITH QUALIFIED HUMAN CAPITAL

By supporting critical projects such as the National Competency Initiative, Istanbul Gelisim University stands out not only for its academic achievements but also for its contribution to the country's strategic development goals.

With its mission to educate the engineers of the future, IGU once again demonstrates its commitment to graduating individuals equipped with the competencies required by the defense industry through such collaborations.