

Law & Order

Man robs two convenience stores Sunday

Police say the same man robbed two Lincoln convenience stores early Sunday morning. A Kwik Shop at 2040 S. 56th St.

and a Kum & Go at 4335 N. 70th St. were both robbed between 4 and 5 a.m. Sunday.

Police describe the robber as an African-American man, about 5-feet-10-inches to 6-feet tall with a medium build, wearing a

blue parka with a fur-lined hood. Police say the man robbed the stores using a handgun, and no one was injured.

Compiled by Charlie Kauffman

# Lack of sunlight in winter months could lead to SAD

BY ALEXIS EINERSON

Some call it the holiday blues. Others blame it on the weather.

But for many, the change in seasons can cause a mental condition that often goes unrecognized.

Seasonal Affective Disorder, or SAD, is a form of depression that is caused by the lack of sunlight in the fall and winter months, said Robert Portnoy, a clinical psychologist and head

of Counseling and Psychological Services at the University Health Center.

Normally people wake up with the sun, Portnoy said. But in the winter, it's dark when many people wake up and fall asleep, which can cause SAD, he said.

Some symptoms of SAD include: fatigue, eating more, weight gain, loss of energy, socializing less and difficulty coping with problems.

UNL freshman Lori Caulfield said she started to

notice these conditions were worse in the winter.

"My friends tell me that I sleep all the time," Caulfield said.

One of the major problems for Caulfield right now, she said, is that it's hard for her to get motivated to go to class.

"All I want to do during the day is just sit and sleep," she said.

Also, Caulfield said she had started to have a problem with snacking more.

For UNL sophomore Jessica Muffly, snacking is about the only symptom of SAD she doesn't experience, she said.

Muffly said that during the summer she always got a lot of things done.

"I usually never fall asleep while I'm reading a good book," Muffly said. "But this morning I was reading a great book, and I fell asleep after only a few minutes."

These two women are not alone, however. According to research, Portnoy said, women are affected by SAD three to four more times than men.

But women don't outweigh men in other types of depression, Portnoy said.

"I don't know anyone who has proposed some rationale as to why this affects women more," Portnoy said.

"This is no reason to assume that women are more depressed than men, however."

Also, Portnoy said, the farther away from the equator, the greater the incidence of SAD within the population.

In fact, Portnoy said, Lincoln and Omaha are in an area where the prevalence of SAD affects 8 percent of the population.

But Portnoy said there was an effective way to combat the symptoms of SAD: just sit in front of a light box.

Using a 10,000 lumens light box and sitting about 18 inches away for 30 minutes is sufficient for most people to treat SAD, Portnoy said.

"All the research suggests that the most effective treatment is photo therapy, or high intensity light," Portnoy said.

Even though symptoms of SAD may seem like they could be caused by other things, Portnoy said it was worth it to get checked out if the problems persist from year to year.

"The holidays can be difficult times for people," Portnoy said. "They may be suffering from SAD, but they call it the 'holiday blues.'"

There is no reason that anyone should suffer, even for four or five months."

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