

Depression in the elderly: difficulties in diagnosis and management

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Abstrak

Depression is a significant problem that is common among elderly patients. The prevalence is quite high, affecting approximately 15% of the population of over 65 years.¹ Among patients with chronic diseases and those with a longer care the prevalence of depression is even higher, which is 10% to 60%. Several studies demonstrate that the comorbidity of depression and physical diseases a patient suffers creates a worse prognosis and increases mortality.^{2,3} Disease management becomes more difficult and not optimal because depression could cause the patient to eat less and become less cooperative in following the treatment, thus resulting in a poorer medical condition.

Depression is generally commonly found in the elderly. Nevertheless, diagnosing depression in the elderly is not easy. Approximately 60% of depression patients have a co-morbid physical disease.² Detection of depression among geriatric patients is often delayed due to unspecific symptoms. Delayed detection results in delayed management, which has a bad impact on the patient's medical condition and response to treatment. This is also why co-morbidity of diseases and depression has a higher mortality rate. The following are several cases of hospitalized patients suffering from depression and a co-morbid illness