

Comorbidity of anxiety and depressive disorders in psychiatric outpatients

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In 50 subjects presenting with anxiety or depression, co-morbidity of criteria based diagnoses was estimated at 72%. Pure forms of depression were found in 20% of cases, and pure anxiety in only 8%. The clinic psychiatrist gave more than one diagnosis in 24% of cases. This confirms the original prediction. In most of the cases, the additional diagnosis was more frequently an anxiety disorder or major depression. When studied retrospectively, it was more common to find cases of anxiety evolving into depression (42%) rather than the other way round (19%). The overall conclusion derived from the study is that cases with concurrent anxiety and depressive disorders are more common in a cohort of psychiatric out-patients than cases with a single diagnosis. Assessment of these cases necessitates awareness of the possibility of comorbidity. The relationship between anxiety and depression is more than just coincidental presence of 2 prevalent conditions.