

Study of SPECT in depressive disorders

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This work aimed to study the changes in the regional cerebral blood flow found in depressed patients in correlation with diagnosis, severity of the condition and symptomatology. The samples formed of 40 inpatients fulfilling the diagnostic criteria of major depressive disorders according to the ICD-10, the sample included cases with unipolar and bipolar depression, moderate and severe depression, with or without psychotic features, with or without somatic complaints and with or without cognitive impairments. They were submitted to a drug wash-out of at least one week, but benzodiazepine at low dosage (Lorazepam 2-8 mg/ day) was allowed for cases with severe insomnia or agitation and those with severe depression were admitted to the hospital. They were medically and neurologically free. The control group consisted of 20 individuals with no apparent physical or psychiatric morbidity. The study concluded that follow up studies were done for four patients after receiving antidepressant and clinical improvement guided by HDRS, three of them showed remarkable regression of the cerebral hypoperfusion. Although, this number of patients is small for statistical analysis, it points to the role of SPECT as a state marker for depression with the need for further confirmation in the future study.