

Depressive symptoms and early memory problems in chronic physically ill elderly

Muhammad, A. S.

Cairo Univ. (EGY). Fac. of Med.

Thesis ; M.Sc. 2003

The study was made to assess the prevalence of depressive symptoms and the early memory problems in relation to the chronic medical illness in the elderly. The study was carried out on 40 chronic medically ill elderly patients, whose age ranges between 65 and 80 years.

The control subjects were divided into two groups ; one group contained 40 chronic medically ill patients with age between 40 and 60 years to study the effect of age, and the other group contained 40 elderly subjects without any medical illness to study the effect of chronic medical illness. The three groups were subjected to the following tools Zung self-rating depression scale, ICD-10 diagnostic guidelines for mood disorders, Hamilton anxiety scale. The prevalence of depressive symptoms was higher in young patients with chronic illness (42.5%) than in elderly with chronic illness (37.5%). The prevalence of depressive symptoms was higher in elderly with chronic illness (37.5%) than in elderly without chronic illness (20%). There was a statistically significant correlation between depressive and anxiety symptoms in all groups. There was a statistically significant correlation between depressive symptoms and female sex.

The most commonly associated medical illnesses with depressive symptoms were hypertension, IHD and aortic regurge. The prevalence of memory impairment was higher in elderly with chronic medical illness (50%) than those without illness (42.5%), and both were higher than the younger patients with chronic illness (22.5%). There was a statistically significant inverse correlation between the age and the level of memory impairment. The prevalence of memory impairment was higher in patients with chronic renal failure, IHD and myocardial infarction. There was a significant correlation between the level of education and the prevalence and severity of memory impairment.