Prevalence of depression in older people in Isfahan, Iran: a community-based study

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Abstract: Introduction: Depression is an important mental health problem, which is quite unknown among old age in our community. Thus, the purpose of this study was to investigate the prevalence of depressive symptoms and to determine the relationship between some socio-demographic variables on depression in a community sample of older adults in Iran.

Methods: A questionnaire including socio-demographic characteristics was administered by interviewer to a total of 637 men and women aged 60 to 90 years old from Isfahan province, center of Iran. Depression was assessed using the 15-item Geriatric Depression Scale which is a good method of screening for major depression. In this scale the scores 0 to 4, 5 to 9 and 10 to 15 were grouped as normal, mild depressed and severe depressed participants, respectively.

Results: The prevalence of mild and severe depression was 50.6% and 69%, in men and women respectively (P value < 0.000). In a univariate analysis, 44.4% of married people, and 27.2% of widowed adults did not have any symptoms of depression (P value < 0.000).

Conclusion: According to GDS estimates, depressive symptoms are common in our subjects and they have significant association with marital status; however, most of them do not seek any treatment. This may lead to serious impacts on health behavior of the community in general. In designing prevention programs, detection and management of older patients with depression using psychiatric interview should be a high priority in developing countries. We would also like to acknowledge the national elite foundation that supported us attending the congress.