

Incidence of Depression among Elderly Attending Primary Health Care Centers

Fatima Habib, MD, ABFM, MSc*

Objective: To estimate the incidence of depression among Bahraini elderly attending primary health care services.

Design: A cross-sectional study.

Setting: Four Primary Health Care Centers, Bahrain.

Method: The study was performed from July to August 2006. One health center was randomly selected from each of the four geographical regions of Bahrain. Two hundred and seventy Bahraini patients aged 60 years and older attending the local health centers during that period were included. The shorter version of the Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS-15) was used to screen for depression among the study participants.

Result: Two hundred and seventy Bahraini patients were included. Hundred and forty-six (54%) were women and hundred and twenty-four (46%) were men. The mean age for male participants was 68.65 ± 6.3 and the mean age for females was 68.36 ± 7 years. Hundred and twelve patients (41.5%) were diagnosed with depression. The mean depressive score for men was 3.67 ± 3.07 and for women it was 5.86 ± 3.62 . Severe depressive symptoms were reported by 3.2% of men and 7.5% of women. The risk of depression was significantly more among women than among men with an odds ratio (OR) of 4.3 (95% CI = 2.54-7.32).

Conclusion: Depressive symptoms are prevalent among Bahraini elderly attending the local health centers. Family physicians should be trained to screen for and to manage depression in highly susceptible groups.