

Socioeconomic Factors and Medical Conditions Associated with Elderly Depression



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Introduction

- Elderly depression among elderly is a common mental illness with worldwide prevalence of 7%
- It is one of the ten leading Malaysian burden of disease
- Known factors for elderly depression in the global population have included low socioeconomic status and certain medical conditions but this data is limited
- The objective of this study is to assess the impact of socioeconomic factors and medical conditions on depression among Malaysian elderly.

Methodology

- Data was obtained from the National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) 2018: Elderly Health Survey
- It was a cross-sectional study of 3977 Malaysians aged 60 years and above
- Depression was assessed using the GDS-14 questionnaire, where a score of 6 and above was taken as positive for depression
- Analyses of associated factors were done using multiple logistic regression with SPSS version 26.0

Results

Discussion

- Out of 3977 elderly persons sampled, 3772 responded (Response Rate – 94.84%)
- The prevalence of elderly depression in Malaysia was 11.2% (9.37-13.40) which was higher than the worldwide prevalence
- Married elderly persons were noted to have lower odds of depression likely due to presence of companionship and decreased sense of loneliness
- In general, lower socioeconomic status had higher odds of depression which was likely associated with decreased finances and social activities
- Urinary incontinence was noted to be the medical condition that had the highest odds of elderly depression which was likely associated with social inadequacies which can be common in this condition
- Other medical conditions noted to have higher odds of depression were hypertension, cancer and current smokers which can be associated with poorer health control and general mental well-being

Conclusion

- Routine depression screening, for example using the GDS questionnaire, should be done in the elderly population as low socioeconomic status and certain medical conditions can be associated with depression among the elderly in Malaysia

| Variables | AOR | 95% CI |
|---|------|-----------|
| Demographic and Socioeconomic Factors | | |
| Age below 70 yo | 0.68 | 0.54-0.83 |
| Married | 0.69 | 0.55-0.85 |
| Lives in rural areas | 1.26 | 1.01-1.56 |
| Unemployed | 1.37 | 1.05-1.78 |
| Highest education - completed primary schooling | 1.57 | 1.19-2.08 |
| Total monthly income - Less than RM1000 | 1.68 | 1.31-2.15 |
| Medical Conditions | | |
| Hypertension | 1.47 | 1.16-1.86 |
| Current smokers | 1.74 | 1.34-2.26 |
| Malignancy | 2.59 | 1.28-5.24 |
| Urinary Incontinence | 5.15 | 3.79-6.99 |

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