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PREVALENCE OF DEPRESSION AMONG OLDER PEOPLE LIVING IN RETIREMENT HOMES WITHIN PENACOVA COUNTY

A. Pinto, A. Cravador, J. Ferreira, L. Marques, J. Cunha-Oliveira

Centro Hospitalar Psiquiátrico de Coimbra, Coimbra, Portugal

Objectives: To estimate the prevalence of depression and of depressive symptoms among older people living in retirement homes within Penacova county. To estimate the percentage of elderly depressed people receiving adequate treatment. To study associations between recorded clinical variables and depression.

Method: We visited all the retirement homes of Penacova County to interview institutionalized men and women older than 64 years, applying a semi-structured protocol that included GDS (geriatric depression screening scale), MMSE, pain scale, Clock Drawing Test, Barthel Index and BSI (Brief Symptom Inventory).

Results: We included 78 subjects (22 Men and 56 Women) with a mean age of 81.3 years. Among them 29 were illiterate, 34 had < 4 years of education, 13 had 4 years of education and 2 had a university degree. 56 were widowers and 49 were born in Penacova. The mean GDS value was 17.27. 19,2% were not depressed, 46.1% were depressed and 34,6% were severely depressed.

Conclusion: These results suggest that depression is a common problem affecting older people living in retirement homes. A significant percentage of depressed patients were not adequately treated. This study highlights the importance of screening this population for depression.