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# INHIBITION IN ELDERLY DEPRESSED PATIENTS: AN EYE TRACKING STUDY

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**Background:** Depression in people aged 65 and more appears to be a major public health problem. Efficient mechanisms of inhibition are important to communicate with other people and to interact with the environment but seem to be deficient in young depressed patients. This function needs to be evaluated in late life depression which has specific features.
**Method:** Twenty inpatients (mean age = 70.4) meeting DSM-IV criteria for major depressive disorder were compared to forty seven healthy controls. They performed a neuropsychological and psychiatric assessments and two eye movement tasks: a prosaccades task to obtain basic parameters of eye movements and an antisaccade task to evaluate the inhibition capacities.
**Results:** In comparison with healthy subjects, depressed patients showed impaired performances in both oculomotor tasks. Concerning the prosaccade trial, depressed patients had higher reaction times and error rates than healthy controls. In both populations, hypometric saccades are the main kind of error. In the antisaccade task, reaction times and error rates were also higher in depressed patients than healthy subjects. However, the two populations showed similar correction rates.
**Conclusion:** The results of this study offer new insight on the inhibition impairment of aged major depressive patients by two simple eye movement tasks. The findings indicate psychomotor retardation and inhibition impairment, consistent with the findings obtained in young depressed subjects.

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