

CLINICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND COGNITIVE FUNCTIONS OF LATE-ONSET PSYCHOSES: A CASE-CONTROL STUDY

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Background: Mental disorders are not uncommon in late life. The emergence of psychotic symptoms for the first time in later life poses a diagnostic challenge for clinicians assessing and treating elderly persons with mental illness.

Objectives: To determine the clinical characteristics and cognitive function impairments in elderly patients with late-onset psychosis compared with normal healthy control.

Participants and methods: A cross-sectional case-control study; 50 patients with late-onset non-schizophrenic psychoses compared to 50 normal, healthy volunteers matched for age, sex, and social standard. The case group was interviewed using the Structured Clinical Interview for DSM Axis-I diagnosis (SCID-I), the control group was chosen on basis of assessment using the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ). Both groups underwent a functional assessment of daily living using the following: (a) Activities of Daily Living scale (ADL), (b) Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL), (c) Cambridge Mental Disorders of the Elderly Examination, section B (CAMCOG), and (d) the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS) for cognitive assessment.

Results: No significant differences between both groups in sociodemographic variables, family, and medical histories, except occupational status, in case group they had significantly more professional and skilled jobs. They also showed significantly higher rates of diseases of the gastrointestinal, renal, and central nervous system. Moreover, they showed very high significant cognitive decline, as well as functional impairment in daily living activities compared with their healthy counterparts.

Conclusion: Patients with late-onset psychoses show more severe cognitive and functional impairments in their daily activities. This paves the way for future studies.