

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN DETERMINANTS OF SUICIDAL IDEATION IN FRENCH SPEAKING COMMUNITY LIVING OLDER ADULTS IN CANADA

H.-M. Vasiliadis¹, S. Gagné², M. Prévile¹

¹Department of Community Health Sciences, ²Université de Sherbrooke, Longueuil, QC, Canada

Background: Determinants of suicidal ideation in females and males may differ in older adults.

Objectives: To ascertain gender specific determinants of suicidal ideation.

Methods: Data used in this study was from the ESA survey on a large representative sample of community dwelling older adults (n=2494). Multivariate logistic regression analysis was used to study the association between suicidal ideation, mental health service and antidepressant use and a number of clinical and socio-demographic factors.

Results: The prevalence of suicidal ideation reached 6.3%. The findings of this study show that the presence of suicidal ideation in females is associated with younger age, single or widowed status, the reporting of daily life stressors and chronic conditions as well as the presence of depression. In males, suicidal ideation is associated with older age, single or widowed status and depression. Furthermore, suicidal ideation is significantly associated with antidepressant use in females but not males and this after controlling for a number of clinical factors.

Conclusion: Although no gender differences are observed between suicidal ideation and mental health service use, females with suicidal ideation are more likely to be dispensed antidepressants than males with suicidal ideation. The more prevalent use of antidepressants in females with suicidal ideation may lead to better management of symptoms related to depression and their consequences at an earlier stage of the disorder.