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GENERALIZED ANXIETY DISORDER IN THE ELDERLY. AN ITALIAN POPULATION-BASED STUDY

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Introduction: The longevity of population is an evidence over the past decades. Elderly physical and mental health are imperative. Despite anxiety is common and has adverse consequences, literature is meagre.

Objectives: To estimate the prevalence of generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) in elderly and to investigate the association with physical comorbidity, depression, daily habits.

Methods: 426 subjects from the population-based Faenza Community Aging Study (De Ronchi et al 2005), mean age 85,1 (Standard Deviation=6,9). The Geriatric Anxiety Inventory short-form (GAI-sf) was utilized to define GAD (score \geq 3). Logistic-regression were used to estimated odds ratio and 95%Confidence Intervals (CI).

Result: Subjects with anxiety were 84 (21,2%), 63,1% were women. For age < 80 the prevalence of GAD was 38,1% while for age>95 was 4,8%. When we compared elderly with GAD to elderly not affected we found the following results: no hobbies (83,3% vs 79,6%) p=0,124, no friendship (21,8% vs 15,8%) p=0,425, they don't make physical activity (53,7% vs 45,6%) p=0,214 than subjects without anxiety. To have comorbidity was associated with anxiety: one disease OR (CI95%)=2,71 (1,15-6,24), two or three OR (CI95%)=2,57 (1,07-6,16) and > three OR (CI95%)=7,5 (1,81-31,05). Hypertension was positively associated with anxiety OR (CI95%)=1,94 (1,04-3,62). Depression was highly correlated with anxiety OR (CI 95%)=5,82 (3,39-9,98). Moderate alcohol consumption was negative associated with anxiety OR(CI 95%)=0,49 (0,25-0,95).

Conclusion: Anxiety in elderly is frequent and should be actively investigated especially in elderly with comorbidity.