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THE LEIDEN ROUTINE OUTCOME MONITORING STUDY

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Introduction: It is likely that 'real-life patients' differ from randomized controlled trial (RCT) patients and from non-treatment seeking populations. However, much of what is known about characteristics of patients with depression and anxiety is based on RCTs and studies in the general population. Data on 'naturalistic' or 'real-life patients' are scarce.

Objectives & aims: In several studies so far, we investigated specific characteristics of patients with depression and anxiety in routine psychiatric specialty care. We studied gender differences in depression, and differences in age of onset of depression. Another study aimed to establish predictors for deliberate self-harm and suicidal ideation (DSHI) in patients with depression and anxiety.

Methods: We used baseline data of the Routine Outcome Monitoring (ROM) study. From 2004-2007, 3798 patients had been routinely assessed with ROM, by specially trained nurses. ROM consists of both self report and observational instruments.

Results: Female patients with depression reported more severe complaints on self-report instruments, as well as worse general health. Observational instruments showed no differences. In addition, patients with depression onset before the age of 18 reported more current suicidality and previous suicide attempts. Finally, low education, being unmarried, comorbidity, more severe symptoms of anxiety and depression, and emotional instability were independent predictors of DSHI.

Conclusions: Our findings in naturalistic outpatients differed from previous findings based on RCTs and studies in the general population. Since our findings are based on routinely obtained measurements in treatment seeking patients, these data may reflect the phenomenology of real life patients more closely.