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PATTERNS OF SYMPTOMS PRESENTATION IN DEPRESSED WOMEN & THEIR LITERACY STATUS AS OBSERVED IN A RURAL INDIAN DISTRICT

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Introduction: In Indian rural population setting where true literacy rate seldom crosses more than 70% in women, the perception of depressive illness and the symptoms presentation are varied & predominately somatic.

Symptoms type variation & the degree of their educational status are correlated here to observe any deviancy.

Aims: Symptom type & literacy status can show an association in depressed women in a clinic.

Methods: About 280 women in the age group 21-51 with a median age of 36 years were taken here for assessment, who were diagnosed as suffering from depressive disorder as per DSM-4, either MDD or Bipolar depression. They all attended a mind care clinic (Mono-Susrusha), in a District HQ town Midnapore, 126 km away from state capital city of Kolkata.

5 basic symptoms were queried here as those were the major presenting features,

1. Headpain or head discomfort or pain around neck
2. Pain in lower extremities or other sites
3. Sleep disturbance, loss of appetite or libido diminution
4. Lack of pleasure or loss of interests to all daily activities
5. Suicidal ideas

Next their literacy status illiterate (20%), junior school (55%), high school (12%), graduate, postgraduate & above (12%) uncertain in 1% cases were assessed.

A tally was made to their educational status & above symptoms.

Results: Somatic, bodily pain symptoms were mostly presenting feature in illiterate & lower school educated women. Biological (3rd listed), lack of pleasure & suicidal urges were echoed mainly in higher educated women group of graduate & above.

Conclusions: Suicidal urges are more perceived in depressed educated women & somatic symptom predominancy were observed more in illiterate & junior level educated group.