



Prevalence of obsessive-compulsive disorder in relation to depression and cognition in an elderly population.

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Abstract:

We examined the 1-month prevalence of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and obsessive-compulsive symptoms (OCS) not fulfilling OCD criteria in relation to sex, age, social and mental function, comorbid depression, and cognitive functioning in an elderly nondemented population.

Population-based sample (N = 900), stratified into two age groups: 70-year-olds (335 women and 224 men) and those aged 78 and above (341 women).

Semi-structured interviews. Psychiatric symptoms were assessed with the Comprehensive Psychopathological Rating Scale and Mini-International Neuropsychiatric Interview, mental and social function with the GAF-scale, memory function with the Word Recall Task and general cognition with MMSE. OCD and Depression were diagnosed according to DSM-IV.

The one-month prevalence of OCD was 2.9%; a further 21% had OCS. Among 70-year-olds, the prevalence of OCD was 1.3% in men and 4.5% in women. Depression was more common among those with OCD (34.6%) than among those with (12.7%) and without (8.0%) OCS. GAF-score was lower among those with OCD (74.8) and OCS (82.9) compared with individuals without obsessions and compulsions (88.2). The association between OCD and GAF-score remained after adjustment for age, sex, and depression. The OCD subgroup with checking behavior had more memory and concentration problems and did worse on Word Recall Task than other groups in our sample.

We found that OCD and OCS are common among the elderly. Both conditions are related to depression and poorer mental and social functioning. Physicians who meet elderly patients need to be aware of OCD as it is potentially treatable.

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