

EMPTINESS IN A LIFE FULL OF EXPERIENCES: MAJOR DEPRESSION IN A 66-YEAR-OLD MAN

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Introduction: Depression is a common, recurrent, often underdiagnosed and undertreated disorder in older people. 10-15% of the elderly present depressive symptoms and 3% of that same population meet criteria for a major depressive episode.

Several factors, such as psychosocial changes, may be related to the onset of depressive episodes. Retirement (often accompanied with feelings of loss of status, both in the family and in the society), the decrease of social contacts with a tendency to isolation, and the difficulties to adapt to new activities and routines, all lead to feelings of inadequacy, worthlessness and a poor self-esteem.

Objectives/aims: The aim of this poster is to show and discuss the importance in recognizing some psychosocial factors that can predict the onset of depressive symptoms in the elderly.

Methods: We report a case of a 66-year-old man, without previous psychiatric history, who presented a major depressive episode with psychotic features, after an important life event (retirement).

Results/conclusion: Depression in older people has severe consequences, afflicting not only patients but also the caregivers. The amplification of previous disabilities associated with medical and cognitive disorders, the increased rate of mortality by suicide and the increased costs to the health care system are common consequences.

To reduce such threats we propose a clinical and social approach that evaluates and regards the different stages of the life cycle and valorize the achieved experiences of older patients.