

MAJOR DEPRESSION IN PATIENTS WITH MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

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Introduction and aim: Depression is frequently underdiagnosed and undertreated in patients with multiple sclerosis (MS). The aim of the study was to determine the prevalence of major depression in MS patients and analyze the frequency of antidepressants intake among patients with major depression.

Methods: The study was conducted on 73 MS patients that underwent inpatient rehabilitation at the Lipik Hospital. The diagnosis was made by use of the Patient Health Questionnaire-nine (PHQ-9) screening test, where a sum of ≥ 10 denoted positive finding. Study patients were divided into two groups, according to the presence or absence of major depression.

Results: Sixteen respondents (21.9%) met the criteria for the diagnosis of major depression. Of these 16 patients, 7 (43.8%) were taking antidepressants. We found that 12 (75%) of respondents with positive PHQ-9 criteria did not inform neurologist on the presence of mood disorder. There were no statistically significant between-group differences according to age ($p=0.814$), sex ($p=0.167$), EDDS score ($p=0.710$), disease duration ($p=0.213$) and disease course ($p=0.876$).

Conclusion: Based on screening test results, substantial proportion of MS patients suffer from major depression. The fact that a significant proportion of patients did not inform neurologist on their mood disturbance, and low frequency of antidepressants intake among MS patients with depression, call for an active approach to diagnosis and treatment of depression.