



# **Comorbidity of Depressive Symptomatology in Patients Aged 60-80 Years with More than Two Chronic Physical Illnesses in General Practice**

**Ivo Natsov<sup>1</sup>, Rumén Trifonov<sup>2</sup>, Svetlana Velikova<sup>1</sup>, Vladimir Nankov<sup>3</sup>, Kaloian Natsov<sup>4</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>State Psychiatric Hospital, Karlukovo, Bulgaria

<sup>2</sup>General Practice Avicena, Pleven, Bulgaria

<sup>3</sup>Municipal General Hospital, Kneja, Bulgaria

<sup>4</sup>Medical University, Sofia, Bulgaria

## **Email address:**

[ivo\\_nacov@abv.bg](mailto:ivo_nacov@abv.bg) (I. Natsov)

## **Abstract:**

**Objectives:** To investigate the prevalence of clinically relevant and subsyndromal depressive symptoms in patients aged 60-80 years with more than two somatic diseases; To appraise PRIME-MD as a tool for investigating depression in later life; to verify the hypothesis that the presence of more than two somatic diseases is a predictor of depression.

**Method:** from October 2014 to March 2016 the group of patients in the age 60-80 years with more than two documented chronic diseases were investigated by means of PRIME-MD. The assessment of multimorbidity was done using the patients health records. Its burden was assessed by the Cumulative Illness Rating Scale.

**Results:** depressive syndromes were significantly more frequent in patients with multimorbidity. Multimorbidity is associated with a higher sum of points in PHQ- 9 and heavier levels of depressive symptoms in comparison with the general population. PHQ- 9 is a fast and reliable tool for evaluating depression in later life.

**Conclusion:** multimorbidity is the rule rather than exception in later life. Diagnosis of depression in patients with multimorbidity may be difficult because of the manifestation of depressive symptoms as somatic. Probably there is a need of mandatory screening for depression in patients with more than two chronic physical disorders in general practice.

## **Keywords:**

Comorbidity, Depression, Multimorbidity