

AS36-02 - CHRONIC COURSE OF DEPRESSION IN THE GENERAL POPULATION

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Introduction: The prevalence and course of chronic major depressive disorders (MDD) in the general population has rarely been assessed.

Objectives: to gain a better understanding of the prevalence, course and the familial aggregation of MDD with at least one episode exceeding a duration of two years.

Aims: to assess 1) the prevalence; 2) course characteristics and comorbidity with other psychiatric disorders and 3) cardiovascular risk factors (CVRFs) and 4) the familial aggregation of chronic MDD in subjects with chronic MDD.

Methods: The sample stems from a large community survey carried out in the city of Lausanne, Switzerland. Subjects were aged from 35 to 65 years (n=3717, 53.1% females, mean age: 50.9 years). They all underwent a physical examination of CVRFs and a psychiatric evaluation using the semi-structured Diagnostic Interview for Genetic Studies.

Results: 1) Approximately 15% of the sample reported at least one chronic depressive episode and 6% were in a chronic depressive episode at the time of the interview; about a 6th of them had episodes longer than 10 years; 2) compared to non-chronic MDD, MDD with chronic depressive episodes was associated with low socio-demographic level, comorbidity with anxiety disorders and almost all variables indicating poor course, but not with CVRFs except for inactivity; 4) there was no evidence for familial aggregation of chronic MDD.

Conclusions: As expected, MDD with chronic episodes revealed a strong association to indicators of poor course. However, with the exception of inactivity they do not seem to be associated with CVRF.