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Assessing the Intensity and Frequency of Symptoms of Mental Disorders in Patients with Neurological Disorders

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Introduction: Psychiatric comorbidity is an important aspect of neurological disorders. It affects about 30-50% of neurologic patients but is frequently underrecognized. **Objectives:** Our objective was to determine the prevalence and severity of the symptoms of mental disorders in neurologic in-patients. **Methods:** Between May and September 2014, all neurologic in-patients of a university neurologic center were asked to complete two self report questionnaires for assessing symptoms of mental disorders, namely the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) and the Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI), which allow to assess a range of nine different psychiatric domains. We performed a multivariate covariance analysis in order to relate the type and frequency of symptoms of mental disorders with the neurological discharge diagnosis, while age, gender, and duration of in-patient treatment served as putative covariates. **Results:** Of all responders (n = 157), 51% stated to have suffered from psychological distress within the past seven days, and 43% indicated depressive symptoms (21% mild, 17% moderate, 5% severe). The mean global severity index GSI (M = 0.64, SD = 0.52) exceeded the 1 SD range of healthy persons but was lower than that of psychiatric in-patients known from the literature. Furthermore, our subanalysis revealed different patterns of symptoms of mental disorders between neurologic patients with degenerative, vascular, demyelinating or epileptic disorders. **Conclusion:** Psychometric measurement is useful to characterize the burden of the symptoms of mental disorders and will be used to further develop the psychiatric liaison services.