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COMORBIDITY OF CURRENT DEPRESSION AMONG THE ELDERLY

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Introduction: Depression in later life is a major public heath issue. Few studies to date examined the psychiatric correlates of depression in elderly surveys in the general population.

Objective: To provide nationally representative data on the prevalence, sociodemographic correlates and comorbidity of current major depressive disorder in late life.

Methods: This study is based on a nationally representative survey, the National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions, of the noninstitutionalized household population (8,205 respondents aged 65 and above). The past 12-months prevalence of major depressive disorder was estimated, and logistic regression analyses were used to examine the relationship between 12-months major depressive disorder and sociodemographic characteristics, general medical condition and psychiatric disorder. Diagnoses were made according to the of DSM-IV criteria.

Results: Among the respondents, 3.2% individuals with a past 12-months diagnosis of major depressive disorder were identified. Women and individuals living in urban areas were more likely to be diagnosed with a major depressive disorder. Significant associations between major depressive disorder and cardiovascular, gastrointestinal diseases, arthritis were found. Several psychiatric disorder were associated with past 12-months major depressive disorder, including dysthymia, bipolar disorder, panic disorder, specific phobia, generalized anxiety disorder, nicotine and alcohol dependence, and histrionic personality disorder.

Conclusion: Recent Major depressive disorder in the elderly was associated with a large number of psychiatric disorders. This study highlights the need to develop effective and targeted intervention initiatives to detect major depressive disorder in elderly.