

DEPRESSION IN CHRONIC HEPATITIS- C EGYPTIAN PATIENTS: RATE AND CORRELATES

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Background: Egypt has the highest prevalence of hepatitis C in the world (10-13%) yet understudied in terms of mental health services.

Objectives: To shed light on depression among chronic hepatitis C patients in Egypt.

Aim of the study: To assess the prevalence of depression and its correlates in a group of Egyptian patients with chronic hepatitis C infection.

Methods: 150 chronic HCV infection non cirrhotic Egyptian patients enrolled in the study. Patients are without past history of psychiatric disorder, having neither alcohol nor substance dependence disorders, did not receive interferon therapy. Psychiatric caseness, and depressive symptoms were assessed using General health questionnaire, and BDI-II questionnaire respectively.

Results: The study included 82 Males patients (54.67 %) and 68 female patients (45.33 %) . Seventy three Patients (48.67%) were found to have current psychiatric morbidity with higher affection rates in younger (**p< 0.001**) and educated (**p= 0.019**) patients. Among those, 64 patients (42.67%) suffered from symptoms of depression (55 patients (36.67 %) of them had mild depression, 6 patients (4%) had moderate depression and 3 patients (2%) had severe depression) with higher affection rates in younger (**p< 0.001**) and educated (**p=0.019**) patients. Gender showed statistically non-significant difference.

Conclusion: There is strong evidence of an association between chronic hepatitis C and psychiatric morbidity in the form of depression in relation rates recorded in general population. Depression is strongly positively correlated with age and level of education. It warrants the attention for providing specialized mental health services in such neglected population.