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PREVALENCE OF BEHAVIOURAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SYMPTOMS OF DEMENTIA IN NURSING HOMES IN BERLIN

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Background: Behavioral and Psychological Symptoms of Dementia (BPSD) include agitation, apathy, hallucinations, and depression. These symptoms are a challenge to professional nursing care, resulting in frequent psychiatric hospitalization, which incur high costs to the national healthcare systems.

Objective: To estimate the prevalence of BPSD in nursing home residents in 16 representative nursing homes in Berlin, Germany.

Methods: In a cross-sectional clustered cohort study, BPSD were assessed using the Dementia Mood Assessment Scale (DMAS), the Neuropsychiatric Inventory (NPI) and the Cohen-Mansfield Agitation Inventory (CMAI). Dementia stage severity was measured by Functional Assessment Staging (FAST) and the Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE). Furthermore, the patients' history recording psychotropics and number of psychiatric hospitalizations were registered. The prevalence and incidence rates of BPSD as well the duration of hospitalization and the quantity of drug prescription were estimated.

Results: BPSD are common above all in nursing home residents with dementia, exhibiting prevalence rates of above 60% of all nursing home residents suffering from dementia. The severity of BPSD was related to number of psychiatric hospitalizations, the amount of psychotropics prescribed, and caregiver burden ($p < .05$).

Conclusion: The high prevalence rate of BPSD reflects a significant problem in nursing home care, and is related to negative health outcomes and caregiver burden. Thus, nursing home care could be improved by minimizing the severity of BPSD, as well as the amount of drugs prescribed and the frequency of demented patients' hospitalization.