

20<sup>th</sup> Euro Congress on

# PSYCHIATRISTS AND PSYCHOLOGISTS

August 07-08, 2017 | Rome, Italy

## Comorbidity in the elderly: one of the reasons why late life depression often passes unrecognized

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**Introduction:** Late life depression is one of the most frequent disorders in elderly and often remains unrecognized. One of the reasons why late life depression often passes unrecognized is comorbidity – a number of different chronic diseases coexist with depression.

**Objective:** To estimate the impact of medical conditions on late life depression.

**Subjects and Methods:** This was a cross-sectional study that used interviewer-administered surveys and medical record reviews. The research was conducted on a sample of 120 participants, 60 patients with late life depression and 60 community-dwelling older adults without depressive symptoms, aged 60+. All participants were examined using a general questionnaire created for the purpose of the study, the existing medical records, the Geriatric Depression Scale and Charlson Comorbidity Index (CCI- a weighted index of 19 diseases that were found to be associated with mortality and other important health outcomes). The research excluded patients with other psychiatric disorders or dementia.

**Results:** The patients with late life depression were suffering from larger number of chronic diseases than non-depressed elderly people, especially heart disease ( $\chi^2=5.63$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=0.018$ ,  $OR=2.59$ ), cancers ( $\chi^2=4.8$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=0.028$ ,  $OR=7.79$ ), hearing impairments ( $\chi^2=6.97$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=0.0083$ ,  $OR=3.00$ ), vision impairments ( $\chi^2=4.37$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $p=0.012$ ), and chronic pain ( $\chi^2=19.38$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p<0.001$ ,  $OR=6.93$ ).

**Conclusion:** These data suggest that late life depression risk is elevated among elderly patients with comorbid chronic diseases and point to a necessity of routine screening and early treatment of depression in patients with chronic diseases in primary care practice.

### Biography

Roza Krsteska is MD, PhD and psychiatrist, with 28 years' experience in diagnosis, treatment and research in the field of Geriatric Psychiatry. She is assistant professor and teaching psychiatry in education institutions.

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