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Depression in Late Life: Review and Commentary FREE

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Abstract

Depression is perhaps the most frequent cause of emotional suffering in later life and significantly decreases quality of life in older adults. In recent years, the literature on late-life depression has exploded. Many gaps in our understanding of the outcome of late-life depression have been filled. Intriguing findings have emerged regarding the etiology of late-onset depression. The number of studies documenting the evidence base for therapy has increased dramatically. Here, I first address case definition, and then I review the current community- and clinic-based epidemiological studies. Next I address the outcome of late-life depression, including morbidity and mortality studies. Then I present the extant evidence regarding the etiology of depression in late life from a biopsychosocial perspective. Finally, I present evidence for the current therapies prescribed for depressed elders, ranging from medications to group therapy.

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