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Prevalence of symptoms of depression and anxiety in patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease: cross-sectional study in primary health care

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Background and Aim: Symptoms of anxiety and depression in Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is associated with reduced quality of life, greater number of consultations and hospitalizations. This study aims to compare the prevalence of depression and anxiety in patients with and without COPD in primary health care.

Methods: Patients with COPD from two Family Health Units, in Braga, Portugal, were invited to perform spirometry and to complete a questionnaire including demographic data, the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS), the St. George Respiratory Questionnaire (SGRQ), and the Graffar scale. Patients without COPD completed a similar questionnaire.

Results: The study sample consisted of 130 participants, 65 with COPD. The prevalence of depression in COPD patients was 16.9% (CI 95%: 9.7% to 27.8%) and 9.2% (CI: 4.3 % to 18.7%) in participants without COPD (NS). The prevalence of anxiety was 27.7% (CI 95%: 18.3% to 39.6%) among COPD patients and 16.9% (CI: 9.7% to 27.8%) in participants without COPD (NS). The mean HADS depression score for COPD patients in GOLD stages II-IV (7.6) was higher than the mean depression score (5.4) for subjects without COPD ($p=0.021$). In a multiple linear regression model we found that respiratory symptoms, socioeconomic status, and marital status are significant predictors of symptoms of depression. Respiratory symptoms were the only significant predictors of anxiety symptoms

Conclusion: Symptoms of depression were more prevalent in patients with COPD GOLD stages II-IV when compared with patients without COPD. Marital status and social class are associated with symptoms of depression in COPD patients. Respiratory symptoms are an important predictor of depression and anxiety symptoms in COPD patients.