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Predictors of depression and anxiety disorders in infertile patients

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Background and Aim: Infertility is clinically defined as a disease of the reproductive system conditioning the failure to achieve a clinical pregnancy after 12 months or more of regular unprotected sexual intercourse. It is highly prevalent worldwide and in Portugal. Often, it implies psychopathological alterations in affected subjects and it can promote the development of psychiatric disorders such as depression and anxiety.
The main goals of the present study were to determine the prevalence and the possible predictors of depressive and anxiety disorders in a sample of infertile subjects from the North of Portugal.
Method: To achieve these purposes it was carried out a descriptive analytic cross-sectional study in a sample of infertile subjects from the Medically Assisted Procreation (MAP) Centre of the Centro Hospitalar do Alto Ave - Guimarães in the North of Portugal. Thus, several clinical interviews were conducted in order to collect data and a self-administered questionnaire with Beck Depressive Inventory and Beck Anxiety Inventory to assess the severity of depressive and anxiety disorders, respectively.
Results: A sample of 200 infertile subjects was obtained. The prevalence of depressive disorders was 10% and the prevalence of anxiety disorders was 28.5%. The following predictors of depressive disorders were observed: a longer waiting time for MAP treatment, a history of depression, lower educational level, lack of occupational activity and existence of an explanation for the cause of infertility. for anxiety disorders the predictors were: female gender, lower educational level, taking anxiolytics, longer duration of infertility and younger subjects.
Conclusions: According to these results, it is recommended that a more intensive support should be given to these subjects through interventions that seek to reduce depressive and anxious symptoms.