MENTAL DISORDERS AMONG THE ELDERLY PEOPLE ATTENDING GERIATRIC CLINIC OF BAGHDAD MEDICAL CITY, BAGHDAD, IRAQ, 2017

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Background: The aging population is currently one of the main issues facing international healthcare systems. Between 2015 and 2050, the proportion of the world's population ≥60 years will increase from 12% to 22%. In Iraq, 2014, the proportion of this group was 5%. WHO estimates that 15% of elderly people are suffering from mental disorders (MDs). Iraqi population was exposed to wars and conflicts, which affect their mental health. We conducted this study to measure the prevalence and identify types and potential associated factors of MDs among elderly people in Baghdad, Iraq, 2017.

Methodology: We conducted this cross-sectional study with analytic element using a convenient sample of 320 elderly people attending Geriatric Clinic of Baghdad Medical City Hospital for non-psychiatric complaints. We collected data on basic demographics and potential risk factors using a self-reported questionnaire. MDs were defined based on Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10) with a known validity and reliability where the cutoff score was 20+. Accredited tools used by WHO were used to identify the types of MDs.

Results: The prevalence of MDs in the study sample was 24.4% (95%CI: 19.85-29.53%). The prevalence rates of MDs types were: depression 16.6% (95%CI: 12.75-21.19), anxiety 12.8% (95%CI: 9.45-17.09), dementia 5.3% (95%CI: 3.22-8.53), substance use disorder 2.5% (95%CI: 1.17-5.06), suicide thoughts 5.6% (95%CI: 3.59-8.72) and suicide attempts 2.5% (95%CI=1.17-5.06). Logistic regression analysis revealed the following significant independent factors: aging (OR:13.7, 95%CI: 9.40-20.2) dependent on others (OR:19.25, 95%CI: 8.06-24.8), loneliness and social isolation (OR:53.4, 95%CI: 18.4-55.3), visual impairment (OR:14.9, 95%CI: 4.63-21.8), economic state deterioration (OR:32.9, 95%CI: 14.7-42.4), neglect and mishandling (OR:46.02, 95%CI: 15.7-49.2), cardiovascular diseases (OR:9.79, 95%CI: 9.23-17.7) and chronic joint pain (OR:11.1, 95%CI: 5.59-17.4).

Conclusions: MDs are widespread among elderly people determined by multiple physical, psychological and socioeconomic factors. We recommended stronger integration of elderly mental healthcare within geriatric healthcare services.

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