

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS AND DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS AMONG ELDERLY POPULATION IN SERBIA

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Background: Depressive symptoms among people progress with aging, and they tend to be pronounced in elderly people. In this study, we tested a model that examines the association between sociodemographic factors and depressive symptoms among the elderly population in Serbia. The results of this research will highlight the significance of good mental health in older age.

Methods and Objectives: The study was conducted within the National Health Survey of the Serbian population in 2019. The questionnaires used as instruments in this study were created in accordance with the questionnaires of the European Health Interview Survey – Third Wave. The Patient Health Questionnaire - 8 was used to evaluate the presence of depressive symptoms in the elderly population aged 65 years and over. The relationships between depression symptoms and a set of independent variables were examined with univariate and multivariate regression analyses.

Results: The prevalence of mild depressive symptoms was 12.9%, the prevalence of depressive episodes was 4.5%, and 82.6% of respondents had no depressive symptoms. In the univariate regression model, depressive episodes are 2.3 times more frequent in men (OR=2.293), 0.3 times low frequent in persons 65-74 years of age (OR=0.305), 1.9 times more frequent in divorced or without a partner (OR =1.974), 3 times more frequent in persons with low education (OR=3.059), 2.5 times more frequent in persons with a poor well-being index (OR=2.585), 1.4 times more frequent in persons who assess their health as bad and very bad (OR=1.424) and 1.6 times more frequent in persons from Sumadija and Western Serbia (OR=1.648). Multivariate analysis showed statistical significance for the variables gender, age, marital status, and self-assessment of health.

Conclusions: Sociodemographic factors should be considered for the development of interventions to lower the prevalence of depressive symptoms in the elderly. Mental health promotion among elderly populations will have significant benefits on their well-being.

Keywords: elderly, depression, sociodemographic factors, mental health, Serbia