

Geriatric Depression

Background

- Geriatric depression is a serious concern facing many communities in both the outpatient and nursing home settings
- The prevalence of depression in individuals > 65 y/o ranges from 7 to 36% in outpatient and up to 40% in hospitalized patients ¹
- Depression is the 2nd most common chronic disorder seen by primary care physicians ¹
- Primary care physicians treat a majority of patient with symptoms of depression ¹
- Identifying patients with depression can be difficult in a busy primary care setting where time is limited ¹

Background

- Primary care physicians fail to diagnose 50-75% of patients suffering from mental disorders including depression ²
- Prevalence of major depression in long-term care patients is estimated at 12-25% and minor depression 18-30% ⁴
- Healthcare providers overlook depression in nursing home patients at a rate of 43-86% ³
- There is evidence that many older depressed patients do not complain of depression and often do not seek mental health services ²
- Depression in elderly patients that goes unrecognized and untreated can cause significant morbidity and mortality ²

Purpose

- Assess the prevalence of geriatric depression in a small community in rural Pike county
- Compare the prevalence of diagnosed depression vs. a randomized sample of elderly patients in the clinic setting, to evaluate any discrepancy in diagnosing depression in the geriatric population
- Determine the level of knowledge that healthcare workers in a nursing home setting have regarding signs and symptoms of geriatric depression

Methods

- 100 randomized charts were reviewed at the Pike County Family Practice searching for a diagnosis of depression. Criteria included that the patient be at least 65 years of age. Charts were reviewed back 10 yrs.
- 100 surveys were randomly given to clinic patients to assess depressive symptoms in themselves. The short version Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS-15) was given to the patients. Criteria included that the patient be at least 65 years of age and without any cognitive impairment. **Fig 1.**

Methods

- The prevalence of depression at a local nursing home was determined using the MDS statistical report
- A questionnaire was administered to all healthcare workers at the local nursing home to assess their level of knowledge regarding geriatric depression **Fig 2.**

Results

- Chart review: 15 out of 100 patients had a diagnosis of depression
- Patient survey: 18 out of 100 patients had a GDS-15 score of 5 or greater which signified depression
- It was found that there was no significant difference between the two rates

Results

- The MDS Statistical report at the local nursing home found the prevalence of major depression to be at 49%
 - 79% receive medication
- 25 employee questionnaire's were returned from the nursing home. The most missed questions were:
 - Depression in older long-term care patients is often diagnosed?
 - People greater than 65 years of age have the highest suicide rate of any other age group?

Discussion

- It was found that the prevalence of geriatric depression at Pike County Family Practice (15%), through a chart review, fell within the estimated average of outpatient clinics (7-36%)
- This percentage is reassuring as a true sample of the population because no significant difference was found between the patients themselves as demonstrated by the patient survey (GDS-15) and the prevalence of geriatric depression as found via the chart review

Discussion

- Pike County Family Practice was well below the estimated 50-75% of depressed patients who are missed by their primary care provider
- PCFP as a primary care clinic is efficient in recognizing and diagnosing geriatric depression as compared to the national outpatient average
- Statistical significance might have been achieved with a larger population size
- Ideally the surveyed patients would have been compared to their personal medical charts, but due to certain limitations this could not be achieved

Discussion

- When compared to the estimated national average, this long-care facility had a higher prevalence of major depression
 - 49% vs. 12-25%
- The reason for this increased prevalence could not be determined at this time, although the healthcare providers at this facility were very well trained in recognizing signs of geriatric depression as was conveyed through the employee questionnaire
- Those healthcare providers who were unsure of certain facts or signs of geriatric depression were educated with the correct information

Conclusion

- Geriatric depression is a very prevalent condition that can be difficult to diagnose
- With an ever-aging population, geriatric depression will continue to be a major issue
- Understanding the facts and taking time to use tools such as the Geriatric depression scale we can catch many of the depressed elderly patients that would otherwise go undiagnosed. This can significantly reduce further morbidity and mortality that goes along with untreated depression.
- Pike County Family Practice was very efficient in using the tools necessary to recognize and treat elderly depression

References

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