

P01-41 - AGE OF ONSET IN PSYCHOTIC UNIPOLAR DEPRESSION: A COMPARATIVE CLINICAL STUDY

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Objective: The issue whether the clinical characteristics of unipolar psychotic major depression (PMD) vary according to the age of onset remains still unclear. In this study we assess comparatively the clinical characteristics of young early-onset (n=30), elderly early-onset (n=34) and elderly late-onset (n=35) psychotic depressives.

Methods: Ninety-nine inpatients suffering from DSM IV unipolar PMD were assessed on the basis of SCID IV, HRSD and a physical impairment rating scale.

Results: The elderly late-onset patients suffered from overall more severe depression compared to both categories of early-onset ones, more gastrointestinal symptoms compared to young early-onset patients and more psychic anxiety compared to elderly early-onset patients. Moreover, they expressed significantly more frequently delusions of somatic content and had higher scores on the HRSD item of hypochondriasis than their young early-onset counterparts. The group of elderly early-onset PMD patients was found to hold an intermediate position between the young early-onset and elderly late-onset PMD patients with regard to hypochondriacal ideation, gastrointestinal symptoms and delusions of somatic, guilt and paranoid content.

Conclusions: The findings of the present study suggest considerable differences between young, elderly early-onset and elderly late-onset PMD patients with respect to their clinical features.