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COMORBIDITY OF ANXIETY DISORDERS AND DEPRESSION

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Introduction: Comorbidity of anxiety and depression is common and frequently poses diagnostic and treatment challenges in the clinical setting and are associated with significant morbidity.

The aim of this study was to analyze the comorbidity between DSM-III-R anxiety disorders in separate subgroups of patients with major depression, bipolar II and bipolar I disorder in a clinical sample of a Bosnian population.

Methods: Randomly selected subjects (aged between 18 and 64 years, N=2202) which were hospitalized at the Psychiatric clinic in Sarajevo was analyzed. Subjects were interviewed by the Diagnostic Interview Schedule (DIS) which generated DSM-III-R diagnoses.

Results: The prevalence of generalized anxiety disorder, agoraphobia and social phobia was the highest among bipolar II patients (18.8, 32.5 and 18.7%), simple phobia was most prevalent in (nonbipolar) major depression (20.6%). The rate of panic disorder was almost the same in the (nonbipolar) major depressive and bipolar II subgroups (11.2 and 10.5%). Bipolar I patients showed a relatively low rate of comorbidity.

Conclusions: The findings support previous results on the particularly high rate of comorbidity between anxiety disorders and unipolar major depression and particularly bipolar II illness, which has significant negative implications for both the course of these disorders and levels of dysfunction.