

Oral presentation

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The co-occurrence of depressive and anxiety disorders: results of a multi-national primary care study

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Depressive and anxiety disorders co-occur to a great degree. Symptoms of anxiety often consist part of depression and depressive symptoms often follow the onset of anxiety disorders. This degree of comorbidity has raised the issue whether they can be seen as different forms of mental disorders, or they consist an "anxiety depressive" spectrum.

Results of large epidemiological studies, either in the general population or in general and primary health care have shown that depressive and anxiety disorders are rarely "pure". This is not restricted to the co-occurrence of symptoms of both groups of disorders. Often anxiety disorders precede the onset of depression, but they can also be separated between each other by large time intervals.

The presentation will use data from the "Psychological Problems in General Health Care" study, carried out in 14 countries, and other epidemiological studies carried out in the general population, in order to discuss the following issues:

1. Are depressive and anxiety disorders different mental disorders?
2. What form of comorbidity is observed between depression and anxiety?
3. To what degree does the co-occurrence of depression and anxiety affects quality of life and functioning of the individual?