ALEXITHYMIA AND SOMATIZATION IN PATIENTS WITH DEPRESSION AND THEIR IMPACT ON SOCIAL FUNCTIONING

INTRODUCTION

Depression is most common disorder and it is one of the leading cause of DALY (disability adjusted life year). Even after remission of depression there is some amount of impairment in social functioning. Alexithymia and somatization is most commonly associated with depression, which can impair the individual’s social and occupational functioning. This study focus on evaluating the level of alexithymia and somatisation associated with depression and to determine the impact of both on social functioning impairment. Also this study compares proportions of various domains related with alexithymia and somatisation in depression patients.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This is a cross sectional prevalence study were the sample size of 100 participants are selected based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria. ICD-10 criteria is used for diagnosing depressive disorder and appropriate scales like TAS-120 scale for measuring Alexithymia, PHQ-15 somatic symptom severity scale for somatic symptom assessment, HAM-D scale for assessing the severity of depression and SOFAS for assessing the severity of social and occupational functioning and appropriate statistical methods were used for analysis.
RESULTS

Depression is associated with alexithymia and somatization which as an impact on social functioning impairment. On comparing various domains, alexithymia is seen more in male gender with mean age of 35 years, severe level of depression and during first episode. Somatization is seen more in female gender with mean age of 47 years, moderate level of depression, and on subsequent episodes of depression.

CONCLUSION

This study provides the importance that while treating the individual with depression it is necessary to assess the somatic symptoms and alexithymia scores using appropriate scales and monitor the progression during follow up which may improve the outcome of disease and prevent the social functioning impairment.

KEYWORDS

Alexithymia, Somatization, Depression