# Comorbidity in the elderly: one of the reasons why late life depression often passes unrecognized

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## Introduction

Late life depression is one of the most frequent disorders in elderly and often remains unrecognized. One of the reasons why late life depression often passes unrecognized is comorbidity – a number of different chronic diseases coexist with depression.



## Objective

To estimate the impact of medical conditions on late life depression.



## Subjects and Methods

A cross-sectional study.

A sample of 120 participants, 60 patients with late life depression and 60 community-dwelling older adults without depressive symptoms, aged 60+.

All participants were examined using a general questionnaire created for the purpose of the study, the existing medical records, the Geriatric Depression Scale and Charlson Comorbidity Index (CCI- a weighted index of 19 diseases that were found to be associated with mortality and other important health outcomes).

The research excluded patients with other psychiatric disorders or dementia.



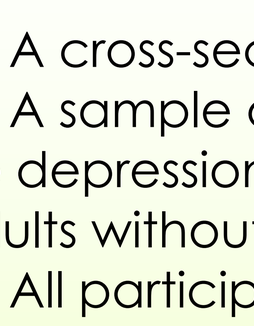
## Results

The patients with late life depression were suffering from larger number of chronic diseases than non-depressed elderly people, especially

**-heart disease ($x^2$=5.63, df=1, p=0.018, OR=2.59),**
**-cancers ($x^2$=4.8, df=1, p=0.028, OR=7.79),**

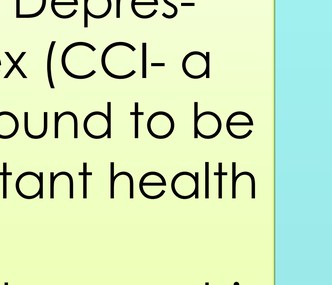
**-hearing impairments ($x^2$=6.97, df=1, p=0.0083, OR=3.00),**
**-vision impairments ($x^2$=4.37, df=2, p=0.012),**

**-chronic pain ($x^2$=19.38, df=1, p=<0.001, OR=6.93).**



## Conclusion

These data suggest that late life depression risk is elevated among elderly patients with comorbid chronic diseases and point to a necessity of routine screening and early treatment of depression in patients with chronic diseases in primary care practice.



**References**

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