DEPRESSION IN DEMENTIA -BURDEN OF COMORBID CONDITION

Dementia with over 46 million people suffering from it has become an illness which cannot be ignored. The confusion regarding whether dementia is a neurological or a psychiatric illness has been existing for a long. Conventionally, dementia has been viewed as a neurological illness with the organicity of the same being given utmost importance. However, we cannot ignore the vast contribution of psychiatry in the discovery of dementia.

The new concept regarding psychiatric and neurological illnesses has challenged the fact that dementia is a completely neurological illness, especially considering the vast similarities between psychiatric disorders and dementia. This confusion regarding whether it is a neurological or a psychiatric illness has created difficulty in the management of these patients.

The Geriatric Psychiatry specialty section of the Indian Psychiatric Society (IPS) conducted focus group discussions as part of a qualitative study to elicit the opinion of experts regarding psychogeriatric research and service development.

Psychiatric morbidity in late life, especially depression, generated lot of research interest in the late seventies and early eighties. Researchers from Madurai and Chennai published many research reports during this period. Studies have shown that 5% of people seeking help in a tertiary care or general hospital setting happen to be older than 60 years. Depression was the commonest disorder and was associated with other physical illnesses. We need more information on the incidence and prevalence of depression from large community samples.