



1<sup>st</sup> World Congress on Healthy Ageing, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

**Abstract 39**

**Relationship of Family Function and Depression in the Elderly at the Out-patient**

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**Key words:** *Family APGAR, Geriatric Depression, Family functionality*

**Abstract**

Background: Depression in the elderly is often undiagnosed hence not given appropriate management. Screening should be done in family practice for prompt detection to facilitate early referral to psychiatrists for formal diagnosis and treatment.

In the field of family medicine, we often assess the family and its functionality to determine if the family is capable of handling a situation, wherein a family member is stricken with disease or medical condition. In a condition where lack of social support system is a risk factor, can we use the same tool in assessing family functionality to determine the risk for having geriatric depression?

Objective: This study was conducted to determine the relationship of family function and geriatric depression in an out-patient setting.

Methods: A case-control study was done in which 200 patients were included from the Out-patient Department of the Veterans Memorial Medical Center from March to April 2009. Subjects were asked to complete a 3-part questionnaire: sociodemographic data, the 30-item Geriatric Depression Scale and the Family APGAR.

Results: Majority of the respondents with probable depression perceived their families as dysfunctional (64.1%): 50% moderately dysfunctional and 14.1% severely dysfunctional. Conversely, most respondents without depression came from highly functional families (69.1%). The odds of having probable depression was noted to be three times higher among respondents from dysfunctional families as compared to those from functional families

Conclusion: It is recommended that elderly patients with low APGAR Scores be screened for Geriatric Depression. These patients may benefit from family counselling and referral to a Psychiatrist for proper diagnosis and management