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MEASURING PSYCHOLOGICAL DISCOMFORT IN SEVERE FUNCTIONAL GASTROINTESTINAL DISORDERS: IS THE HOSPITAL ANXIETY DEPRESSION (HAD) SCALE HELPFUL?

A. Rodríguez-Urrutia¹, M.D. Braquehais¹, A. Accarino², M.J. Bel¹, M. Quesada¹, P. Lusilla¹, G. Parramon¹

¹Department of Psychiatry, ²Digestive System Research Unit, Vall d'Hebron University Hospital, Autonomous University of Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain

Introduction: Patients suffering from Functional Gastrointestinal Disorders (FGD) experience a high degree of psychological discomfort difficult to measure with current psychometric tools.

Objectives:

- To describe the presence of affective symptoms measured with the Hospital Anxiety Depression (HAD) Scale in FGD inpatients.
- To analyze the differences in HAD subscales scores between motor functional gastrointestinal disorders (MFGD) and non-motor functional gastrointestinal disorders (NMFGD).

Material and method: 46 inpatients admitted to the Vall d'Hebron Digestive System Research Unit to study the existence of FGD were evaluated from January 2008 to July 2010. All patients completed the HAD scale and results from the two HAD subscales - Anxiety subscale (HAD-A) and Depression subscale (HAD-D)- were analyzed.

Results: The mean age of the sample was 41.02 ± 16.86 years, 89.1 % were women and 10.9 % were men. Thirty-one patients met criteria of NMFGD, 13 of MFGD, and 2 did not meet criteria of both diagnoses. The mean scores of the HAD were: HAD-A= 8.12 ± 5.23) and HAD-D= 5.20 ± 4.20 . MFGD patients' HAD results were: HAD-A= 7.00 ± 5.74 and HAD-D= 4.55 ± 4.52 while NMFGD HAD results were: HAD-A= 8.21 ± 4.98 and HAD-D= 4.96 ± 3.77 . No statistically significant differences were found between both groups.

Conclusions: According to our findings, MFGD patients do not meet HAD criteria of anxiety or depression while NMFGD patients only fulfill criteria for probable anxiety or depression. New psychometric tools should be developed in the future to study the psychological discomfort these patients usually complain of.