

## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

# AGE AND GENDER FEATURES OF DEPRESSIVE AND ANXIETY SYMPTOMATICS OF DEPRESSIVE DISORDERS

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**ABSTRACT**

**The aim:** of the study is to study the features of the clinical phenomenology of depressive disorders at the present stage, taking into account gender and age factors.

**Materials and methods:** Clinically examined 107 men and 138 women with bipolar affective disorder (current episode of depression), depressive episode and recurrent depressive disorder using HDRS, HARS, BDI, C. Spilberger's Scale of Reactive and Personality Anxiety.

**Results:** In all patients showed an increase in the severity of depression and anxiety with age, but in women the greatest differences were found between the middle and older age groups, and in men when comparing young and middle age groups. In young patients the level of agitated depression is higher for men, and women showed the higher overall level of anxiety, somatic anxiety, undifferentiated depression, reactive and personality anxiety. In patients aged 30-44, men have a significantly higher overall score of HARS depression, the level of adynamic, agitated and undifferentiated depression, the level of depression on BDI. In the older age group, the levels of depression in men and women are not significantly different, and the levels of mental anxiety and personality anxiety in women are significantly higher.

**Conclusions:** The general tendency consisting in increasing the severity of depression with age, and more pronounced indicators of depression in men, and anxiety in women. In men, the greatest increase in the severity of depression occurs before the age of 44 years, and in women after 45 years.

**KEY WORDS:** depressive disorders, depressive and anxious phenomenology

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**INTRODUCTION**

The problem of depression is one of the main problems of modern psychiatric science and practice; depressive disorders are associated with suicidal behavior, reduced of quality of life, and social disadaptation both in patients with depressions and in their microsocial environment [1-3]. According to modern studies, depressive disorders are characterized by polymorphism of symptoms, difficulty of diagnosis and resistance to therapy [4-7]. In this regard, it is important to study the clinical phenomenology of depressive disorders at the present stage, which can be the basis for the development of effective preventive measures [8-10].

**THE AIM**

The aim of the study is to study the features of the clinical phenomenology of depressive disorders at the present stage, taking into account gender and age factors.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

With the observance of the principles of biomedical ethics, we have clinically examined 107 men and 138 women who applied for medical care at Vinnitsa Regional Psycho-Neurological Hospital from 2015 to 2019. The nosological structure of the contingent was as follows: bipolar affective disorder, the current episode of depression (ICD-10 codes F31.3, F31.4): 42 men (39.8% of the total number

of men surveyed) and 38 women (27.5% of the total the number of women); depressive episode (F32.0, F32.1, F32.2): 32 men (29.9%) and 64 women (46.4%), recurrent depressive disorder (F33.0, F33.1, F33.2): 33 men (30.8%) and 36 women (26.1%), respectively.

The average age of the men was  $34.2 \pm 11.1$  years, and  $33.2 \pm 11.4$  years for women ( $p=0.422$ ), the average duration of depression was  $5.7 \pm 5.8$  years for men, and  $4.5 \pm 5.4$  years for women ( $p=0.064$ ).

3 subgroups were allocated in group of men and women depending on the age of patients at the time of the study: up to 30 years (M1 and W1, respectively), from 33 to 44 years (M2 and W2 groups, respectively), 45 years and older (M3 and W3 groups, respectively).

The study was conducted using M. Hamilton's Depression [11] and Anxiety Scale [12] (HDRS and HARS), A. Beck's Depression Inventory (BDI) [13], C. Spilberger's Scale of Reactive and Personality Anxiety in Y. Khanin modification [14].

Statistical analysis of differences between groups was carried out using non-parametric Mann-Whitney test.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The results of the analysis of depressive and anxious manifestations in men are given in table I.

The main trend is an increase in the severity of depressive and anxious symptoms with age. This naturally reflects the

**Table I.** Features of depressive and anxious manifestations in men, taking into account age factor

Indicators	Clinical groups			level of statistical significance of differences (p)		
	M1 M±m/Me (Q <sub>25</sub> -Q <sub>75</sub> )	M2 M±m/Me (Q <sub>25</sub> -Q <sub>75</sub> )	M3 M±m/Me (Q <sub>25</sub> -Q <sub>75</sub> )	M1 vs M2	M1 vs M3	M2 vs M3
M. Hamilton's Depression Scale (HDRS)						
Total score	15,8±5,8/13,5 (12,0-19,0)	22,3±9,1/21,0 (13,0-31,0)	28,7±11,1/33,0 (14,0-38,0)	0,002	0,000	0,010
Adynamic depression	11,8±4,7/10,0 (8,0-14,0)	16,0±6,6/16,0 (10,0-23,0)	21,2±7,1/24,0 (11,0-26,0)	0,003	0,000	0,003
Agitation depression	6,8±3,3/6,0 (4,0-10,0)	9,7±4,7/10,0 (6,0-14,0)	12,2±6,3/14,0 (4,0-17,0)	0,005	0,003	0,052
Depression with fear	5,7±4,4/4,0 (3,0-9,0)	8,5±5,1/8,0 (3,0-13,0)	12,4±5,9/15,0 (5,0-17,0)	0,014	0,000	0,005
Undifferentiated depression	3,0±2,0/2,5 (2,0-3,0)	5,4±2,5/5,5 (3,0-8,0)	6,0±3,0/7,0 (2,0-8,0)	0,000	0,001	0,288
M. Hamilton's Anxiety Scale (HARS)						
Total score	10,3±5,28,5 (7,0-11,0)	15,4±7,2/14,0 (10,0-22,0)	21,9±11,2/26,0 (8,0-33,0)	0,001	0,001	0,018
Psychical anxiety	8,3±2,5/8,0 (7,0-9,0)	10,2±3,4/9,5 (7,0-13,0)	11,9±4,6/14,0 (7,0-16,0)	0,011	0,006	0,130
Somatic anxiety	2,1±3,0/1,0 (0,0-3,0)	5,2±4,3/5,0 (2,0-8,0)	10,0±7,1/11,0 (1,0-16,0)	0,000	0,000	0,011
A. Beck's Depression Inventory (BDI)						
Total score	25,1±13,3/23,0 (15,0-34,0)	36,1±17,2/37,0 (19,0-53,0)	48,8±17,9/59,0 (26,0-62,0)	0,003	0,000	0,003
Cognitive-affective subscale	16,2±9,1/13,0 (10,0-24,0)	23,3±11,4/24,5 (12,0-34,0)	30,2±11,7/37,0 (13,0-39,0)	0,006	0,000	0,007
Subscale of somatic depressive manifestations	8,8±4,9/9,0 (5,0 12,0)	12,7±6,5/12,0 (7,0-19,0)	18,7±6,5/21,0 (13,0-23,0)	0,007	0,000	0,001
C. Spilberger's Scale of Reactive and Personality Anxiety						
Reactive anxiety	32,0±7,9/29,5 (26,0 32,0)	40,4±10,3/42,0 (32,0-49,0)	48,2±14,5/55,0 (29,0-62,0)	0,000	0,000	0,014
Personality anxiety	36,3±7,9/34,0 (30,0 40,0)	42,2±9,6/43,0 (33,0-51,0)	38,7±11,2/33,0 (31,0-47,0)	0,006	0,754	0,129

progression of the pathological process in time. However, the most pronounced differences in men were found when comparing groups up to 30 years and 30-44 years, while differences between groups of 30-44 years and 45 years and older are less pronounced.

For women, there are other patterns (Table II). They also showed an increase in the severity of depression and anxiety with age, but the greatest differences were found between the middle and older age groups. So, although the rates of depression in the middle age group are greater than in the young one, these differences are not statistically significant. Significant differences were found only for anxiety indicators (a general indicator for HARS, an indicator of somatic anxiety and an indicator of reactive anxiety). At the same time, in the older age group, all indicators are significantly more than in the middle.

Statistically significant differences between men and women were identified mainly in patients aged 30-44 (Table III).

In young patients under the age of 30 years the level of agitated depression is higher for men, and for women, the overall level of anxiety, the level of somatic anxiety and the level of reactive anxiety are higher. Also, women showed higher levels of undifferentiated depression and personality anxiety, but the level of statistical significance for these indicators is somewhat less. In patients aged 30-44, men have a significantly higher overall score of HARS depression, the level of adynamic and agitated depression and undifferentiated depression, the level of depression on BDI, including the cognitive-affective subscale and subscale of somatic manifestations of depression. In the older age group (45 years and more), the levels of depression in men and women are not significantly different, and the levels of mental anxiety and personality anxiety in women are significantly higher.

The study revealed some trends of depressive and anxious manifestations of depressive disorders in different age groups.

**Table II.** Features of depressive and anxious manifestations in women, taking into account age factor

Indicators	Clinical groups			level of statistical significance of differences (p)		
	W1 M±m/Me (Q <sub>25</sub> -Q <sub>75</sub> )	W2 M±m/Me (Q <sub>25</sub> -Q <sub>75</sub> )	W3 M±m/Me (Q <sub>25</sub> -Q <sub>75</sub> )	W1 vs W2	W1 vs W3	W2 vs W3
M. Hamilton's Depression Scale (HDRS)						
Total score	14,6±6,1/12,0 (11,0-17,0)	18,0±9,0/14,0 (12,0-27,0)	28,1±10,3/31,0 (19,0-37,0)	0,076	0,000	0,000
Adynamic depression	10,8±4,6/9,0 (8,0-12,0)	12,9±6,7/10,0 (8,0-20,0)	20,1±6,8/22,0 (15,0-26,0)	0,189	0,000	0,000
Agitation depression	5,7±3,6/4,0 (3,0-8,0)	7,3±5,0/6,0 (3,0-12,0)	12,6±5,4/13,0 (8,0-17,0)	0,119	0,000	0,000
Depression with fear	6,5±4,0/5,0 (4,0-9,0)	7,7±5,7/5,0 (3,0-14,0)	12,6±5,6/14,0 (11,0-17,0)	0,693	0,000	0,001
Undifferentiated depression	3,5±1,9/3,0 (2,0-4,0)	4,4±2,6/3,0 (2,0-7,0)	6,4±2,8/8,0 (5,0-8,0)	0,318	0,000	0,002
M. Hamilton's Anxiety Scale (HARS)						
Total score	13,2±5,5/12,0 (9,0-17,0)	16,7±7,9/14,0 (11,0-23,0)	25,9±11,2/26,5 (15,0-36,0)	0,023	0,000	0,000
Psychical anxiety	9,5±4,0/8,0 (6,0-13,0)	10,8±4,4/10,0 (7,0-15,0)	15,0±5,8/15,5 (10,0-20,0)	0,074	0,000	0,001
Somatic anxiety	3,8±2,5/4,0 (2,0-5,0)	5,8±4,0/5,0 (3,0-8,0)	10,8±6,2/12,5 (6,0-16,0)	0,004	0,000	0,000
A. Beck's Depression Inventory (BDI)						
Total score	21,8±13,5/19,0 (11,0-31,0)	27,6±17,7/24,0 (14,0-45,0)	46,3±17,5/50,5 (35,0-61,0)	0,151	0,000	0,000
Cognitive-affective subscale	14,2±8,9/12,0 (6,0-21,0)	17,6±11,5/16,0 (7,0-28,0)	28,9±12,3/32,5 (19,0-39,0)	0,202	0,000	0,000
Subscale of somatic depressive manifestations	7,6±5,1/7,0 (3,0-11,0)	10,0±6,9/9,0 (4,0-15,0)	17,3±5,8/19,0 (13,0-22,0)	0,104	0,000	0,000
C. Spilberger's Scale of Reactive and Personality Anxiety						
Reactive anxiety	37,0±8,5/33,0 (31,0-44,0)	42,5±10,4/42,0 (33,0-50,0)	53,0±14,0/54,5 (42,0-65,0)	0,007	0,000	0,000
Personality anxiety	40,2±9,9/39,0 (31,0-44,0)	40,3±8,5/41,0 (33,0-44,0)	49,7±10,9/54,0 (42,0-58,0)	0,725	0,000	0,000

It has been established that, in general, men have higher rates of depression than women. This may be due to the fact that men seek psychiatric help later, and in more severe cases than women because of the stereotype that exists in society that a man must be enduring and endure difficulties. Perhaps men are also more affected by stigmatization. In women, higher levels of anxiety were revealed, which can be considered as one of the manifestations of gender pathomorphosis of depression.

It has been established that, in general, the severity of depressive and anxious manifestations in depressive disorders increases with age. However, in men and women, the trends are different: in men, a more pronounced deterioration was observed before the age 44 years, and in women – after 45 years. These features require further deeper study of the dynamics and pathomorphosis of depressive disorders, taking into account gender and age factors.

## CONCLUSIONS

The study of the features of depressive and anxious manifestations of depressive disorders revealed its main tendencies, consisting in increasing the severity of depression with age, and more pronounced indicators of depression in men, and anxiety in women. In men, the greatest increase in the severity of depression occurs before the age of 44 years, and in women after 45 years.

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**Table III.** The levels of statistical significance of differences when comparing men and women

Indicators	Level of statistical significance (p)		
	M1 vs W1	M2 vs W2	M3 vs W3
Total score on HDRS	0,137	0,012	0,744
Adynamic depression subscale of HDRS	0,197	0,015	0,376
Agitation depression subscale of HDRS	0,047	0,016	0,851
Depression with fear subscale of HDRS	0,154	0,394	0,954
Undifferentiated depression subscale of HDRS	0,061	0,048	0,519
Total score on HARS	0,001	0,435	0,213
Psychical anxiety on HARS	0,371	0,627	0,033
Somatic anxiety on HARS	0,000	0,367	0,702
Total score on BDI	0,222	0,015	0,479
Cognitive-affective subscale of BDI	0,248	0,014	0,788
Subscale of somatic depressive manifestations of BDI	0,185	0,040	0,324
Reactive anxiety on C. Spilberger's Scale	0,001	0,399	0,278
Personality anxiety on C. Spilberger's Scale	0,080	0,351	0,001

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#### Conflict of interest:

*The Authors declare no conflict of interest.*

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