

# Geriatric Depression: Do you recognize it?

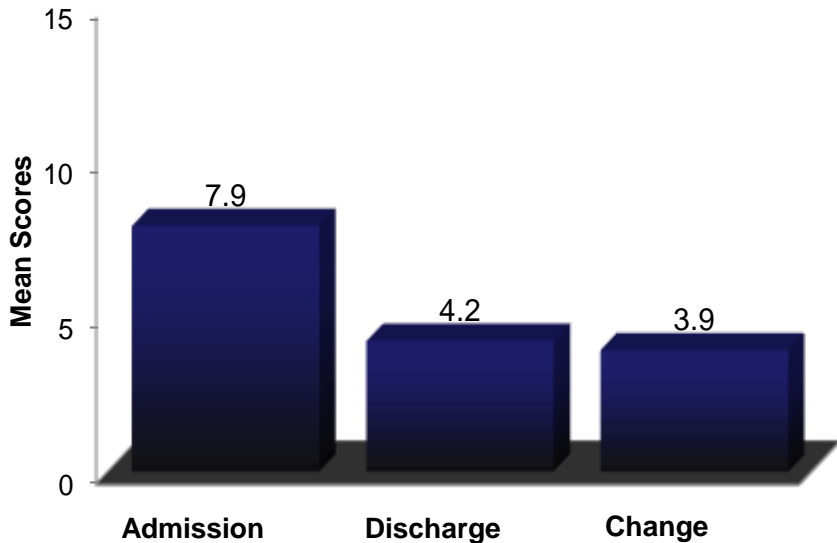
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**Geriatric depression can be difficult to recognize, but should not be considered a normal part of aging<sup>1</sup>. Depression later in life is associated with changes in emotional processing<sup>2</sup>, suicidality, cardiovascular diseases, and morbidity from heart diseases<sup>3</sup>. These findings highlight the importance of recognizing and treating depression in the geriatric population.**

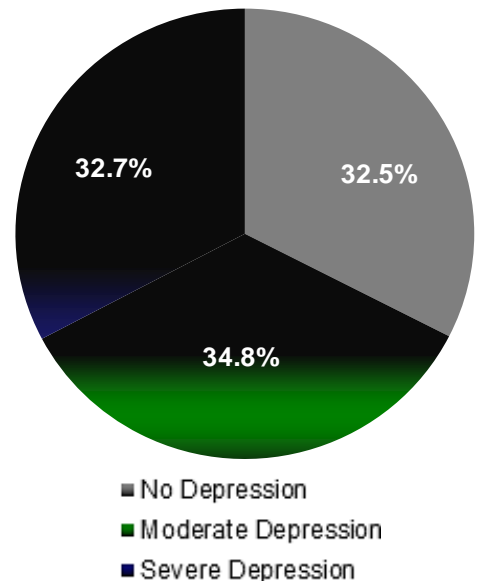


Research has shown that geriatric populations are undertreated for depression, often due to patient characteristics (e.g. decreased cognitive score)<sup>4</sup>. While only 20% of the geriatric population are identified as having a primary diagnosis of Depression, over 60% of geriatric patients report moderate to severe depressive symptoms at admission (N=1635). When provided with treatment, our patients demonstrated a decrease in the severity of reported depressive symptoms.

**Geriatric Depression Scale Scores**



**Severity of Depression at Admission**



Geriatric Depression Scale (GDSP) Admission/Discharge scores are measured on a scale from 0 to 15, where a higher score indicates a higher level of depression. Change in GDSP is measured on a scale from -15 to +15, where a higher score indicates greater improvement in depression.

<sup>1</sup>NIMH (1998). Older adults and depression. Retrieved from *National Institute of Mental Health Website*.

<sup>2</sup>Mah, L., & Pollock, B. G., (2010). Emotional processing deficits in late-life depression. *The American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*, 18(7), 652-656.

<sup>3</sup>Heok, K. E., Ho, R. (2008). The many faces of geriatric depression. *Current Opinion in Psychiatry*, 21(6), 540-545.

<sup>4</sup>Barry, L.C., Abou, J.J., Simen, A.A., & Gill, T.M. (2011). Under-treatment of depression in older persons. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 136(3), 789-796.