Depression is one of the most important causes of disability in the world, causes considerable suffering, and problems associated with depression are extremely costly to society. Depression is one of the most common and debilitating illnesses of older people that is frequently overlooked. The most recent epidemiological study in Mexico estimated the lifetime prevalence of major depressive episodes among people 18 to 54 years old to be 7.8%, only second to alcohol dependence (8.2%). A previous study found that older adults tend to have higher levels of depression than younger adults. There are important gaps of information about depression among the elderly. Along with refined measurement approaches, further research is needed on risk and protective factors for depression as these factors might highlight the areas that need to be targeted. Addressing depression among the elderly can significantly contribute in reduced health care costs, lowered disability, morbidity and mortality. This could yield important savings, freeing resources that might become available for the attention of important health care needs.

Palabras clave

depression; aging; primary health care; hypertension;

diabetes mellitus; Mexico