Short summary of completed research

The prognosis of major and minor depression in older medical inpatients

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This prospective observational cohort study compared the 12 month outcomes of 3 groups of medical inpatients aged 65 or over: major depression, minor depression, and no depressive disorder. Primary family caregivers were also invited to participate and interviewed at baseline, 6 and 12 months. The study was conducted at two university-affiliated hospitals in Montreal. Outcomes measurement was blind to the diagnostic group and study group. Clinical research data were linked to provincial administrative databases. The wide-ranging results of this study indicate that the prognosis of both major and minor depression in older medical inpatients is poor and worse than previously thought. The negative effects of a depression diagnosis during medical hospitalization on patient health status persist for at least 12 months. Family caregivers of depressed patients experience poorer mental health for at least 6 months. Depression is frequently not recognized by hospital and community non-psychiatrist physicians. These findings support the need to evaluate improved methods of detection and management of depression in this population, both during and after hospital admission.