

Abstract:

Objective: Post-stroke depression (PSD) was a serious and often under-recognized condition. Reports on the characteristics, association and outcomes of PSD were highly variable and conflicting. There were very few researches on Chinese PSD in past. The purposes of this study were to examine the characteristics of PSD and the validity of major and minor subtypes of PSD. We will also assess the outcome of Chinese PSD 12 months after the initial onset.

Methods: This was a retrospective study. The author examined the characteristic of 90 PSD patients. All of them were ethnic Chinese. They were referred consecutively to a psychiatric clinic in the year 1998/1999 and within 4 month after stroke. All of them suffered from depression and fulfilled the DSM-IV criterion of Major Depressive episode, Dysthymic Disorder or Adjustment disorder with depressed mood. 72 of them were available for outcome assessment. They were assessed by a battery of instruments that included: Cantonese version of the Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE), Chinese Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS-15), Hamilton Depression Rating Scale (HAM-D) and Barthel Function Index (BI).

Results: there were 52(57.8%) female and 38(42.2%) male in our group. The mean age was 75.36 years. Female PSD patients were significant older than the male by 5.72 years (95%CI=1.72 to 9.72). Their education level was usually low (nil=55.6%, primary=34.4%). A high proportion of them (35.6%) came from old age home (OAH). However, the severity of depression at onset of PSD was significantly higher in

patients living at home with before onset of stroke. The most predominant brain lesion found in PSD patients were that occurred in the left side (33.3%), of infarction type (55.6%) and in the cerebral cortex (50%). There was no significant difference between Major and Minor depression subtypes of PSD at onset with respect to most demographic and clinical characteristic. Suicide history was more often found in 'major depression' type. Cognitive impairment was common in PSD patients (mean MMSE score = 17.57) and probably due to pseudo-dementia. The mean GDS-S and HAM-D of our group were 8.57 and 24.31 after an average of 2.117 years. 11.1% of our group had history of suicide attempt. The persistence of depressed mood in PSD patients after 2 year was not related to their functional level or other demographic factors. The average BI score was 43.11. PSD patients with high functioning level were more often younger, living at home and cognitively better. The efficacy of different types of antidepressants was similar and unsatisfactory.

Conclusion: PSD in Chinese was a serious condition. The pattern we found was similar to the Caucasian. Persistent depression and cognitive impairment was common in Chinese PSD patients after 2 years. Functional level was related to cognitive impairment but independent of depression severity in PSD patients. The treatment results of PSD were unsatisfactory. Researches on Chinese PSD were few and this serious condition deserved more attention in future.