

STRESS FACTORS AND STRUCTURE OF MENTAL DISORDERS IN SJÖGREN'S SYNDROME

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Introduction: The primary Sjögren's Syndrome (SS) - a chronic, systemic autoimmune disease, characterized by lymphocytic infiltration of endocrine glands, functional impairment of the salivary and lachrymal glands, which has some common pathogenic links with stress-related mental disorders (MD).

Objectives: To evaluate the occurrence rate/severity of MD and the influence of stress factors in SS patients.

Methods: 50 inpatient women (mean age 46 ± 13.16 yrs) suffering SS were enrolled in the study. MD were diagnosed in accordance with ICD-10 criteria. The severity of depression, anxiety and stress load were measured with MADRS, HAM-A and PSS.

Results: MD were diagnosed in 42 (84%) of SS patients: depressive episode (mild/moderate; single/recurrent, $n=9; 18\%$); dysthymia ($n=9; 18\%$); generalized anxiety disorder ($n=7; 14\%$); adjustment disorder ($n=8; 16\%$); schizotypal disorder ($n=9; 18\%$). Mean severity levels of anxiety, depression and stress were 16.5 ± 6.5 ; 17.2 ± 7.9 and 16.9 ± 6.0 accordingly. The acute stress factors and reactions were preceded the SS symptoms in most cases ($n= 27, 54\%$). MD had the significant precipitating chronic stress factors in 36 (72%) patients. The adverse experience in childhood (parental deprivation mostly) had 32 (64%) of SS patients (recurrent events - 48%).

Conclusion: The study revealed high occurrence rate of MD, precipitating stress factors and childhood adverse experience in SS patients. The results support the stress-diathesis model of mental disorders in patients suffering rheumatic disease.