

METABOLIC SYNDROME AND SUICIDALITY IN OLDER ADULTS: A NARRATIVE REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.

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Introduction: Among older adults (65+ years), suicidal behaviour is a major public health issue. Metabolic syndrome (MetS), a cluster of five cardiovascular risk factors, whose prevalence is increasing worldwide in older people, is reportedly associated with mental disorders that are known to increase the risk of suicide. However, it is unclear if MetS itself and/or its components could increase the suicidal risk in older adults. Aim of this study is to review the literature which has addressed the association between MetS and/or its components and suicidal risk in older adults (65+ years).

Methods: PubMed electronic database was searched with the following key words: “metabolic syndrome AND suic* risk OR suic* ideat* OR suic* OR suic* att*”. Observational studies regarding people aged 65+ years, written in English, were included. Studies that did not directly match the review question, meta-analyses, reviews and single case reports were excluded.

Results: The search provided 201 results. After titles and abstracts selection, 21 studies were selected for full-text evaluation, and 3 papers were finally included in the review.

- Obesity was positively associated with suicidal ideation, especially in women.
 - Impaired glucose tolerance was found to be associated with suicidal behaviour in the elderly.
- Because of the cross-sectional nature of the studies, no causal associations could be made.

Conclusions: Studies on this topic are few, suggesting that further research is needed in this area. If an association between MetS and/or its single components will be found, this could be taken into consideration in the assessment of suicidality in MetS older patients.

References:

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