

## Comorbid Diabetes and Depression among Older Adults – Prevalence, Correlates, Disability and Healthcare Utilisation

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### Abstract

**Introduction:** The objectives of this current study were to: 1) examine the prevalence and correlates of diabetes mellitus (DM) among older adults (aged 60 years and above) in a multi-ethnic population; 2) examine the prevalence and correlates of comorbid DM and depression among them; and 3) assess the effect of comorbid depression on disability, cognition and healthcare utilisation. **Materials and Methods:** Data for the current study came from the Well-being of the Singapore Elderly (WiSE) study; a single phase, cross-sectional survey conducted among Singapore residents aged 60 years and above. A total of 2565 respondents completed the survey; depression was assessed using the Automated Geriatric Examination for Computer Assisted Taxonomy (AGECAT) while a diagnosis of DM was considered if respondents stated that a doctor had diagnosed them with DM. **Results:** DM was reported by 25.5% of the population. The prevalence of depression was significantly higher in those diagnosed with DM than those without DM (6% vs 3%). After adjusting for sociodemographic correlates, smoking and other chronic conditions, DM remained significantly associated with depression and subsyndromal depression. However, after including measures of functioning and cognitive impairment as covariates, DM was not significantly related to depression and subsyndromal depression. Those with comorbid DM and depression were more likely to be of Indian and Malay ethnicity, aged 75 to 84 years (versus 60 to 74 years) and widowed. **Conclusion:** Given the significant association of certain sociodemographic groups with comorbid depression among those with DM, targeted interventions for prevention and early diagnosis in these groups should be considered.

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**Key words:** Direct medical care costs, Singapore, Well-being of the Singapore elderly

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