

The experience and management of depression in the elderly in Greece

Perdikari E and Paraskevopoulou S.

Hellenic Open University, Greece

Abstract

Depression is a painful reality for a large percentage of elderly in Greece, especially in recent years after the financial crisis. Its onset seems to be related to physical illnesses, social isolation and stressful events, while an important factor in dealing with depression is the way in which the elderly experience and manage it. The purpose of this study is to investigate the experience of depression in older people with emphasis on how to manage it by themselves. Qualitative methodology was used with semi-structured interviews with elderly people and the method of thematic analysis was used for data analysis. The main issues that emerged from the analysis of the interviews are: “change for the worse” (negative emotions, development of psychosomatic symptoms, isolation), “how I perceive depression” (fear of stigmatization, what led me to depression, treatments), “how depression has affected my life” (my daily life is changed, my life is general is changed, my social relationships have changed), “depression management” (passive attitude towards depression, active attitude towards depression, non-accepting depression). The investigation of this issue is particularly important because the elderly in Greece constitute a very productive portion of the population and contribute greatly to society as a whole and the family bond. The usefulness of this research lies in the production of new knowledge for the depression of the elderly and the potential utilizations of its results in order to design therapeutic interventions, adapted to the specialized needs of the elderly in Greek society.

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Biography:

Erietta Perdikari is a psychologist-psychotherapist at the Psychiatric Department of Skilitsio General Hospital in Chios, graduate of Hellenic Open University and specialized in geropsychology.

Stavroula Paraskevopoulou is a clinical psychologist-psychotherapist, postdoctoral researcher at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens and Consultant Professor at Hellenic Open University.