

S.W. CHENG, K.H. HUNG, H.M. HUA, Z.C. LIN, S.Y. CHENG, Y.J. CHUANG. **Content analysis on research on depression in older people in Taiwan.** *Gerontechnology* 2012;11(2):245; doi:10.4017/gt.2012.11.02.561.00

Purpose The number patients with depression using antidepressants in Taiwan approached 91 000 in 2010. These numbers have grown by at least 2 000 per year over the past four years¹. The older adults in the population in Taiwan have a high risk of depression², ranging from 20.1% to 33.4% in 2011, representing almost 87,000 older adults, according to studies carried out in Taiwan³⁻⁴. However, assessing depression in older adults is difficult⁶⁻⁷. This study aimed to analyze the content and trends of past research on assessment methods for depression in Taiwan and to identify potential problems and recommendations.

Method The method employed in this study was content analysis. Our data consisted of 90 journal articles taken from PerioPath Index to Taiwan Periodical Literature System; the key words were depression and (assessment) scale. The articles were analyzed on the aspects of research types, topics, variables, and scales. The three raters in this study attained an inter-rater reliability of 0.923 on average, while the intra-rater reliability had an average of 0.887; $\alpha > 0.8$. For content analysis these are sufficiently high values⁸.

Results & Discussion We found that research backgrounds could be categorized into four main groups: medicine, 17 papers; public health nursing, 42 papers; education & psychology, 21 papers; and 10 other papers. Journals currently studying depression among Taiwan's elderly population publish mostly comprehensive review papers and few original research papers. There were in total ten original research papers, 8 papers in public health nursing and two in medicine. Research methods used were assessment and quasi-experimental intervention designs. As for the scales, the geriatric depression scale (GDS) was used frequently. Identification of older adults suffering from depression by an assessment scale is, however, problematic. This is partly due to a high illiteracy rate among older people. Also, depression inventories for detecting clinical depression among different groups in Taiwan have not yet been standardized. For the quasi-experimental designs it was generally found that interventions focusing on mood change were effective.

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