

# The Correlation between Depression Symptoms and Length of Disease in Scleroderma Patients

## Hypothesis

Length of disease is likely to affect depression among scleroderma patients.

## Research Objectives

The overall purpose of this study is to see if there is an association between length of disease and depression in scleroderma patients.

## Methods

### Subjects:

- 186 scleroderma patients subscribed to the weekly e-letter
- Out of 186
  - 13 were men
  - 173 were women.
- From the United States, Australia, Great Britain, and Canada.
- All patients had scleroderma.

### Experimental Procedure:

- Survey Used: The Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D)
- A general demographics survey in order to create a criteria as to who take the survey and who cannot.

Subjects received the survey through e-letter from the Scleroderma

Subjects will be scleroderma patients from around the country who are members of the Scleroderma Foundation and receive the foundation's weekly e-letter. The 186 patients currently receive the weekly e-letter. Subjects included males and females as well as different ages and racial backgrounds.

## Instrument

The Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D) is a 20 item self-administered scale used to measure symptoms in consenting adults.

- Survey measures include:
- sleep disturbance
  - loss of appetite
  - Mood
  - feelings of worthlessness and psychomotor retardation
  - diminished ability to think or concentrate
- Have found that the CES-D has good reliability, repeatability, reliability (Radloff, 1977; Corbridge, 1987; Pottenger, Prusoff, 1987).

## Correlations

Total CES-D

## Discussion

positive correlation (0.273) between age and years of illness

significant at the 0.01 level.

as people get older they have more years of illness.

(-.17) between Total CES-D and age.

As patients get older, they have lower levels of depression.

When the correlations were broken down by gender, the correlation between total CES-D scores, age, and years of illness, showed no significant relationships for males (-.14, .54, .3).

For females there was a significant and negative correlation between Total CES-D scores and age ( $r = -.160, p = .05$ )

implying that as women got older they were less depressed

significant positive correlation between age and years of illness ( $r = 0.27, p < .01$ ).

significant correlation between Total CES-D and years of illness ( $r = -.091$ ).

