

Psychotropic medications use, prevalence of psychiatric disorders and suicide risk among women seeking assisted reproductive technology (ART) therapy

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Introduction: Use of medications in women seeking pregnancy is of extreme importance in the scenery of infertility and teratogens.

As it's been described in the literature, **infertility treatment is highly associated with depression and anxiety**, and so we may expect significant **use of psychotropic drugs in this population**.

Although this theme is recurrent in the literature, the use of psychotropic drugs and the prevalence of psychiatric disorders among women seeking ART therapy assessed by **proper psychiatric diagnostic tools remains uncertain**.

Objectives: This study aims to describe the **trends in psychotropic medications use** and the **prevalence of psychiatric disorders according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) diagnostic criteria**, as well as evaluate **suicide risk in patients seeking assisted reproductive technology (ART)**. It's worth pointing out that these patients not necessarily had an infertility problem, as there were cases of homosexual relationships and single women starting treatment.

Methods: We performed a **prospective cross-sectional study**, from november 2016 to november 2017, at an ART center in southern Brazil, **including patients seeking to initiate assisted reproduction** that agreed to participate.

Patients were subjected to a structured interview, the **Mini International Neuropsychiatric Interview (MINI)**, and **previous psychiatric diagnosis and medication use were assessed by self-report**. **Suicide risk was assessed by the MINI**. Data were analyzed using SPSS 24.

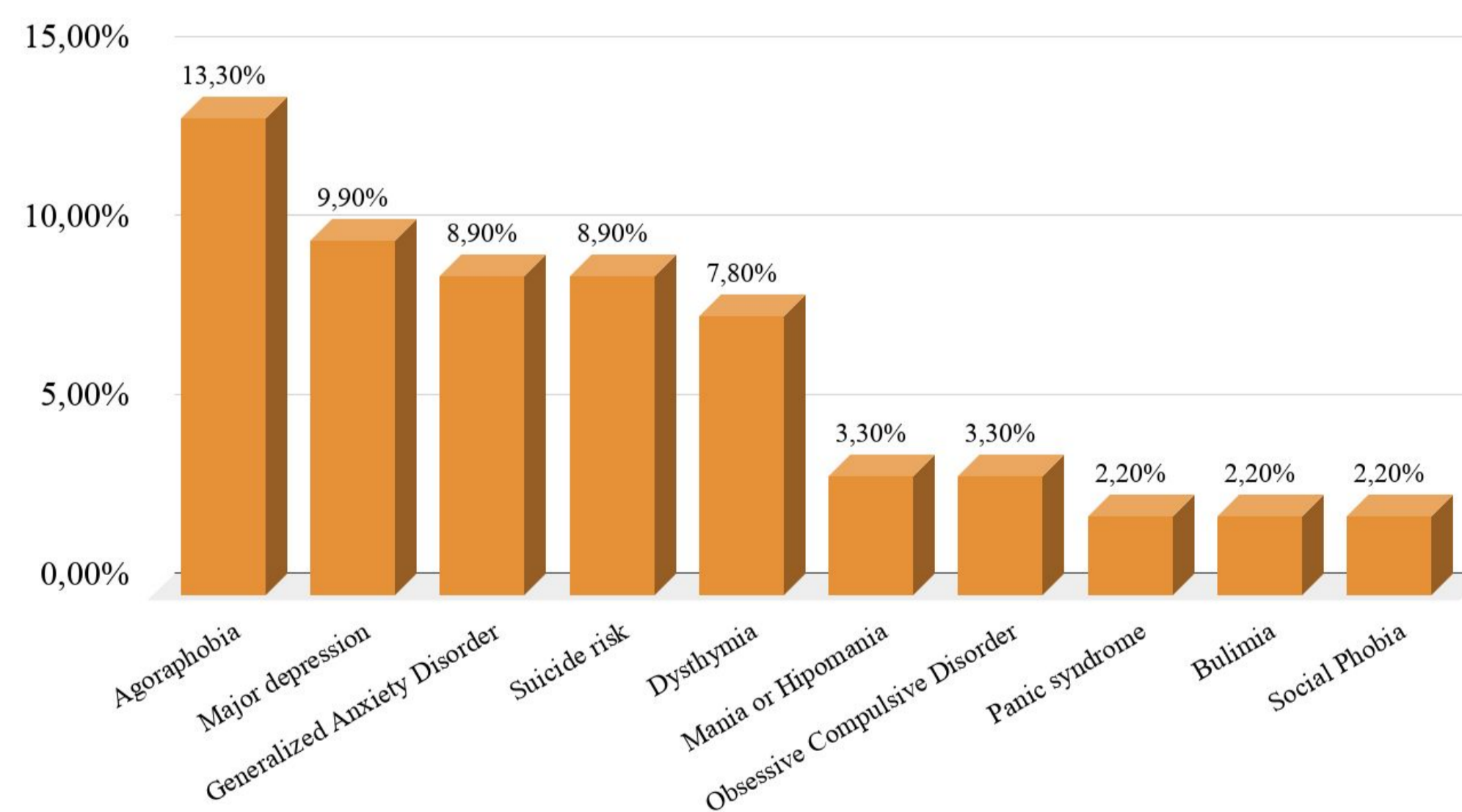
Results: We included **90 patients**, and a total of **13.3% women** were on **current use of psychiatric medication**, 44% taking selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) and 31% taking **benzodiazepines**.

40% of the women interviewed had one or more current psychiatric disorders according to MINI (chart 1). Mood disorders were detected in 21% of the patients [major depression (10%), dysthymia (7,7%), bipolar disorder (3.3%)]. The most common diagnosis was agoraphobia (13.3%).

Anxiety-related disorders were also highly prevalent, reaching 30% of the patients. Women with psychiatric disorders were more likely to have reported psychiatric history and to be on psychiatric medication ($P < 0.005$).

A suicide risk of 8,9% among all patients interviewed was also detected.

CHART 1: Diagnoses prevalences (%) according to MINI.



Conclusions: We have demonstrated a **high prevalence of previous and current psychotropic medication use** and surprisingly **high suicide risk**. The use of psychotropics can have both risks and benefits that need to be balanced when seeking pregnancy. **We aim to draw attention to the counseling of women regarding the use of psychotropics during the preconception phase and in particular during potentially early pregnancy.**