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Validity of routine clinical diagnoses in acute psychiatric inpatients

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Abstract

Aim: To examine the validity of diagnoses obtained by clinicians during routine clinical examination on acute psychiatric inpatient wards. Methods: N=100 inpatients with a broad spectrum of major mental disorders were randomly selected in a mental hospital's department of general psychiatry. Patients were diagnosed by independent assessors within M=5 (Range: 1-18) days of admission using the SCID I in order to examine the validity of the diagnoses given by the clinical staff based on routine assessments. Results: The commonly used clinical examination technique had good overall agreement with the SCID I assessments regarding primary diagnoses at the level of main categories (F2, F30-31, F32-F33, F4; $\kappa=0.65$). However, agreement between routine clinical diagnoses and the SCID I diagnoses tended to be low for some specific mental disorders (e.g., depressive disorders) and for secondary diagnoses. Conclusions: The validity of routine clinical diagnoses established in acute inpatient settings is limited and should be improved.

Keywords

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