

INTRODUCTION

- Depression can cause various cognitive and mental and physical symptoms, including a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest, and can lead to a decline in daily function.

The lifelong prevalence rate of major depressive disorders in Korea is as high as at 7.7%, and in the recent COVID-19 National Mental Health Survey, the number of depression risk groups increased to 16.9%, more than five times in 2019 (3.2%). In addition, the utilization rate of healthcare services for depressive disorders was only 28.2% last year, and mental health problems such as suicide continuously arise due to stigma and lack of early intervention.

For example, Korea had the highest suicide rate (24.6 per 100,000) among OECD member countries in 2019, which was 2.2 times higher than the OECD average.

Accordingly, Health Insurance Review & Assessment Service (HIRA) has conducted a quality assessment for the outpatient depression treatment since 2021 in response to the social policy needs.

METHOD

- The target institutions are all levels of care including (tertiary hospitals, general hospitals, hospitals, long-term care hospitals, psychiatric hospitals, and clinics), and the health insurance claims data from the HIRA from January to June 2021 was analyzed.
- The subjects were new patients with depression aged 18 or older with no previous history of care for depression within 6 months.
- Indicators to measure quality of care are composed of the rate of revisits, conducting initial assessment of depressive symptoms, and continued prescribing of antidepressant.

CONCLUSIONS

- HIRA sent back the results of the quality assessment for the outpatient depression treatment to each healthcare institution to encourage voluntary and continuous quality improvement and disclosed the results to public to provide information for the right to choose.
- Following that, HIRA plans to supplement the current program by encouraging continuous and periodic visits of patients to healthcare institutions in order to allow accurate diagnosis initial treatment for depression and improving the assessment results while supporting quality improvement activities in healthcare institutions.

RESULTS

The results of the first assessment for the outpatient depression treatment were calculated for 483,078 patients in 4,224 healthcare institution.

- The rate of revisit within 3 weeks of the first visit was 39.4%, while the rate of visit more than 3 times within 8 weeks was 21.5%.
- The rate of conducting initial assessment of depressive symptoms was 31.4%, while the rate of re-assessment of depressive symptoms was 22.6%.
- The rate of continued prescribing for 84 days or more of antidepressants, which is used for monitoring purposes is 25.8%, and the rate of continued prescribing for 180 days or more of antidepressants is 16.4%.
- Overall, the results evaluation index showed low results, and the deviation by institution ($\pm 18.1 \sim 32.2$) was large.

