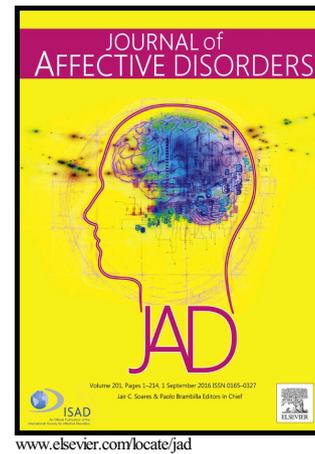


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The Prevalence, Reporting, and Treatment of Anxiety among Older Adults in Nursing Homes and Other Residential Aged Care Facilities

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## The Prevalence, Reporting, and Treatment of Anxiety among Older Adults in Nursing Homes and Other Residential Aged Care Facilities

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### ABSTRACT

#### *Background:*

Little is known about anxiety in aged care populations, despite its increase in this frail population. This study investigated the prevalence, recording, and treatment rate of anxiety disorders among aged care residents.

#### *Methods:*

A cross-sectional, observational design was used to assess 180 elderly residents from 12 aged care facilities in Melbourne, Australia. Participants were assessed for threshold and subthreshold anxiety disorders and comorbid depression using the MINI for DSM-5. Medical files were also reviewed to determine whether there was any indication that anxiety had previously been detected, and what treatment those with a threshold/subthreshold diagnosis were receiving.

#### *Results:*

Overall prevalence of threshold and subthreshold anxiety disorders was 19.4% and 11.7%, respectively. Generalized anxiety disorder was the most common threshold disorder and agoraphobia was the most prevalent subthreshold anxiety disorder. While less than half of those with a threshold or subthreshold anxiety disorder had an indication of anxiety in their file, the majority received psychotropic medication. Cognitive impairment was not significantly associated with the prevalence or treatment of anxiety.

#### *Conclusions:*

The prevalence of threshold and subthreshold anxiety in aged care settings is high, but remains under-reported by staff and GPs. Facility staff and GPs should ensure they are aware of how anxiety presents in elderly residents and routinely screen for this common mental health issue. This cohort had poor access to psychological treatments for their condition.

**Key words:** Anxiety, prevalence, elderly, nursing home, aged care, treatment

### INTRODUCTION

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