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INCREASED PREVALENCE OF DEPRESSION IN COHORTS OF ELDERLY. A
LONGITUDINAL EPIDEMIOLOGICAL STUDY: THE HUNT-STUDY

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Introduction: As the elderly population is growing world-wide, depression in the elderly is becoming an increasing health problem. Studies of depression shows varying results in development patterns with age (1, 2).

Aims: To study changes in prevalence and new cases of depression in elderly age cohorts.

Methods: The Nord-Trøndelag Health Survey (HUNT) is a general health survey conducted in Nord-Trøndelag County with a follow-up after 11 years. The participants aged 45 years or above at baseline were included. Depression was covered by the depression sub-scale of the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS-D; 3). Prevalence and incidence of depression was estimated in the different age cohorts.

Results: 16517 participants were included and divided in age cohorts based on their age at baseline. A significant increase in depression was found in all age cohorts from 76 years at follow-up. The oldest age cohort (86-90 years at follow-up) had the greatest increase with a change from 11.3 % to 20.9 %. New cases of depression is increasing with age, with over 10 % new cases in all age cohorts aged 81 years and above at follow-up.

Conclusions: We found increased prevalence of depression and a large number of new cases of depression in the oldest age cohorts.