The mean±SD age of the 524 elderly subjects (173 men; 351 women) was 76.6±5.1 years. They had 4.6±1.9 years of education and were affected by 3.5±2.2 chronic conditions; 134 (24.4%) lived alone, and 149 (27.1%) had 1 or more BADL functions lost. The MMSE and GDS mean scores were 25.8±3.6 and 3.7±3.0, respectively. Vital status was assessed for each subject 60 months from the baseline analysis. One hundred and twenty-nine persons (24.6%) died during the follow-up period.

The Table gives the crude and adjusted associations of GDS score with 60-month mortality, indicating a dose-dependent association between depressive symptoms and mortality even when mental impairment (relative risk, 1.6; 95% confidence interval, 1.1-2.5) and disability (relative risk, 1.5; 95% confidence interval, 1.2-7.8) were taken into account. It should be noted that both conditions were independently related to mortality.

The data confirm the association reported by Schulz et al\(^1\) between depression and mortality in older subjects. Furthermore, we demonstrated that the relationship is clinically relevant, even when mental and functional status are taken into consideration.

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