

## **Social Support and Depressive Symptoms in Participants of a University of the Third Age: Evidences From a Cross-Sectional Study in Brazil**

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**Abstract :** Depressive symptoms are recurrent in older adults and affect the quality of life and well-being of individuals. One of the strategies to reduce depression is social support, but studies are still needed to determine which types of social support are most effective in moderating this effect in certain populations. The objective was to identify the relationship between social support and depressive symptoms in participants of a University of the Third Age. This is a cross-sectional study. Participants were 82 individuals ( $\geq 50$  years) who responded to the Geriatric Depression Scale - GDS and the Medical Outcomes Study - MOS. Data collection was carried out from November 2020 to May 2021. The Chi-Square and Mann Whitney tests were used, at a significance level of 5% for data analysis. Among the participants, 83.4% were female, 57.3% were age between 60 to 69 years, 83.1% studied 12 year or more and 48.1% receive from 4 to 10 minimum wages. The prevalence of depressive symptoms was 12.2%. The type of support with the highest median score was affective (100 points) and the lowest, or emotional (87.5 points). The results showed that participants without depressive symptoms had higher median scores for informational support when compared to those with depressive symptoms ( $p=0.029$ ). The other types of social support were not statistically significant. The findings suggested that informational support is related to depressive symptoms in older adults. Promote informational support and educational actions in Universities of the Third Age may be an important strategy for preventing depressive symptoms and improve the quality of life of this population.

**Keywords :** aged, depressive symptoms, social support, university of the third age

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