

Abstract:

BACKGROUND: Depression and heart disease are replacing the traditional enemies of Africa such as infectious diseases and malnutrition as the increasing causes of disability and premature death. Little is known about the co-morbidity of heart disease and depression in Africa.

OBJECTIVE: To describe the prevalence of depression in Black Africans with and without Coronary Artery Disease as documented on coronary angiography at the Nairobi Hospital.

DESIGN: Prospective comparative study. **SETTING:** A private not for Profit 210 bed hospital, catering for fee paying middle class clientele.

RESULTS: Of the eighteen patients with an abnormal angiogram, the highest score on the BDI was 9 while the average was 2.11. Of the seven with normal angiograms, the highest BDI was 5, and the average was 1.71. There was no statistical significance in these differences.

CONCLUSION: While African scientists must continue to concentrate on the urgent medical priorities of today (AIDS, malaria, measles, etc), cognisance has to be made of the other emerging epidemic, of the co-morbidity of coronary artery disease and depression. That no significant difference in depression score between the two groups was found could be due to a number of reasons including the small sample size achieved in this first study of its kind in Kenya.