

Functional Somatic Symptoms Prevalence in an Italian General Practice

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ITALY



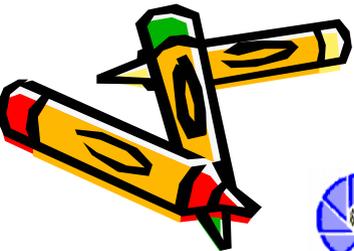
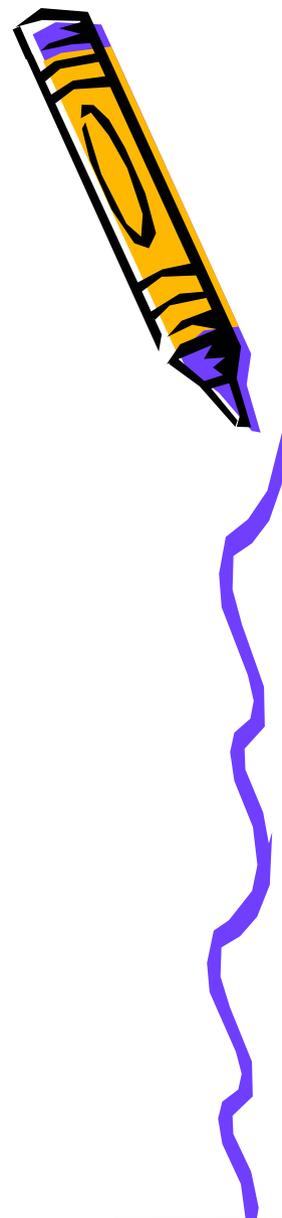
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OBJECTIVE

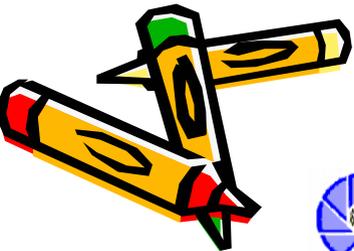
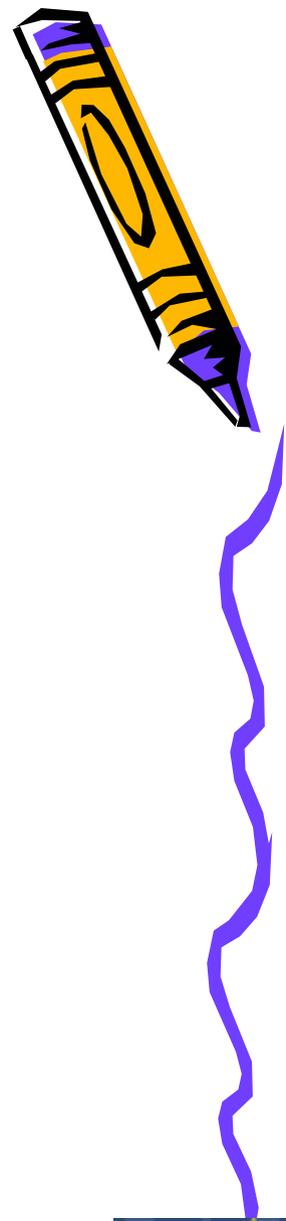
- to investigate the current prevalence of somatization in an Italian general practice, comparing it among Italians and South American immigrants.



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METHOD

- we enrolled 100 patients (mean age 37ys), divided into equal number of italians and immigrants from South America and between men and women, with no cognitive problems, in good general conditions and aged 18 or over, who went for a visit to a Group General Practice in Genoa -Cornigliano (lower socioeconomic suburban area) in 2008.
- A reliable and validated self-report questionnaire, the Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI -21) was given them.
- Patients scoring 14 or more on the BSI -21 were considered at risk for somatization.



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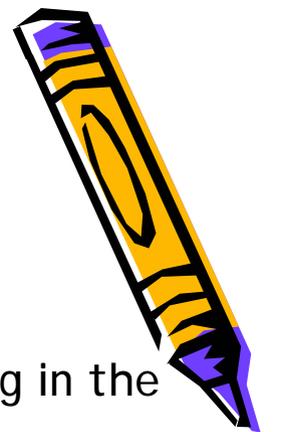
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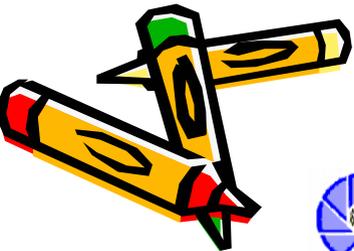
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Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI -21)



Tiredness
Lack of energy (weakness)
Dry mouth/throat
Neck and shoulders pain/tension
Headache
Heavy head
Sweating a lot
Aches/pains all over the body
Passing urine more frequently
Chest/heart pain
Pressure inside the head (as if it
is going to burst)

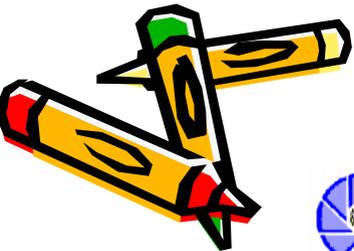
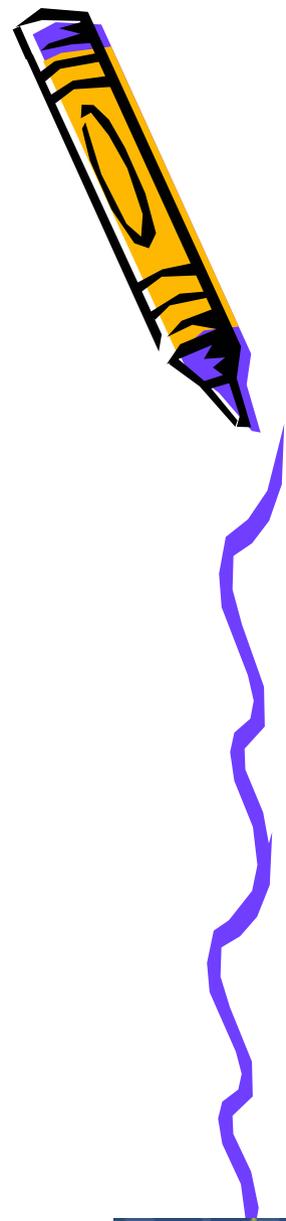
Fluttering/something moving in the
stomach
Palpitations
Excessive wind (gas) or belching
Head constriction
Feeling cold
Chest or heart pressure/tightness
Constipation
Trembling or shaking
Throat choking sensation
Weak/sinking heart



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RESULTS

- The overall prevalence of reported somatic sensations was 27%; 62.9% (17/27) of the somatizers were women;
- Italian somatizers were 11 (22%), including 7 women (63.6%);
- the prevalence rate of patients at risk for somatization among the immigrants group was 32%, the women were 10 (62.5%);
- the frequency hierarchy of endorsed items was similar in both groups.



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CONCLUSIONS

- South Americans patients tend to somatize more than italians;
- women from both groups demonstrated a higher prevalence of reported somatic sensations;
- the frequency hierarchy of endorsed items was similar in both groups.

