

## A Systematic Review on Depression, Depressive Disorder and Treatment Methods

Uz. Adli Psk. Hazar Topal<sup>1</sup>, Doç. Dr. Meryem Karaaziz

*Department of Psychology, Near East University*

**Abstract-** The aim of this study is to conduct a systematic literature review on depression, depressive disorder, what treatment methods are available for depression, which treatment methods are more useful and what are the most used treatment techniques.

The study was carried out by cross-sectional, systematic literature review and document scanning method, and the articles found by searching with keywords within 10 years between 2009-2019 were used in the scan. After the number of articles reached, the sample group was formed according to the inclusion criteria.

In the study; Regardless of the method in terms of inclusion criteria, the language of the study, having a different disease other than depression, age, gender, etc. All existing studies were included, considering the treatment of depression without discrimination of factors. In terms of exclusion criteria, studies that did not contain information about the treatment of depressive disorder and whose full text could not be accessed were not included in the study. Although the number of articles detected was 84, 20 studies were reached and evaluated as a result of the inclusion and exclusion criteria and the questions the study sought answers to.

The study has limitations in terms of the combination of many different topics on depression, the effectiveness of the exclusion criteria and the inability to access some electronic databases.

Within the scope of the findings of the study; 8 of the articles included in the study were reviews and 12 were research, 14 different treatment methods emerged regarding the treatment methods of depression, and the two most common treatment methods were Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and Positive Psychotherapy (PPT) (+pharmacotherapy). It is also observed that the combination of psychotherapy and pharmacotherapy is more effective in treating depression.

In conclusion, this systematic review shows that psychotherapy techniques can be effective in the treatment of depression even on their own, and that pharmacotherapy can be more effective when used concurrently with psychotherapy.

Apart from this, while emphasising the importance of psychotherapy in the treatment of depression, it can be said that in this context, in addition to university psychology education, it is also important for people to receive training in any branch of psychotherapy in order to perform more effective and technique-based treatment.

**Key word-** depression, depression treatment, depression treatment methods, systematic review

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Depression is generally described in the literature in terms of its meaning and content within the framework of its symptoms. These symptoms are generally described as: inability to enjoy normally enjoyable situations, changes in sleep, eating habits and weight, depressed mood, loss of energy.

A study defining depression as the presence of at least five symptoms, provided that there is a change in the previous level of functionality between a two-week period and the first of the following symptoms is present: depressed mood, decreased interest, weight loss or gain, change in sleep patterns, loss of energy, feelings of guilt, psychomotor agitation or retardation, defined the concept of psychotherapy as the general name of the techniques aiming to solve the emotional and behavioural problems of individuals, to improve and protect their mental health, as well as a psychiatric treatment method that aims to eliminate the behaviours that disrupt the harmony of the individual, to develop insight or to eliminate the symptom, based on normal and pathological development theories, based on interaction in a dynamic relationship with the verbal communication of the therapist and the client, aiming at the formation of change (Alpaslan & Erol, 2016).

There are many treatment methods for depression, both psychotherapeutic and medical. In this research, answers were sought especially to the following questions:

- What are the treatment methods of depression?
- Which treatment methods are more useful?
- Which treatment techniques are most used?

### A. *Materials and Methods*

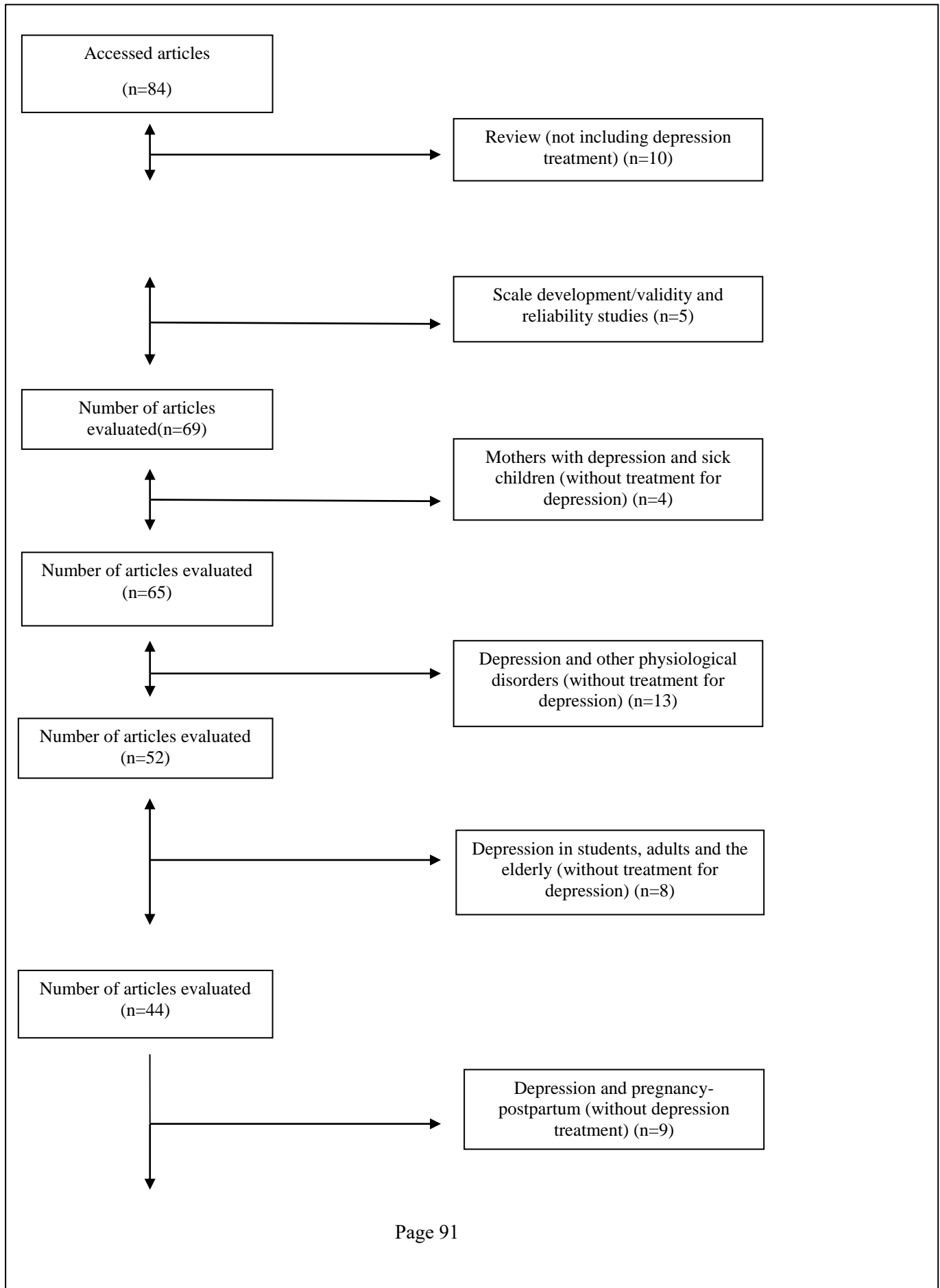
The research is a cross-sectional, systematic literature review. And document scanning method was used. In determining the studies to be included in the scope of the research, Scopus, DergiPark, TubitakUlakbim electronic databases were searched using the keywords "depression", "depressive disorder", "psychotherapy", "treatment", "treatment methods", "depression", "depressive disorder", "psychotherapy", "treatment", "treatment methods". In the search, articles published in the last 10 years between 2009-2019 were used. The number of articles reached was 84 and the sample group was formed by evaluating according to the inclusion criteria.

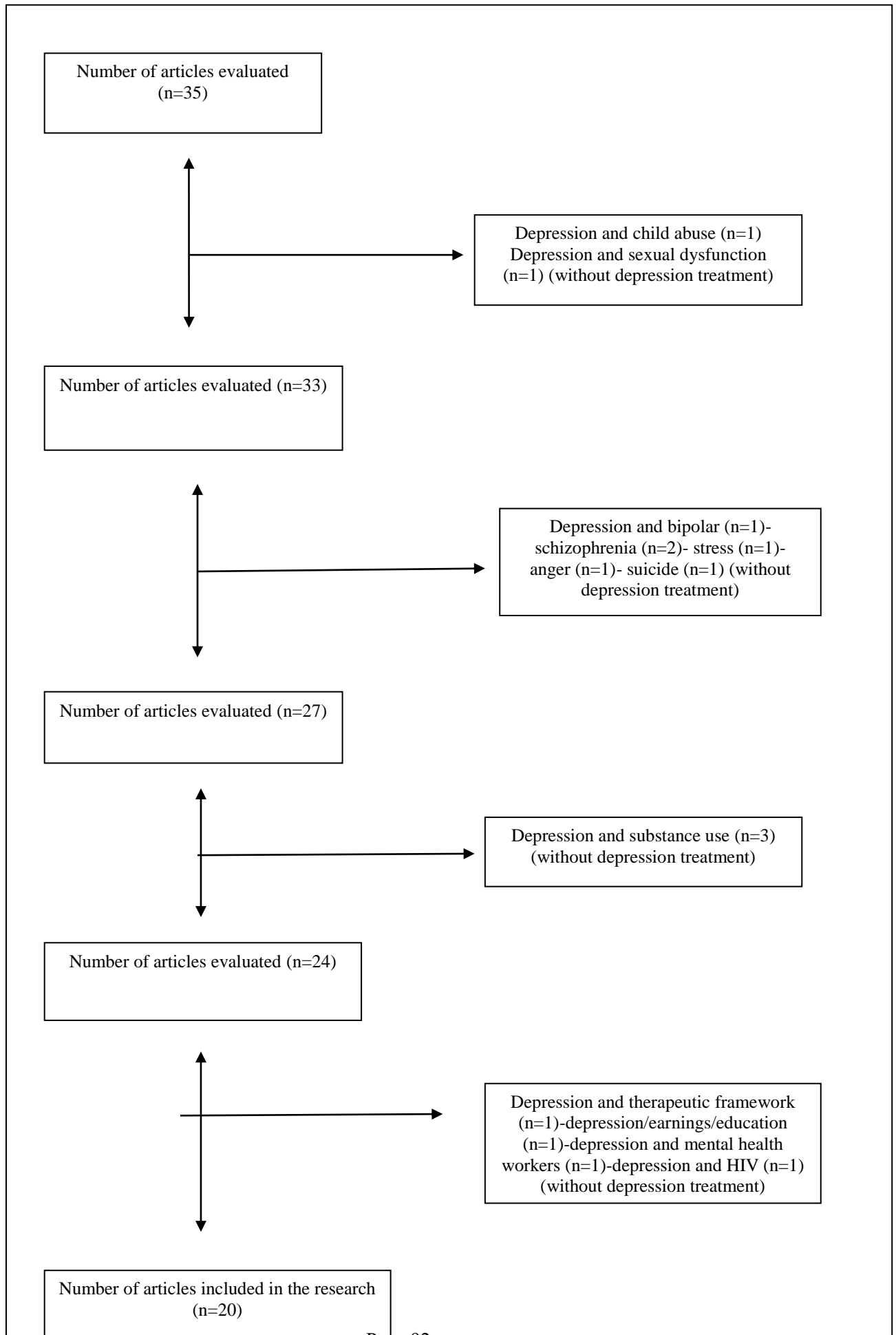
### B. *Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria*

In the inclusion criteria, Turkish and English articles, sample group and subject content, having any other disease other than depression, pregnancy, age, gender, considering the presence of treatment of depression in its content, studies conducted with all research methods without discrimination of method were included.

The exclusion criteria in the study were articles that did not contain information and findings related to the treatment of depression and whose full text could not be accessed were not included in the study.

As a result of the search, 20 studies on depression treatment published between 2009 and 2019 were found (Fig. 1).





### C. Data Analysis and Research Limitations

The scans were made in line with the use of keywords determined by the researcher. The articles that were found to meet the inclusion criteria in the study, which were made in the last ten years and included the treatment of depression in their content, were summarised and included. Considering the questions that the study sought to answer, 20 articles included in the scope of the research were summarised and evaluated within the scope of providing answers to the questions.

In terms of the limitations of the research, there are many articles in different fields with the subject of depression and many articles could not be included in the study in terms of grouping while working on exclusion criteria, as well as the possibility that some studies containing valid results for the research could not be reached due to the inability to access some electronic databases within the available possibilities.

### D. Findings

Twelve of the articles included in the scope of the research are research studies with a sample group and 8 of them are review studies. Some variables related to these articles are as stated in the table below (Table 1).

**Table 1. Characteristics of the studies used on depression and its treatment**

Variables	n
<b>Research</b>	12
<b>Review</b>	8
<b>Year of publication of the article</b>	
2009	1
2010	1
2012	2
2013	1
2014	2
2015	3
2016	3
2017	1
2018	2
2019	4
<b>Scales used in the articles</b>	
Beck Depression Inventory	8
IPPA Family and Peer Commitment Test	1
Beck Anxiety Inventory	2
Perceived Stress Inventory	1
MMPI	1
Loneliness Scale	1
Wiesbaden Positive Psychotherapy Family Inventory	1
Rosenberg Self-Perception Inventory	1
<b>Specified research method</b>	
Quasi-experimental	3
Experimental	3

Case	2
Clinical trial study	2
Cross-sectional	2

\*More than one scale was used in the studies.

The findings on which psychotherapy and treatment types are used in the treatment of depression, which is one of the main objectives of the research, are given in the table below (Table 2).

<b>Table 2. Depression treatment methods mentioned in the articles</b>	
<b>Treatment method</b>	<b>N</b>
Time-limited psychodynamic psychotherapy	1
Group therapy	1
Cognitive behavioural therapy+antidepressants+electroconvulsive therapy	1
Cognitive behavioural therapy + dialectical behaviour therapy	1
Antidepressants	1
Positive psychotherapy	2
Cognitive behavioural therapy + pharmacotherapy	1
Psychotherapy+pharmacotherapy	2
Spiritual-religious psychotherapy	1
Fluoxetine	1
Cognitive behavioural therapy	5
Solution orientated deep depression coping training	1
Interpersonal psychotherapy	1
Psychotherapy (psychodynamic psychotherapy, behavioural activation therapy, cognitive behavioural therapy, interpersonal therapy, problem solving therapy)	1

When the findings related to the treatment methods in the articles are examined, it is seen that there are 14 different results and the most preferred method among these treatment methods is Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) (n=5). Considering the findings of the article, the second most preferred treatment methods after CBT are Positive Psychotherapy (PP) (n=2) and psychotherapy+pharmacotherapy. In addition to this, both psychotherapy types and differentiation therapy were included in the other treatment modalities preferred and tried (Table 2).

#### *E. Argument*

In line with the results of the reviewed research articles, it is observed that the most widely used and most useful form of treatment is Cognitive Behavioural Therapy among psychotherapy techniques. As an example of this: in a study, short-term cognitive behavioural therapy (4 weeks) was found to be effective in reducing developing depressive symptoms (Wokie et al., 2019). In another study, cognitive behavioural therapy was found to have depression-reducing effects in hemodialysis patients with depression (Ahmadvad et al., 2012). In a group in which cognitive behavioural therapy was applied for onemonth, significant differences were found to reduce depression (Zamani et al., 2010). In a review, it was emphasised that cognitive behavioural therapy played an effective role in reducing depression in cancer patients (Soylu, 2015).

When the results of the articles in the literature review were examined, it was observed that the cognitive behavioural therapy technique had positive effects not only on certain sample groups, but also on every sample group with depression and depressive symptoms, regardless of gender-age, etc. variables. This shows us that this therapy method can be effective on every sample group in every age group. For example; in a study conducted on a group of 7 women who had been divorced for 2 years, Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) was applied to the women before and after the therapy. As a result of cognitive behavioural therapy applied to divorced women, significant decreases were found in post-therapy depression rates compared to pre-therapy rates (Öngider, 2013).

When the findings of the articles are examined, it is observed that the treatment modalities mostly include psychotherapy, group psychotherapy and psychotherapy techniques. Although these treatment techniques have rapid and positive results in improving depression, it should not be overlooked that they are common and preferred. In addition to this, some studies suggest that pharmacotherapies containing antidepressants are recommended for the treatment of depression, and in these studies, it is stated that antidepressants in combination with psychotherapy are much more useful and effective treatment methods in a short time. Thus, reduction of depressive symptoms and alleviation or elimination of depression level will be realised much faster. However, while using antidepressant treatment method, it has been observed as an important issue that should be taken into consideration that it may have side effects as well as its therapeutic effect. As an example of this issue, in a review, it was emphasised that antidepressants are significantly effective in preventing symptoms of depression, but some long-term side effects may affect the person in terms of increasing dullness (Gönül, 2012). In a review that found pharmacotherapy useful, it was pointed out that attention should be paid especially to side effects in the treatment of depression and that the best results can be obtained by applying pharmacotherapy and psychotherapy together (Trawka et al., 2019). In a review conducted by Wagner (2015) and involving elderly people with depression, it was stated that the treatment method with fluoxetine pills is supportive because health institutions and social support have little therapeutic effect on this disease.

While it is generally emphasised that psychotherapy and pharmacotherapy are therapeutic for depression when used together, there is a study that does not support this result in the literature review. In a study conducted with 30 female patients with depressive and manic symptoms; as a result of cognitive behavioural therapy and pharmacotherapy applied for 6

weeks, a decrease in manic symptoms was observed, while no significant difference was observed in people with depressive symptoms (Hashemabadi et al., 2009).

Throughout the review, it was observed that many psychotherapy techniques were effective in terms of ameliorating depression. This indicates that psychotherapy techniques are more successful than pharmacological treatments. As an example of articles showing that psychotherapy techniques are effective in terms of treating depression, positive and reducing depressive symptoms: In a study conducted with students, it was observed that short-term psychodynamic psychotherapy had a positive effect on depression (Tuncel, 2018). Demir and Ilgaz (2019) found that depression scores decreased significantly as a result of 2 months in individuals diagnosed with depression who received group therapy for 90 minutes once a week for 2 months, and according to this result, it can be said that group therapy has a curative effect on depression. In a study conducted with depressed mothers of children with disabilities; as a result of dialectical behavioural therapy and cognitive behavioural therapy, it was found that these forms of therapy were curative, efficient and reliable on depression (Zamani, 2015). In a study using positive psychotherapy (PP), another school of psychotherapy, it was found that PP had a depression-reducing effect on 30 female MS (multiple sclerosis) patients with depression (Khayatan et al., 2014). In a study conducted by Ghotbabadi and Alizadeh (2018) with 28 people in a nursing home, it was stated that spiritual-religious psychotherapy was effective in preventing depression. In another study conducted with 20 male civil servants aged 20-45; PP-based depression intervention was recommended (Eryılmaz, 2016).

The study titled "Psychotherapy in the Treatment of Depression" emphasised that since depression affects large masses of people and causes significant loss of ability and function, issues related to the treatment of depression are issues that should be addressed as a priority in terms of public health. In addition, it was emphasised that psychotherapy can be used alone or in combination with drug treatment and that psychotherapy gives at least as positive results as drug treatment when treating depression, that it is superior to drug treatment in some follow-up situations, and that less relapse and dropout rates are seen in treatment with psychotherapy. In addition, efficacy and effectiveness studies have shown that psychodynamic psychotherapies, behavioural activation therapy, cognitive behavioural therapy, interpersonal relations therapy and problem solving therapy are effective therapies in the treatment of depression, and as a result, psychotherapy is recommended as the first treatment option in the treatment of depression and is an applicable treatment in health institutions applied for mental problems (Eskin & Öztürk, 2017).

In the study conducted by Başıoğlu and Buldukoğlu (2015), it was stated that clinical guidelines recommend the combined use of pharmacological and psychosocial interventions in the treatment of depression, and that psychosocial interventions are defined as interventions that emphasise psychological and social factors instead of biological factors. In this study, as therapy techniques: Psychodynamic Therapy, Interpersonal Relationship Therapy (IRT), Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Family and Couple Therapy, Humanistic-Existential Therapy and Problem-Solving Therapy. As a result, it was stated that depression is the most common psychiatric disorder in the world and it should be handled especially by mental



health and psychiatric nurses in terms of health costs, loss of labour force, suicide risk and relapse. In addition, it was stated that there are courses to gain the necessary competencies to apply psychotherapy, but the long-term and costly courses cause the number of psychotherapists to be low and thus the number of clients receiving support from these psychosocial interventions is also low. Due to this situation, it was emphasised that mental health and psychiatric nurses should gain the necessary competencies in terms of therapy and educational interventions that are effective in the prevention and treatment of depression and evidence-based studies should be increased in this regard.

Objective: When the findings obtained in the research, which was prepared on the basis of Solution-Focused Short-Term Therapy, to test the effects of Solution-Focused Depression Coping Training on depressive symptoms, it was seen that this training was effective in reducing depressive symptoms in the sample group of students (Sarı and Günaydın, 2016).

In another study comparing the effects of CBT, Interpersonal Psychotherapy (IPT) and medical treatment in the treatment of depression; in addition to the fact that interpersonal psychotherapy seems to be an effective method in the treatment of depression, it was emphasised that IPT did not make a significant difference in terms of the level of improvement compared to other methods in studies that included CBT and medical methods that proved to be effective in treatment, and it was also stated that IPT was not superior to CBT and medical, but it was seen to be effective on depression treatment (Öztekin & Karaoğlu, 2019).

In addition to the fact that different psychotherapy schools are effective and used in the treatment of depression, it is observed that pharmacological treatment is a common treatment method in addition to psychotherapy in many studies.

## **2. CONCLUSION**

In the studies examined, it has been observed that the level of depression, the presence of other chronic-psychological-physiological disorders in addition to depression, age and gender factors, regardless of what they are, together with pharmacological treatment, as well as psychotherapy techniques are effective and common in treating depression without using pharmacological treatment methods.

In addition, another point that should be emphasised is that psychology undergraduates of universities should receive additional training in psychotherapy. In this way, it can be said and recommended that they can treat psychological disorders more effectively, adequately, in a short time and in a more technically richer way.

## References

- [1] Ahmadvad, A., Saie, R., Sepehrmanesh, Z. ve Ghanbari A. R. (2012). Effect of Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy on Anxiety and Depression Hemodialysis Patients in Kashan. *Majallah-i Danishgah-i Ulum-i Pizishki- Qum*, 6 (1), 35-39.
- [2] Demir V. ve Ilgaz H. H., (2019). Depresyon, Anksiyete ve Stres Belirti Düzeylerini Azaltmaya Yönelik Grup Terapisi. *Türkiye Bütüncül Psikoterapi Dergisi*, vol 2, (4), 1-16.
- [3] Eryılmaz, A., (2016). Depresyon Tanısı Alan ve Almayan Genç Yetişkin Erkeklerin Pozitif Psikoterap Yapıları Açısından Karşılaştırılması. *Akademik Bakış Dergisi*, 53.
- [4] Eskin, M. ve Öztürk, C. Ş., (2017). Depresyon Tedavisinde Psikoterapi. *Türkiye Klinikleri J FamMed-Special Topics*, 8 (1), 52-7.
- [5] Gönül, S. A. (2012). Depresyon tedavisinde yeni bakış açıları. *DergiPark-Journal Of MoodDisorders*, vol 2, (5).
- [6] Ghotbabadi, S. ve Alizadeh, K. (2018). TheEffectivenessofSpiritual-ReligionPsychotherapy on MentalDistress (Depression, Anxiety, andStress) IntheElderlyLivingInNursingHomes. *Health, SpirituallyandMedicalEthics*, 5 (1), 20-25.
- [7] Hashemabadi, B., Gharavi, M., Masoudi, S. ve Haghighi, A. (2009). TheEffect of Cognitive-BehavioralTherapy in combinationwithPharmacotherapyonManiaandDepressionSymptomsandAwareness of warmingsigns of realpse in patientswith Bipolar Disorder. *IranianJournal of Psychiatry*, 4 (2), 67-73.
- [8] Khayatan, T., Azkhosh, M., Bahmani, B., Azimian M., ve Dolatshahi B. (2014). GroupPositivePsychotherapyandDepressionof FemalesAffectedby Multiple Sclerosis. *IranianRehabilitationJournal*, 12 (4), 49-53.
- [9] Öngider, N., (2013). Bilişsel-Davranışçı Terapinin Boşanma Sonrasında Kadınların Depresyon, Anksiyete ve Yalnızlık Semptomlarında Etkinliği: Bir Pilot Çalışma. 2, 147-155 .
- [10] Öztekin, E. ve Karaoğlu, K. M., (2019). Depresyonun Kişilerarası Psikoterapisinin Klinik Alandaki Rolü: Bilişsel Davranışçı Terapiler ve Medikal Tedavilerle Karşılaştırma çalışmalarına İlişkin Bir Derleme. *Yaşam Becerileri Psikoloji Dergisi*, 3 (5), 111-118.
- [11] Ranjbar, F. Ashktorab, T. ve Dadgari, A. (2010). Effect of GroupCognitive-BehavioralTherapy on Depression. *Majallah-i Danishgah-i Ulum-i Pizishki- Qum*, 18 (3), 299-306.
- [12] Sarı, E. ve Günaydın, N., (2016). Çözüm odaklı depresyon ile başa çıkma eğitiminin depresyon belirtileri üzerindeki etkileri. *Anadolu Psikiyatri Dergisi*, 17 (5).
- [13] Soylu, C., (2015). Effectiveness of Cognitive-BehavioralTherapyTechniques on AnxietyandDepression in CancerPatients. *Bilişsel Davranışçı Psikoterapi Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 4 (1), 54-63.
- [14] Trawka, P., Paszkowska, A., Lamch, M., Wijata, A., Hejnosz, P., Graczykowska, K., Jablonska, J., Dorobiala, J., Lazarek, M., Denkwicz, M. ve Kornatowska, K. (2019). Pharmacotherapy of depression in palliativepatients. *Journal of Educaion, HelathandSport*. 9 (9), 27-37, doi 10.5281/zenodo.3372330.
- [15] Topbaş, E., Eroğlu, M., Zabun, S., Güneş., T. ve Çalışkan, M. (2014). Depresyon ve Parkinson Hastalığı olan Bir Hastada ElektrokonvulsifTedavei. *CukurovaMedicalJournal*, vol 39 (1), 185-188.
- [16] Tuncel T.D., (2018). Türkiye’de 18-25 Yaş Grubu Üniversite Öğrencileri Arasında Görülen Depresyonun; Benlik Saygısı, Aile Bağlılığı, Akademik Başarı ve Cinsiyet ile Olan İlişkisi ve Depresyonda Olan Bu Öğrencilerin Süresi Sınırlı Psikodinamik Psikoterapi ile Tedavisi. *DergiPark Türkiye Bütüncül Psikoterapi Dergisi*, vol 1, 74-96.
- [17] Yorbık, Ö. ve Mutlu, C., (2016). Okul Öncesi Dönemde Depresif Bozukluk Kliniği, Tanısı ve Tedavisi. *Türkiye Klinikleri J Child Psychiatry-Special Topics*, 2 (1), 68-74.

- [18] Wagner, G. A., (2015). Treatment of depression in older adults beyond fluoxetine. *Revista de Saude Publica*, 49 (0), 1-4.
- [19] Woike, K., Sim E., Keller F., Iecua C. ve Markus Z. (2019). Common Factors of Psychotherapy in Inpatients With Major Depressive Disorder: A pilot Study. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, doi 10.3389/fpsyt.2019.00463.
- [20] Zamani, H., Habibi, M. ve Darvishi M. (2015). Compare the effectiveness of Dialectical Behavior Therapy and Cognitive Behavioral Group Therapy in Reducing Depression in Mothers of Children with Disabilities. 18 (1).