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Abstract: The aim of the present study was to determine the prevalence of mild cognitive impairment (MCI) in elderly patients in general hospitals and to investigate the persistence of the cognitive deficits after discharge from the hospital. In a sample consisting of 794 non-demented patients in general hospitals aged 65–85 years, we found an MCI prevalence of 36.1%. The positive predictive value for cognitive impairment 3.5 months after hospital discharge was 61.0%. The deficits in multiple-domain MCI proved to be particularly stable with a positive predictive value of 82.9%. Elderly patients in general hospitals represent a high-risk group for MCI. These results indicate that general hospitals offer an opportunity for the early detection of incipient dementia.

Stichworte: Mild cognitive impairment; prevalence; General hospitals; Early detection of cognitive disorders

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