PURPOSE OF REVIEW: The frequent co-occurrence of depression and somatic symptoms poses a continuing challenge to clinicians, researchers and experts involved in drawing up classifications. In this review we present recently published literature on aspects of epidemiology, classification and treatment in this important overlap area. RECENT FINDINGS: From the multitude of papers published annually on the co-occurrence of different pain conditions and depression, temporomandibular dysfunction stands out this year by sheer quantity; it can be seen as a model case of the necessity for differentiated high-quality assessments on the biological as well as the psychosocial level. There is a general move to separate utility of diagnostic classifications from their validity, and this strengthens classificatory approaches that help to view the regular overlap of depression, pain and other somatic symptoms as the rule rather than the exception. The incorporation of cognitive variables like causal attributions should help to distinguish clinically relevant subtypes among overlap cases. The classificatory future of the category of somatoform disorders' is somewhat in doubt, but reforms seem to be more productive than abolishment. Psychopharmacology provides rather intense recent coverage of the overlap field, with newer dual serotonergic-noradrenergic reuptake inhibitors offering some promise. SUMMARY: Treating the overlap of depression, pain and other somatic
symptoms as the rule rather than the exception is necessary for adequate aetiological research as well as for diagnosis and treatment, with one-dimensional classificatory and treatment approaches almost certainly being insufficient.