SUMMARY

Aim The aim was to assess the association of the manifestations of somatization disorder on the family functioning, workplace and social functioning in the upper socio-economic class adult patients attending outpatient clinic at the National Hospital Abuja.

Methods Socioeconomic class tool modified by Ogunlesi et al to classify the subjects as well as the PHQ-15 scale instrument updated with the ICD-10 criteria for somatization disorder were used to assess the prevalence, development and manifestations of somatization disorder among upper socioeconomic class subjects. This study was conducted in primary care settings at the general outpatient department (GOPD) of the National Hospital Abuja-Nigeria from July through September 2010. For the study, patients selected from preceding screening exercises with a socioeconomic class in the upper range and who had 3 or more severe somatic symptoms based on the PHQ-15 criteria, were recruited thereafter to fill out a 2 part questionnaire that addressed the association between somatization disorder and the patient’s family functioning, his workplace and social functioning.

Results 195 adults belonging to the upper socioeconomic class were recruited. The mean age of the participants was 37±14 years (age range of 18-65 years) while 76.2% (138) of them were females. At a cut off level of 3 or more severe somatic symptoms during the past 2 years according to the PHQ-15 scale, 11 subjects (or 5.6%) had somatization disorder. It was commoner among the females as well as among young adults. Certain associated risk factors like alcohol use was also identified following a logistic regression.

Headache occurring in 122 of the subjects (62%) was the commonest manifestation among the subjects irrespective of the gender. There was also a significant association between somatization disorder in the individual and some parameters in his/her family like type of marriage; however family functioning strictly was not affected. Ability to
work was also affected by the disorder in the workplace while the social life especially involvement in private leisure activities was also affected.

**Conclusion** The findings indicate that a minority of individuals belonging to the upper socioeconomic class were affected by somatization disorder.