



Original Research Article

ALCOHOLISM RELATED PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA AND PSYCHIATRIC DISORDERS IN WIVES OF ALCOHOLICSR. Sekar¹¹Associate Professor, Department of Psychiatry, Annapoorana Medical College and Hospitals Salem, India.

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ABSTRACT

Background: Alcohol Dependence Syndrome has harmful consequences not only on the patient with Alcohol Dependence Syndrome but also on the family. The wife of the patient who is the key member in such a family is most vulnerable to have considerable Psychiatric disorders. The psychopathology in wives of patients with Alcohol Dependence Syndrome is a largely neglected area in psychiatric research. Aim of the study is to assess the psychological well-being of the wives of patients with Alcohol Dependence Syndrome, to evaluate the frequency and nature of Psychiatric disorders prevalent in wives of patients with Alcohol Dependence Syndrome and to study the socio demographic variables.

Materials and Methods: A total of 60 wives of patients with Alcohol Dependence Syndrome were evaluated. The Psychological wellbeing was assessed using the Psychological Well Being Index Scale. The severity of psychopathology was assessed using the Hamilton Depression Rating Scale and Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale. A semi-structured profoma was used to assess the Sociodemographic profile in wives of Alcohol Dependence Syndrome.

Results: On screening with the Psychological Well Being Index scale it was found that 72% of the wives of patients with alcohol dependence syndrome were suffering from psychological distress. This 72% of the wives were assessed for the prevalence of Psychiatric disorders using the Hamilton Depression Rating Scale and Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale. The results revealed that wives were suffering considerable psychiatric disorders. 43% of them were suffering from Depression of a moderate category, 12% with mild depressive episode, and 3% with severe depressive episode. 6 % had severe Anxiety disorder 8% and had moderate Anxiety disorder. Depression is the most common diagnosis in the wives of patients with Alcohol Dependence Syndrome.

Conclusion: The present study concludes that the wives of patients with Alcohol Dependence Syndrome have significant psychiatric morbidity, as most them were subjected to constant psychological distress because of the husband's behavior due to alcoholism. To achieve good results in the De-addiction treatment, it is always beneficial to pay attention to the psychological well-being of the wives and treat the psychiatric morbidity in them effectively, because they play an important role in the De-addiction treatment.

Keywords: Wives of patients with Alcohol Dependence Syndrome, Psychological wellbeing, Psychiatric morbidity.

INTRODUCTION

Alcoholic beverages consumption are widespread in the world and the problems related to alcohol consumption vary extensively in different parts of the world. Worldwide the deaths attributed to alcohol are 4%. The World Health Organization (WHO) has estimated that 1.4% of the global disease burden account for Alcohol Use Disorders, 3.2% of deaths (1.8 million) and 4.0% loss of Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALY) (58.3million)¹ are caused by alcoholic beverages usage at an International level. The magnitude of the problem in our country is quite substantial. It has been estimated that in INDIA 33% of the population consume alcoholic beverages which is the second largest populace that consume alcohol in the whole world and the distressing part of it is, it keeps rising progressively. In INDIA about 20% of all disability-adjusted life years (DALY) are lost primarily because of issues like 'high occurrence of alcohol dependence among people 2, "poor healthiness in people" and "noticeable Malnutrition".

Alcohol abuse attributes to a number of physical, psychological and social problems. Physical consequences include many organic illnesses such as, liver cirrhosis, liver malignancies, Cardiovascular diseases, Neurological disorders, and esophageal tumors are a very few to be mentioned. Psychological consequences include Depression, Anxiety; Alcohol induced Psychosis, increased frequency in suicidal attempts, violence and crime. Social consequences include road traffic accidents, spouse abuse, and many unscrupulous anti-social activities. Alcoholism in due course leads to many devastating outcomes. It wipes out human lives mercilessly or renders them inoperative at a juvenile age, resulting in physical disability, ultimately leading to a reduction of many years of worthy life and not infrequently even death due to a wide spectrum diseases. The DSM V TR throws light on these aspects in making a diagnosis of alcohol Dependence syndrome.

Alcohol abuse and dependence are associated with multiple life problems and challenges and augment the risk for a wide range of morbidities and premature death. Alcohol Dependence Syndrome is one of the most widespread psychiatric disorders prevailing in the general population with a considerable impact on public health. A sizeable amount of scientific research for evaluation of Alcohol Dependence Syndrome has been carried out over the past 40 years.

Generally when a person contracts a disease like Diabetes, Hypertension, or even Cancer it is the person alone who suffers from the disease is affected, but this is not the case in a person who is afflicted with alcohol dependence syndrome. Alcoholism can affects a person physically, mentally, socially and even spiritually.

Alcohol Dependence Syndrome should be considered as a disorder of the family. It has lethal consequences not only on the patient with Alcohol Dependence but also on the members of his family. The wives of patients with Alcohol Dependence Syndrome are obviously the severely affected people on most occasion's. They are the core members of the family system. They are forced to undergo innumerable troubles such as frequent quarrels in the family because of the disgusting behaviours of the husbands under the influence of alcohol.^[3,4]

Many of them experience hardships and humiliations because of economic deprivation. A disruption in the interpersonal relationships in the family rapidly takes place. A lack of sexual intimacy occur between the couple as a result of the husbands' alcohol use. This also can be the one of the main causes for the wives suffering and can result in great psychological distress to them.^[7]

Owing to these kind of ongoing stressful factors, the wives always get worried become desperate and about their entire life. The future of their children appear fruitless. Some of the wives are often beaten up cruelly by their intoxicated husbands and get verbal abuse from them for no valid reasons that make them shrink out of shame. As they are subjected to endless troublesome experiences, they eventually end up in Psychological trauma or in other words a disruption to the Psychological well-being. They often have the feeling that their lives have become meaningless and their future is dark. Some of them have even been pushed to the extreme of attempting suicide, which reflects the intensity of their psychological distress they might have undergone. Hence, the wives are more prone to be affected with psychiatric disorders like Mood disorders, Anxiety disorders, medical illnesses and psychosocial problems.^[8] There are many research reports on the coping behaviour, personality characteristics, quality of matrimonial life, and psychological well-being in wives of persons with alcohol use disorders 9.

However, the psychiatric morbidity in wives of patients with Alcohol Dependence Syndrome is comparatively neglected area in Psychiatric research. The psychological well being of the wives of patients with Alcohol Dependence Syndrome is generally overlooked by the health care professionals. Based on this study is aimed at assessing the Psychological well-being in the wives of patients with Alcohol Dependence Syndrome. Also to study the occurrence of Psychiatric disorders in the wives of patients with Alcohol Dependence Syndrome, their socio-demographic profiles.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The clinical study was carried out in tertiary care teaching Hospital, in the male psychiatry ward of Department of Psychiatry. This study was done for period of six months. For this study, a sample size

consisting of 60 wives of patients with Alcohol Dependence Syndrome were selected. The patients with Alcohol Dependence Syndrome were diagnosed as per the Diagnostic Guidelines of the ICD-10. The wives of those patients who were diagnosed as Alcohol Dependence Syndrome alone constituted the populations for the study who were in age group between 18 and 60 years.

Wives of patients whose age were below 18 and above 60 years with physical and psychiatric disorders in the patient which were not related to alcohol use, and those who were not consenting for the study were excluded.

This study has been cleared by the institutional ethical committee. A written informed consent was obtained from all the subjects. All the subjects underwent a methodical physical and mental status examination. The assessment was done during the first week of hospitalization. The sociodemographic data was collected and recorded using a specially designed profoma for the clinical study. The socioeconomic status of the subjects was assessed with a semi-structured profoma. The psychopathology of the wives of them was assessed using psychological well-being Index as a screening tool to pick up the percentile of the deviant psychopathology. Those who had been affected with psychological well-being was again evaluated for Mood and Anxiety disorders using the Hamilton

Depression rating scale and Hamilton Anxiety rating scale respectively.

The results obtained were analyzed using the following statistical methods. Descriptive statistics were computed. Categorical variables were described as frequencies and percentages. The Chi-Square test was used to compare categorical variables. ANOVA and Pearson correlation coefficient was also used.

RESULTS

In our study population of 60 wives 17 were in the range of 20-30 years, 30 in range of 31-40 years, 11 in range of 41-50 years while rest 2 were above 50 years.

Majority of wives were found to be educated up to the middle school level (n=35) while rest 25 were educated less than middle school. Most of them were doing unskilled works as an occupation. Majority of wives (n=52) were found to be belonging to Hindu religion while 5 were Christian and 3 were Muslim. Most of wives were hailing from rural areas.

In our study 52 wives (86.7%) suffered from depression, based on HAM –D score 43 had moderate depression, 7 had mild depression and 2 had severe depression. Next coming to psychological well-being index 72% of the wives were found to be psychologically distressed.

Table 1: Data Regarding HAM – D Score

Particulars	Number of participants (n=60)	Percentage (100%)
Nil	8	13.3
Mild	7	11.7
Moderate	43	71.7
Severe	2	3.3

Next moving on to relation between demographic variables and with depression scale like HAM-a, HAM –D and PWBI scale, there was no significant difference based on age, educational qualification, literacy, income, religion and type of family, all these had no influence on incidence of depression.

Further, we analyzed the PWBI scale with all HAM-A and HAM- D scales and found that in wives with more severe levels of depression the well-being was also poor. Anxiety disorder was present in 8 wives in our study group in which 6 were mild and 2 were moderate.

DISCUSSIONS

Alcohol use in a family members causes serious problems not only to the abuser but also to the innocent family members. It can affect the family and society in a variety of ways through unemployment, financial burden, and disrupting interpersonal relationships, anti-social activities, promiscuous affairs, drunken driving, alcohol induced mental and physical disorders and many more.

Among the family members alcoholic's wives were found to be the most affected than any others in the family. They are prone to physical abuse, verbal abuse subjected to an ongoing emotional distress and as a result deterioration in their Psychological well-being. Most often invariably they are deprived of adequate sexual relationships from their partner, this is again an important factor that impair their psychological well-being. Due the alcoholic husband's frequent non- attendance in their work place, financial burden falls on the shoulders of their wives, the wife takes the role of leading the family on her shoulders. This study was carried out on 60 wives of patients admitted for the treatment of Alcohol Dependence Syndrome in the male psychiatry ward of Department of Psychiatry.

The Sociodemographic profile was evaluated in terms of age, religion, educational status, domicile distribution, occupation, income, occupational distress, economic problems, history of psychiatric illness and socioeconomic status.

Majority of the wives were in between the age group of 31-40 years. This is similar to the findings of other investigators. Out of 60 individuals the age

group between 31 to 40yrs accounted for 50%. Age group between 20 to 30yrs accounted for 28.3%. Age group between 41 to 50yrs accounted for 18.3%. Considering the 21.7 % were illiterate, 20% were found to be educated up to primary school, 28.3% were educated up to middle school and 30.0 % up to high school. Among the wives of patients with Alcohol Dependence Syndrome, the total populace was to be significantly higher in Hindus amounting to 86.7 %, Christian community 8.3 % and Muslim 5 %. Majority of wives were found to be educated up to the middle school level 28.3%. Majority of the women were hailing from the rural area 78.3%, from the semi – urban 13.3 %, and only 8.3% from the urban.

Most of the wives were unemployed as reported by a previous study in which majority of the wives of patients with Alcohol Dependence Syndrome were unemployed 70. Most of the patients belonged to low socioeconomic status.

The present study shows a high prevalence of psychiatric disorders in wives of patients with Alcohol Dependence Syndrome which has been reported by previous investigators as well.^[9-16] Psychological Well Being Index scale (PWBI) was used to screen the Psychological well-being in the wives of patients with alcohol dependent syndrome and it was found that around 72% of the wives had poor psychological well-being. Invariably, most of them were suffering from symptoms of depression and anxiety. Taking this aspect into consideration the scales for Depression and anxiety were administered. The scale, Hamilton Depression Rating scale (HAM-D) for evaluating depression and the Hamilton Anxiety Rating scale for evaluating Anxiety were appropriately selected.

Selecting those 72% of the wives who were suffering from poor psychological well being of patients with Alcohol Dependence Syndrome, 43% were suffering from Depression of moderate category, 12% had mild depressive episode and 3% had severe depression. 8% had Moderate Anxiety disorder, and 6 % had severe anxiety disorder. These findings were in consistent with the previous studies conducted by Kishor M et al, Pandit LV, Raguram R.^[17]

The present study reveals that there is a significant incidence of Depressive and Anxiety Disorders. Moderate depression found most commonly the in wives of patients with Alcohol Dependence Syndrome and is diagnosed in 43 wives of patients with Alcohol Dependence Syndrome. The diagnosis of mild depressive disorder was made in 12 wives of patients with Alcohol Dependence Syndrome.

Anxiety disorder is diagnosed in 8 wives of patients with Alcohol Dependence Syndrome moderate category and in 6 wives mild anxiety disorder was present. The above findings indicate that wives of patients with Alcohol Dependence Syndrome tend to have a depressive and anxiety states predominantly.

In the present study, the total psychiatric morbidity as well as the psychiatric disorders have been compared with the various socio demographic and clinical variables to find out the relationship if any between them. Depression was found to be more common in women with lower education and this is statistically significant among the wives of patients with Alcohol Dependence Syndrome. Psychiatric disorders were more common in unemployed wives of patients with alcohol dependence syndrome. This has been reported by a previous study where employment is reported by the wives as a positive experience.

In the present study however, employment is not found to have statistically significant association with the total psychiatric morbidity. However, Depression is significantly higher in unemployed women among the wives of patients with Alcohol Dependence Syndrome. Majority of the wives with psychiatric disorders belong to LSES and this is significant in wives who have Depression among the wives of patients with Alcohol Dependence Syndrome. In the present study, no significant association was found between the domicile distribution and the total psychiatric morbidity. Most of the patients with psychiatric disorders resided in a rural area and significantly, moderate Depression prevailed among the wives of patients with Alcohol Dependence Syndrome.

CONCLUSION

The present study concludes that the wives of patients with Alcohol Dependence Syndrome have significant psychiatric morbidity. The most common psychiatric disorder was Depression of a moderate category. Wives of alcohol dependence were having poor psychological well-being. Psychological well-being among wives of alcoholics does not vary significantly according to socio demographic profile. Wives of alcohol dependence patients mental health was grossly affected leading to Psychiatric morbidity. The next Psychiatric illness that prevailed in the wives of alcohol dependence patients was Anxiety disorder. This study has several limitation like. size of the sample and controls are not sufficient to calculate the prevalence and nature of psychopathology and psychiatric morbidity, but a larger sample size would be required to enhance the reliability and validity of the results. The present study is an observational cross sectional clinical study examining the frequency and nature of psychiatric disorders in wives of patients with Alcohol Dependence Syndrome and its association with the socio demographic and clinical variables. Despite its limitations, the present study definitely indicates that there is significant psychiatric morbidity in wives of patients with Alcohol Dependence.

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