

RELATIONSHIP OF POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER AND ALEXITHYMIA WITH RELAPSE DURING 12 MONTHS IN MALE ALCOHOL DEPENDENT INPATIENTS

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Objective: Aim of this study was to evaluate the relationship of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and alexithymia with relapse to alcohol use during 12 month follow-up after inpatient treatment in male alcohol dependents. Age at regular alcohol use, severity of alcohol related problems and psychiatric symptoms were controlled while evaluating these relationships.

Method: Among 156 consecutively admitted male alcohol dependents 136 could be reached at the end of 12 months. Patients were investigated with the Clinician Administered PTSD Scale, the Symptom Check List and the Michigan Alcoholism Screening Test (MAST) and with the Toronto Alexithymia Scale (TAS-20) at baseline.

Results: Among 136 alcohol dependent patients 66.2% (n=90) were considered to be relapsed according to telephone interview. Among these 102 were interviewed face to face. Rate of alexithymia and relapse and mean of “difficulty in identifying feelings-DIF” of TAS-20 were higher in PTSD group. Other than these there were no significant relationship between PTSD, alexithymia and relapse. PTSD diagnosis predicted relapse during 12 month follow-up (n=136). When only those who were evaluable to interview face to face included, only DIF predicted relapse (n=102).

Conclusions: PTSD and alexithymia (particularly DIF factor) may be related with relapse during 12 month follow-up. This study suggest that rather than the early onset of alcohol use, the severity of alcohol related problems and the general psychiatric symptoms, PTSD and DIF, which may be related, are two factors to focus when relapse prevention programs are planning.