

ABSTRACT

Background: Alcohol dependence has adverse health and social consequences. Alcohol related problems primarily occur within the family context and maximum impact is felt on spouses, given the intimate nature of their relationship. Spouses play an important role in treatment programs related to alcohol. There is thus a need to study psychiatric morbidity and coping strategies in spouses of alcohol dependent patients in order to understand and address such issues.

Aims: The aim of this study was to assess the pattern of psychiatric morbidity, coping strategies in spouses of men with alcohol dependence syndrome and to compare them with controls.

Materials and Methods: For psychiatric morbidity, 30 spouses of men with alcohol dependence syndrome were compared with 60 controls using MINI Questionnaire. Psychological distress was assessed using General Health Questionnaire. Coping strategies was assessed using the Coping Strategies Inventory. Severity of alcohol dependence in the husbands and consequences of drinking was assessed using Severity of

Alcohol Dependence Questionnaire and Drinkers Inventory of Consequences respectively.

Results: 33.3% of spouses had a psychiatric disorder. Primarily mood and anxiety disorder were present. 13.3% had Major Depressive Disorder, 10% had Dysthymia, 6.7% had Generalized Anxiety Disorder and 6.7% had Suicidality. Problem Focused Engagement and Emotion Focused Engagement were the main coping mechanisms adopted. Increasing severity of alcohol dependence or consequences in any specific domain of alcohol dependence were not significantly associated with any psychiatric disorder and did not change the coping method adopted.

Conclusion: Psychological distress and psychiatric morbidity in spouses of alcohol dependent men is high. Addressing these issues will be beneficial as spouses are known to play an important role in the treatment of alcohol dependence syndrome.

Key words: Psychiatric morbidity, Coping strategies, spouses of alcohol dependent men.