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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

ORAL STATUS IN ADOLESCENTS WITH ALCOHOL ADDICTION

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Alcohol addiction is one of major public health concerns because rich assortment of alcohol drinks, alcohol advertising may hasten the initiation of alcohol drinking and increase consumption among children and adolescents nowadays. Cytotoxic effect of alcohol is among the leading causes of oral mucosa malignant degeneration, therefore alcohol drinkers are at risk of cancerous diseases. This should be taken into consideration by dentists during routing check-ups. The assessment of oral status in alcohol abusers is essential for making up a treatment plan and prophylaxis, and the investigation of oral manifestations in alcohol drinkers is of great clinical significance.

The aim: To determine the peculiarities of oral status in underage drinkers.

Materials and methods: The study involved 135 inpatients aged 14-17, who took the course of treatment at the Narcological Department, Poltava Regional Clinical Psychiatric Hospital. We assessed the condition of periodontal tissues and oral mucosa.

Results: There was a tendency towards an increase in precancerous diseases depending on the age of patients and the length of alcohol addiction. The prevalence rate of the diseases in the first group of patients who had being abused alcohol for 2 years was 10,91% of cases; and in the second group of patients who had being abused alcohol for 3 years it made up 16,80%. This may be explained by adverse effect of ethanol on the oral mucosa and by no regular dental check-ups.

Conclusions: Based on the results obtained, it is appropriate to recommend mandatory oral check-ups for adolescents with alcohol abuse.

KEY WORDS: acute and chronic oral mucosa damage, mechanical traumas of oral mucosa, adverse effect of ethanol

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Introduction

Expansion of alcoholic beverages at the contemporary alcohol market, their variety and easy availability, obsessive advertising and the common tradition of alcohol consumption among population are the causes of early use of alcohol and alcoholism in children and adolescents [1, 2, 3]

Alcoholism can equally be assigned to mental and somatic diseases, since the polymorphism of the symptoms of alcoholic disease asserts total affection of the body by the effect of ethanol-containing substances [4].

The general pathological effect of alcohol on the body is determined primarily by the biochemical properties of ethanol, which is a cytoplasmic poison with a strong devastating effect [2]. The cytotoxic effect of alcohol is the cause of frequent malignant degeneration of the oral mucosa; therefore, patients with alcoholism are at risk for the development of oncological diseases, which should be taken into account by the dentist during prophylactic checkups [5]. In this regard, the identification of dental status in patients with alcohol dependence is of therapeutic and preventive value, and the study of its features is crucial.

The aim

The paper was aimed at determination of the features of dental status in adolescents with alcohol dependence.

Materials and methods

135 people who received treatment in the narcological unit of the A.F.Maltsev Poltava Regional Clinical Psychiatric Hospital have been examined according to the diagnostic criteria of the International Classification of Diseases, 10th Revision with the diagnosis of “Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of alcohol” (code F10) [1].

The patients have been assigned into 2 groups according to the age and duration of alcohol abuse for more accurate evaluation of the dental status and to clarify some of the features of the development of pathological lesions, dependent on the duration of alcohol intoxication.

Group I involved 65 patients, aged 14-15 years with 2 years of alcohol abuse and signs of stage II alcoholism;

Group II involved 70 patients, aged 16-17 years with 3 years of alcohol abuse.

50 people without alcohol dependence have been selected using the AUDIT screening tool (assessment of the alcohol dependence) to verify the resulting data. They formed a control group (III) with the similar study of dental status.

The prevalence of oral diseases in patients with alcoholism was studied using the clinical-anamnestic, clinical and epidemiological methods.

Results and Discussion

Notably, the paper presents the nosological forms, which have significant differences as compared with the control group.

Inadequate awareness of patients about existing dental diseases and their prognosis in both groups was revealed.

The tendency towards an increase in precancerous diseases, depending on the age of the patients and the duration of alcohol abuse was noted. Thus, their prevalence in patients of Group I and II accounted for 10.91% and 16.80% of cases, respectively, caused, in our opinion, by both the negative effect of ethanol on oral mucosa and the low rate of medical aid appealability. This is confirmed by the data of the anamnestic survey of the examined patients,

which showed that in the main groups of patients the visits to a dentist in connection with oral mucosa diseases was about 0.75%, whereas all controls visited dental care facilities.

The determination of the incidence and severity of acute and chronic injuries of oral mucosa, estimated in 38.29% of cases in patients of the major groups was crucial; it is more frequent than in the control group, where the total number of detected injuries accounted for 8.00% ($p < 0.01$). The higher frequency of mechanical injury to oral mucosa in patients with alcohol dependence was caused by the specific course of the disease, mainly by the complex of psychopathological disorders (aggression, psychopathisation, predisposition to destructive actions, etc.), as well as spasmodic manifestations of metalcohol psychoses at stage II and III of the disease. The number of injuries to oral mucosa was tending to increase, depending on the age and duration of alcohol consumption. All patients with injuries to oral mucosa needed dental care. They underwent the necessary set of therapeutic measures and were given recommendations, which were recorded in the patients' medical history and outpatient's card.

The study of the findings of the epidemiological analysis of the prevalence of oral mucosa diseases in young people with chronic alcoholism has shown that this group of patients has a significantly higher morbidity and severity of lesions.

The reasons for the high incidence of the diseases were mainly the clinical features of alcoholism, both psychic (personal decompensation, spasmodic syndrome in metalcohol psychoses), and somatic, due to the toxic influence of ethanol on the functioning of organs and systems, metabolism.

Social deadadaptation of adolescents with chronic alcoholism, a range of personality mental disorders, especially psychopathisation, undervaluation of their own health has become the reasons for their critically low dental aid appealability. The lack of qualified dental care in patients with alcohol dependence led to exacerbation of clinical symptoms of oral lesions, an increase in their intensity and severity. The problem was aggravated by the progressive course of the underlying disease due to the continuing negative influence of factors, leading to the emergence of the oral diseases. The effect of these factors along with low dental aid appealability resulted in the increased frequency of occurrence and intensity of oral mucosa lesions in patients.

Conclusions

On the basis of the conducted research, it is necessary to carry out a comprehensive dental diagnostic examination of adolescents with alcohol dependence syndrome both inpatients at the specialized psychiatric facilities and outpatients at narcological clinics. Preventive activities aimed for this contingent of patients is also important.

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