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Alcoholism and Psychiatric Comorbidity: A Complex Relationship

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Abstract

Alcoholism, also known as alcohol use disorder (AUD), is a chronic and relapsing condition characterized by the excessive and compulsive consumption of alcohol which leads to negative effects on the physical as well as mental health. Heavy drinking associated with alcoholism can coexist with or contribute to several different psychiatric disorders like depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorder, antisocial personality disorder, and schizophrenia. In patients with AUD, around 80% of cases suffer from a social anxiety disorder, 27% -40% of cases are diagnosed with major depressive disorder, 19%-26% of young adults suffer from attention-deficient hyperactivity disorder, 21% of patients with AUD are diagnosed with schizophrenia, and around 42% of patients of AUD diagnosed with bipolar disorder. As a result, this comorbidity with a psychiatric disorder can complicate the diagnosis, treatment, and recovery of these psychiatric disorders. Thus, the thorough diagnosis and evaluation of psychiatric complaints in alcoholic patients is important to reduce the severity of illness in these individuals. Although, alcoholism itself can lead to a broad range of psychiatric symptoms and signs and the severity of these symptoms and signs may vary depending upon the amounts of alcohol used, how long it was used, and how recently it was used by the patients. Like, the large amount of alcohol consumption may be associated with more dramatic changes in mood, such as sadness, irritability, and nervousness, it may also impair judgment, and unleash aggressive antisocial behaviour, depression, anxiety, and panicking behaviour. Medication for patients having comorbidity with alcoholism and psychiatric disorder may hold significant importance. Patients of alcohol dependence with comorbidity face greater difficulties in assessing and using traditional alcoholism treatment. In case of patients with dually diagnosed conditions (i.e., alcoholism and psychiatric disorder) dosage schedules can be readily integrated into a medication schedule for comorbid conditions.

Keywords: *Alcohol use Disorder, Comorbidity, Psychiatric Disorder, Diagnosis, Treatment.*