

Co-Dependency and Depressive Symptoms among Wives of Alcoholics

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Abstract

Background: Alcoholism carries with it a host of social problems. Both the drinker and the family unit are affected. When the wife is a co-dependent it interferes with the recovery of the alcoholic.

Objectives: A study was conducted to assess the level of co-dependency and depressive symptoms among wives of alcoholics.

Methods: A descriptive Co-relational design was used to assess the co-dependency and depressive symptoms. Sample size was 100. Non Probability Convenience sampling technique was used for selecting the samples.

Results: 52% of the subjects were found to be moderately Co-dependent and 48% were found to be highly co-dependent. 75% of the samples had shown severe depression symptoms. Findings showed a positive correlation between co-dependency and depression. Significant relation was found between co-dependency and demographic variables like age, number of children, type of family, duration of married life, duration of alcohol consumption by husband and alcoholic history in parents. Significant relation was found between depressive symptoms and demographic variables like age, number of children, educational status, occupational status, type of family and duration of alcohol consumption by husband.

Conclusion: The present study revealed positive correlation between co – dependency and depression among wives of alcoholics.

Keywords: Co-dependency; Depressive symptoms; Alcoholics.

Introduction

Alcohol is one of the leading causes of death and disability globally and in India. Alcohol and its relationship to ill health have been recognized as an important public health challenge even though alcohol use has been part of the cultural traditions in different societies. Alcoholic beverages have been used in human societies since the beginning of recorded history.

Alcoholism carries with it a host of social problems. Both the drinker and the family unit are affected. Alcohol can have devastating effects on the family. Numerous marriages have been destroyed by alcohol, both emotionally and financially. Children of alcoholics are emotionally disturbed due to alcoholic parents. Approximately twenty percent of adults grew up with a family member with an alcohol problem. These adults themselves are at risk for developing substance abuse problems. Emotional issues such as guilt, depression, and relationship problems are often found in children of alcoholics.[1] Children of alcoholics (COAs) face special problems as a

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result of living in a home disrupted by alcohol problems. An estimated 6.6 million children under the age of eighteen live in households with at least one alcoholic parent.[2]

Co-dependence was originally defined in the late 1970s and early 1980s to help families and spouses of individuals with alcohol and drug problems. When the wife is a co-dependent it interferes with the recovery of the alcoholic.[3]

Alcoholism also has negative effects on the spouse of an alcoholic. The spouse may have feelings of hatred, self-pity, and avoidance of social contacts, may suffer exhaustion and become physically mentally ill. Very often the spouse has to perform the roles of both parents. Family responsibilities shift from two parents to one parent. As a result, the non-alcoholic parent may be inconsistent, demanding, and often neglect the children, in exchange for keeping the family together.[4]

Need of study

Taking into account both recorded and unrecorded consumption, the highest amount of alcohol consumed per adult resident, is in Europe, especially in Russia and its surrounding countries, and in the established market economies of Western Europe and North America. The least amount of alcohol consumed per resident is in the mostly Islamic regions of the Eastern Mediterranean and in the lesser developed region of Southeast Asia, dominated by India. Between the sub region with the highest estimated consumption level (Europe C) and the sub region with the lowest (Eastern Mediterranean D) the difference in consumption is more than 20-fold.[5]

Although the recorded alcohol consumption per capita has fallen since 1980 in most developed countries, it has risen steadily in developing countries, alarmingly so in India. The per capita consumption of alcohol by adults[3] in India increased by 106.7% between 1970-1972 and 1994-96. The pattern of drinking in India has changed from occasional and ritualistic use to social use. Today, the common purpose of consuming alcohol is to get drunk. These developments have raised

concerns about the health and the social consequences of excessive drinking.[6]

A study was conducted in NIMHANS showed that 20% of women reported domestic violence and 94.5% of women identified their husbands' alcohol consumption as a risk factor in incidents of domestic violence. Findings showed that relation between alcohol and health outcome was complex and multidimensional[7]. Each member of the family may be affected by alcohol differently. Adjustment to an alcohol problem of husband may result in an increase in the family's emotional and physical illness and altered familial function. The most negatively affected family members were spouse and children of an alcoholic.[8]

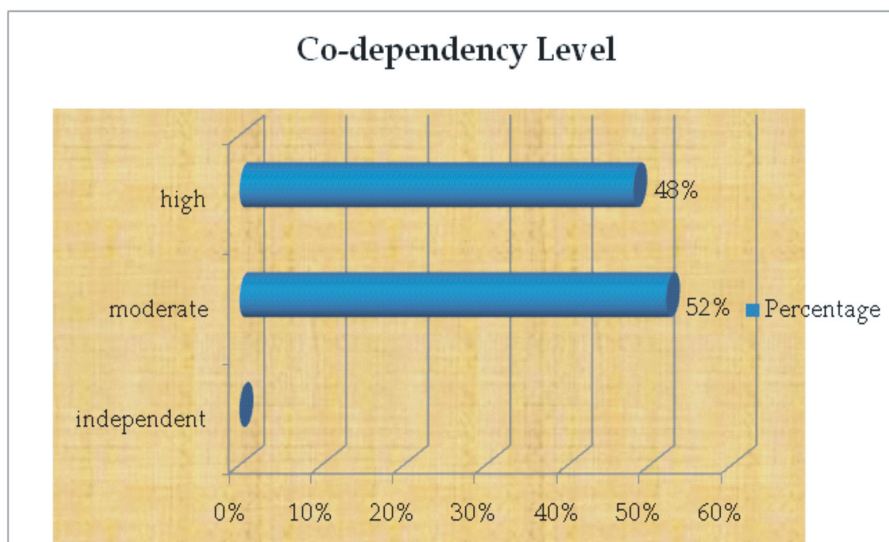
Long-term alcohol abuse can have dangerous physical and emotional effects. Alcoholism can also put financial strains on marriage. The money being spent on alcohol may cause problems and the strains among alcoholic wives. Trying to juggle alcoholism and marriage is tough because alcohol addiction can drain couples to the breaking point.[9]

With this knowledge in the background, a study was conducted to assess the level of co-dependency and depressive symptoms among wives of alcoholics, and to find the association between co-dependency, depressive symptoms and selected demographic variables.

Research Methodology

A descriptive co-relational design was used to assess the co-dependency and depressive symptoms. The study was done in Pandav Nagar, Wadarwadi. Population was Wives of alcoholics. Sample size was 100. Non probability convenience sampling technique was used for selecting the samples. After obtaining written consent tool was administered to the participants. Assurance was given regarding confidentiality and conducive environment was maintained. The average time taken by the respondents to

Figure 1: Co- dependency among Wives of Alcoholics



complete the questionnaire was approximately 10 minutes. Section 1 of the tool consisted of items related to socio demographic characteristics like age, religion, type of family, type of marriage, duration of married life, number of children, education and occupation. Modified Span Fischer Codependency Scale containing 14 items was used to assess codependency and Center for Epidemiologic studies depression scale (CES-D) was used to assess depressive symptoms among wives of alcoholics.

Major Findings

Section 1: Sample Characteristics

48% of subjects were in the age group of 20-30 yrs. Regarding number of children, 26% had only one child, 34% had two children, 32% had three children and only 8% of the sample had four children. 45% of sample had no formal education, 30% had primary education and 25% had secondary education. 42% of subjects

Figure 2: Depressive Symptoms among Wives of Alcoholics

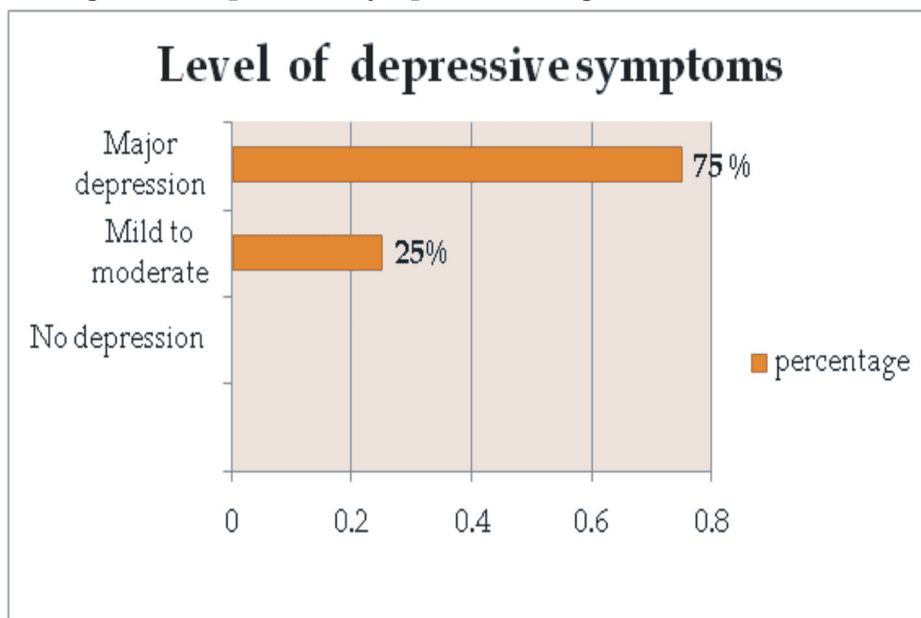
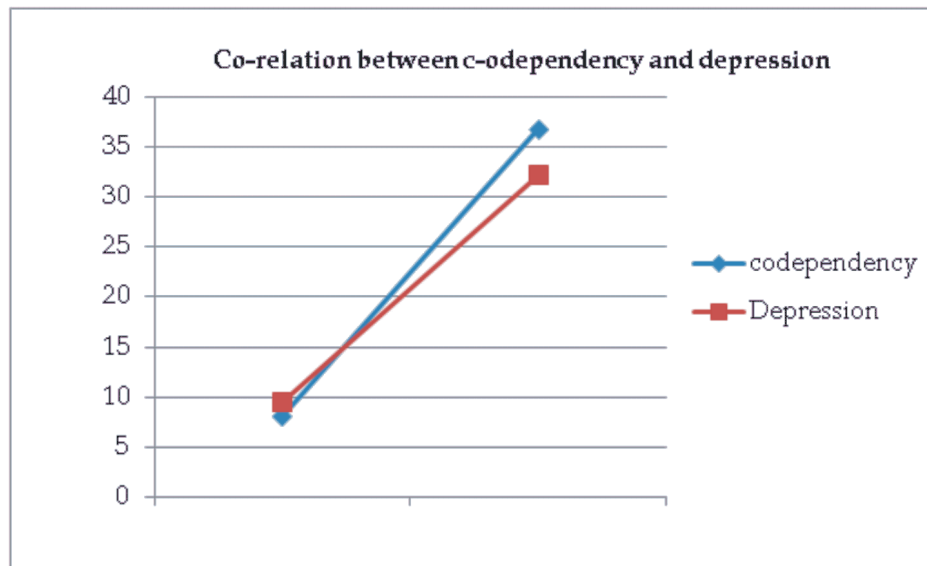


Figure 3: Co-relation between Co-dependency and Depressive Symptoms

were housewives, 40% were daily wagers and 18% were self-employed. 92% were Hindu and 8% were Muslim. 80% of the samples belonged to nuclear family. 51% of the samples had alcoholic history in parents and 49% had no alcoholic history in parents.

Section 2: Co- dependency among Wives of Alcoholics

52% of the samples were found to be moderately co-dependent, 48% were found to be highly co-dependent and none of them was completely independent.

Section 3: Depressive Symptoms among Wives of Alcoholics

75% of the samples had severe depression and 25% had mild to moderate depression.

Section 4:Co-relation between Co-dependency and Depressive Symptoms

The mean percent of co-dependency was 65.8% and standard deviation was 14.4%. The findings further showed that means percent of depression was 53.1% and standard deviation was 15.6%. The Karl Pearson co-relation coefficient was +0.842 showing a positive correlation between co - dependency and depression.

Section 5: Association between Co- dependency and Demographic Variables

Significant relation was found between co-dependency and demographic variables like age (14.02) number of children (13.3), type of family (11.03), duration of married life (9.77), duration of alcohol consumption by husband (6.07), and alcoholic history in parents (3.99).

Section 6: Association between Depression and Demographic Variables

Significant relation was found between depressive symptoms and demographic variables like age (12.35), number of children (16.47), educational status (10.77), occupational status (6.16), type of family (10.45), and duration of alcohol consumption by husband (8.44).

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