

EVALUATION OF PSYCHOSOCIAL FACTORS AND PSYCHIATRIC COMORBIDITY AMONG PERSONS ABUSING CANNABIS

ABSTRACT

CONTEXT

Cannabis is one of the most widely used illicit substances in the world. The increasing use of cannabis has raised a series of complex issues about both the health effects of cannabis & the appropriate social response to increasing cannabis use. Amongst issues relating to the consequences of cannabis use, there have been concerns about the extent to which the use of cannabis is associated with increased risks of a range of psychosocial problem. Specifically, it has been well documented that those who use cannabis are at risk population for a range of adverse psycho social outcomes that include: crime; mental health problem, other forms of illicit drug use; social drop out & unemployment.

AIM : To evaluate psychosocial factors and psychiatric comorbidity among persons abusing cannabis.

OBJECTIVES : To evaluate sociodemographic profile among persons abusing cannabis. To evaluate problematic domains among persons abusing cannabis. To evaluate withdrawal symptoms among persons who abstain from cannabis. To estimate the distribution of psychiatric comorbidity among persons abusing cannabis. To estimate sociodemographic variables and psychosocial attributes between adolescent and adult onset of cannabis abuse.

DESIGN : Descriptive study

SETTING : This study conducted at the Institute of Mental Health, a tertiary care center in Tamilnadu.

SAMPLE SELECTION

100 subjects qualified for cannabis dependence by ICD 10 were taken.

SCALES USED

Semi structured proforma, Cannabis withdrawal scale, Marijuana problem scale, MINI plus questionnaire

RESULTS

We found that those who presented with cannabis related problems are predominantly males, 77% unmarried, 70% belong to urban area, 96% belong to LSES, 64% employed. The mean age of onset of cannabis use was 18.36 years with a median of 17 years. 87% has family history of substance use disorder whereas history of mental illness present only in 13%. 68% used cannabis in adolescent period i.e less than 19 years. 48% use nicotine, 66% use alcohol and 27% use other psychoactive substance like fevibond, HANS, Nitrazepam tablets, cough syrup etc. 61% qualified for psychotic disorders, 21% for non-alcohol psychoactive substance use disorders [cannabis use disorder], 11% as Manic episode, 6% with antisocial personality disorder and 1% with depression.

CONCLUSIONS

Psychiatric comorbidity is a common occurrence in persons with cannabis dependence especially those seek treatment. Psychotic symptoms are the most common presentation presented in a tertiary care center. Cannabis withdrawal symptoms increase as the duration of cannabis use increase. Adolescents who begin to use cannabis has poor psychosocial factors like high levels of impulsivity, drug using peer relationship, drug availability in neighborhood, skipping at school or work than those begin to use cannabis in early adulthood.

KEYWORDS : Cannabis, Cannabis Dependence, Withdrawal symptoms, Psychiatric comorbidity, Adolescents, psychotic disorder.