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Impact of internet abuse on human relationships

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Young generation spends more and more time using internet and addiction to it seems to be an increasing problem. In the context of social life each addiction, including internet addiction is a destructive attachment, which leads to functional disturbance in relationships with other people, strengthens suffering and loneliness.

The objective of this study was to show influence of the internet overuse on human relationships and displaying network addiction features in young generations.

Out of the group of 100 students 68 daily internet users aged 19 to 24 were examined. An anonymous inquiry containing 28 questions was used. The inquiry was constructed basing on available tests checking internet addiction and authors' observations. Age, sex and place of residence were taken into account as the characteristics of the examined group. The examined population included 10 males and 58 females, 57 of them lived in the cities, 11 of them in the villages.

The results showed that internet overuse is a reason for family conflicts in 50% examinees, due to long term stay on-line young people have problems in learning, work, and family duties, on-line stay above 5 hours a day may be followed by an increased risk of addiction. Prolonged internet use influences reduction of contacts with real friends.

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VIH+ status: indication or contra-indication for liver transplantation?

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VIH+ status: indication or contra-indication for liver transplantation

Background and aims: Since 1996 antiretroviral treatment drastically diminished morbidity and mortality of VIH infected patients. This fact allowed it to include patients with hepatic failure caused by Virus B or C in liver transplantation procedures. We intended to identify psychological factors interfering in the post-transplantation period with the further aim to define criteria for psychological assessment at the pre-transplantation period.

Methods: From 2001 to 2006 we made a psychological investigation with 34 VIH+ patients during their usual pre-transplantation assessment. ICD-10 diagnoses were given after clinical non-structured interviews. Patients' psychosocial situations were also assessed in a non-structured way as well as drug and alcohol consumption was monitored. Patients were followed up during the whole time period.

Results: We found an elevated prevalence of psychopathology among this group of VIH+ transplantation candidates, specially personality disorders, socio-familiar problems and substance abuse.

Conclusions: It is important to include in-depth social and psychological assessment into the routine pre-transplantation procedure in order to preview and to minimize risk situations during the post-transplantation period.

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Does substance abuse significantly risk of relapse after treatment of first episode psychosis despite adherence to medication?

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Objective: To determine if substance abuse significantly increases the risk of relapse in first episode psychosis patients over a two year follow-up even after adherence to medication is improved.

Method: Relapse was based on ratings on the Scale for Assessment of Positive Symptoms and weekly ratings on Life Chart Schedule (WHO). Predictor variables included gender, duration of untreated psychosis (DUP), duration of untreated illness from the time of first psychiatric symptoms (DUI), age of onset, pre-morbid adjustment, co-morbid diagnosis of substance abuse at one year, time to remission of psychotic symptoms and adherence to medication. Univariate analyses were followed by logistic regression for rate of relapse and survival analysis with Cox proportional hazard regression was used for time to relapse as the dependent variable.

Results: Of the 207 patients, 162 achieved remission of positive symptoms and were treated and followed for two years. Relapse rates were relatively low (21.6% in the first and 13.8% in 2nd year, respectively) with 33 weeks as the mean time to relapse. Relapse rates were significantly higher for patients with a co-morbid diagnosis of substance abuse (OR= 2.59, CI 1.28-5.21), especially for the second year (OR=3.66, CI 1.30-10.27) and for those with shorter DUI (OR=0.437, CI 0.209-0.914) after controlling for other predictors. Likelihood of relapse during follow-up was associated only with a co-morbid diagnosis of substance abuse (HR= 2.49, p=.01, CI 1.21-5.10).

Conclusions: Specialized treatment of substance abuse may further reduce risk of relapse even after improving adherence to medication.

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Cognitive impairment expressed in drawings of healthy alcoholics serves as diagnostic and therapeutical instrument

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Background and aims: Detoxified alcoholics often have specific deficit in perceptual capacities, motor performance, memory function and abstracting abilities. To illustrate the clinical observations of cognitive impairment expressed in drawings of alcoholics we used two case vignettes.

Method: Qualitative analysis of form and content of drawings and group protocols were applied. Art group therapy is a part of integrative therapy in Day unit. It involves two steps: 1) drawing by free associations and 2) discussing exhibited drawings in group. The group is open, heterogeneous and meets once a week. The drawings of two healthy, neurological intact, right-handed male alcoholics, aged 36 and 39 years were analysed. They were previously hospitalised because of serious alcohol withdrawal syndrome. There was more than 4 weeks after last drink.

Results: The both alcoholics showed impairment of perception and executive functions, but they did not notice it. After confrontation in the group they recognised their cognitive deficit and accepted that they had serious damage caused by alcohol, regardless of good medical condition. The clinical improvement was presented by improving in next drawings, and discussing in the group with more self-confidence.

Conclusion: Art therapy makes possible visual expression of emotions, perceptions and cognitions, and provide large variety of confrontation and support within group, thus facilitating integrative therapeutic process of alcoholics.

Keywords: alcoholism, drawings, art therapy, cognitive impairment, diagnosis, therapy.

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The changes of sex hormones among male alcoholics in the early abstinence

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Background and aims: The most prominent endocrinology disturbance among alcoholics is male hypogonadism. This paper deals with the effects of early abstinence on gonadal hormones.

Method: A total group of non-cirrhotic male primary alcoholics, without malnutrition, (N=40) aged from 20-60 years was consecutive recruited during inpatient treatment. They meet ICD-10 criteria for alcohol dependence and were compared with 20 matched healthy controls. The blood samples for testosterone, estradiol and SHBG (sex-hormone binding globuline) were collected at day 1 and 28. The plasma levels of hormones (RIA) differences between groups were tested by Student t-test.

Results: There was significant higher concentration of estradiol and SHBG at alcoholics vs. controls, and significant lower concentration of testosterone at alcoholics compared with controls. Repeated assessment after 28 days showed non-significant elevation of testosterone and decrease of SHBG, but significant decrease of estradiol. All values were between normal range.

Conclusion: There is trend of development of hypogonadism and secondary feminisation at male alcoholics without prominent liver damage, which may be transient and resolve during early abstinence.

Keywords: alcoholism, testosterone, estradiol, SHBG, abstinence.

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Correlates of nicotine dependence in a non-psychiatric sample

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Background: It is well documented that mental disorders and suicidal behavior are associated with tobacco smoking. However, investigations in which there is a distinction between high and low nicotine dependence are more recent. The purpose was to evaluate correlates associated with high nicotine dependence such as psychiatric morbidity, suicidal behavior, practice physical exercise and use of caffeine, alcohol and illegal drug.

Methods: The analysis was based on sample of 290 participants, ages varying from 18 to 65, in a primary health service of Granada (south of Spain). All of them were assessed with the Fagerström Test for Nicotine Dependence and with the General Health Questionnaire.

Results: The prevalence of current smoking was 34,5% and the prevalence of high nicotine dependence was 9,3%. Psychiatric

morbidity (GHQ-28>6), previous suicide attempts, lack of physical exercise, high caffeine intake and consumption of illegal drugs were significantly associated with high nicotine dependence. These results remained after controlling for gender or substance abuse. Also there was significant relationship between high nicotine dependence and antecedents of suicide attempts (OR=3,53; IC 95%:1,53–25,98). In the logistic regression model, after adjusting for sex and age, the differences remained statistically significant (OR=8,17; IC 95%:1,96–34,03), as well as the protective effect of married status (OR=0.08; IC 95%:0.01–0.72).

Conclusions: Smokers with high nicotine dependence should be distinguished from other smokers in evaluating health status populations. Serial cross-sectional and longitudinal studies of nicotine dependence are needed to determine whether certain groups are especially vulnerable to nicotine dependence when they start smoking.

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Role of methadone in post-war society

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Harm reduction program in Bosnia and Herzegovina exist only in a form of methadone treatment. This program started in early eighties of the last century.

During the war, this program was unfortunately interrupted, and it is revitalized at the beginning of 2002, as an answer to increasing number of addicts during the post-war period.

Recently, we started to make first steps in implementation of other harm reduction programs such as needle exchange, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, and similar.

In this paper we will present three year experience in application of methadone in treatment in our Methadone Maintenance Treatment Center for 190 clients.

We will also try to present our experiences and effectiveness of this type of treatment through examples from practice, as well as by epidemiological and statistical data.

Keywords: Harm reduction, Methadone, Treatment, Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Suicide in dual diagnosis patients

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Background: Patients suffering from both psychiatric disorders and substance abuse (SA) are titled "dual diagnosis patients" (DDP). SA is associated with suicidal behavior. Although our knowledge of SA and suicide behavior is increasing, we lack sufficient knowledge of suicide among DDP.

Objectives: To compare the suicide attempts rate among DDP and non-DDP; To compare the suicide attempts rate according to gender in DDP and non-DDP; To compare the suicide attempts rate according to substance in DDP.

Method: Analysis of consecutive admissions: men and women ages 18–65 in our center (06/2003–06/2005).

Results: Of 848 DDPs' admissions, 197 (23.2%) were after suicide attempt, whereas 403 of 2558 non-DDP's admissions (15.8%)