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Age of onset of drinking dyscontrol and alcohol associated milestones in male subjects: a hospital-based questionnaire study

Dr. Shravan Kumar[1*], Dr. Rakesh Kumar Gaur[2]

[1] Senior Resident, Department of Psychiatry, Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh, India
[2] Professor, Department of Psychiatry, Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh, India
[*] Corresponding Author: Dr. Shravan Kumar

Abstract
Aim: age of onset of drinking dyscontrol and alcohol associated milestones in male subjects.
Materials and Method: The present hospital-based questionnaire study is conducted at the department of Psychiatry, Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College, Aligarh Muslim University, U.P, India. The course of alcoholism was recorded as per a list of symptoms which covered various alcohol related social physical-mental and four drinking dyscontrol milestone were evaluated. The data was analyzed using SPSS version 20.
Results: Mean age of onset of drinking was 18.91 years. The association between the age of onset of drinking dyscontrol and various social and physical & mental milestones was highly significant (P<0.001).
Conclusion: age of onset of first three drinking dyscontrol milestones and majority of the social and physical-mental milestones were correlated and found in significant association.

Keywords: Alcoholism, Alcohol related milestones, drinking dyscontrol, Binge drinking

Introduction

The field of alcoholism research has witnessed a number of important developments that help clinicians, teachers, and researchers understand how to identify alcoholics and predict the clinical problems likely to be observed in these men and women over time. These developments have contributed to our recognition that a substantial proportion of persons in every part of the world will experience some alcohol-related life impairment at some time during their lives.

It has been estimated that more than sixty millions in India consume alcohol and that there has been a significant increase in the per capita consumption of alcohol in recent times [1]. The lifetime risk of developing alcohol dependence in men is around 10% [2].

Early onset of alcohol use and alcohol use disorder is associated with a family history of alcohol use disorder [3], aggression and problems with law [4], social role maladaptation and loss of behavioral control when drinking [5]. childhood criminality [6], and tobacco use [7]. thus substantiating the claim that this may be a distinctive subtype of alcoholism. Several reasons have been suggested for initiation of alcohol use early in life which includes pressure from peer groups, experimentation, and curiosity.

The data regarding any possible relationship between age of onset of drinking and family history and other documented factors of alcoholism and its association with severity of alcoholism in the Indian population is not clear. Indian studies lack the details regarding methods used to obtain family history [8], are carried out in de-addiction settings [9] and the reliability of the family history information is not provided [10].

This study attempted to evaluate if any correlation exists between age of onset of drinking dyscontrol and alcohol associated milestones in male subjects.

Materials and methods

The present hospital-based questionnaire study conducted at the department of Psychiatry, Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College, Aligarh Muslim University, U.P, India.

The study protocol was reviewed by the Ethical Committee of the Hospital and granted ethical clearance. After explaining the purpose and details of the study, a written informed consent was obtained.

Inclusion criteria

Patients above 18 years of age Diagnosed cases of alcohol dependence syndrome as per ICD-10 criteria

Exclusion criteria

Patients with Acute and severe psychiatric illness
Uncooperative persons
Those who do not give consent to take part in the study

Sample selection

With the help of purposive sampling technique a total of 100 male patients of alcohol dependence, who visited Psychiatry OPD (Out Patient Department), were enrolled into the study.

Methodology

Data were collected with the help of pre-designed and pre-tested questionnaire. The subjects and one or more of their close family members were interviewed to obtain information regarding selected demographic features, family history and course of alcoholism. The course of alcoholism was recorded as per a list of symptoms which covered various alcohol related social physical-mental and four

drinking dyscontrol milestone were evaluated.

Statistical analysis

Completed questionnaires were coded and spreadsheets were created for data entry. The data was analyzed using SPSS 20 (SPSS Inc. Chicago, IL, USA) Windows software program. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the demographic information and the survey data was analyzed. Test applied for the analysis of quantitative data was Pearson correlation coefficient. Confidence level and level of significance were fixed at 95% and 5% respectively.

Results

Table 1: demographic profile of the study population

Variables	N (%)
Age	
18-27 Years	16 (16%)
28-37 Years	50 (50%)
38-47 Years	24 (24%)
>47 Years	10 (10%)
Education	
Illiterate/ Read and write	7 (7%)
Primary	24 (24%)
Higher Secondary	46 (46%)
Graduate	23 (23%)
Occupation	
Un-employed	14 (14%)
Skilled	58 (58%)
Un-skilled	28 (28%)
Marital status	
Married	59 (59%)
Un-married	29 (29%)
Divorced	12 (12%)
Residence	
Rural	54 (54%)
Urban	28 (28%)
Peri-Urban	18 (18%)
Religion	
Hindu	34 (34%)
Muslim	49 (49%)
Sikh	9 (9%)
Christian	8 (8%)
Total	100 (100%)

Table 2: Mean-age of onset of various milestone

Milestone	Mean (onset of age)
Social	
Divorce	32.81
Family disapproval	31.21
Lost Job	34.98
Loosing friends	37.81
Seeking Psychiatric advice	39.81
Physical & Mental	
Blackout	24.31
Tremors	35.78
Convulsion	34.91
Sexual problem	30.19
Spend Night in Jail	24.34
Accident	33.29
Drinking Dyscontrol	
Getting drunk	18.91
Morning drinking	29.67
Day time drinking	31.25
Mid-week drinking	30.98
Weekend drinking	27.12

Table 3: Correlation between drinking dyscontrol and other alcohol related milestones

Milestone	Drinking Dyscontrol							
	Morning		Day time		Mid-week		Weekend	
Physical & Mental	r=0.398	≤0.05	r=0.512	≤0.05	r=0.490	≤0.05	r=0.284	≥0.05
Social	r=0.367	≤0.05	r=0.461	≤0.05	r=0.401	≤0.05	r=0.201	≥0.05

Test applied: Pearson correlation coefficient. (r) Indicates correlation coefficient

Discussion

Since the present study was conceived only as an exploratory work, we decided to keep the symptom list short and tried to include more of symptoms which could be easily identified and recalled by the subjects as well as the family members. Thus, our list had 15 milestones which had similarity with symptoms listed by Schukit *et al*. [11] and Jellinek *et al*. [12] respectively.

Assessment was carried out when the subjects were drug-free and after ruling out conditions that could cause memory impairment.

In terms of the frequency of milestones, our subjects were similar to those of Schukit *et al*. [11] for physiological milestone like day time\morning drinking, accident, blackouts, morning shakes, convulsions and job loss.

This study took four drinking dyscontrol milestones, namely morning drinking, day time, mid-week and weekend into consideration. Various social and physical and mental milestones taken into consideration. The association between the age of onset of drinking dyscontrol and various social and physical & mental milestones was highly significant ($p<0.001$) between three milestones except for the fourth milestone i.e. weekend drinking.

In the present study the age of onset of drinking was 18.91 years. A study conducted among Indian population found that the age of onset of alcohol was 18 years in a hospital-based population and the age at which alcohol dependence started was 27 years. The first criteria of alcohol dependence were developed in these subjects after six years of alcohol use and only four years later they developed the dependence syndrome according to ICD-10 [13]. 17

Limitations

A difficulty arises from insufficient definition of some of the questions and this leaves one in doubt as to the precise meaning of the answers.

Another drawback was the order of the questionnaire items is· also a source of possible errors.

Conclusion

The present study concluded that the correlation between the age of onset of first three drinking dyscontrol milestones and majority of the social and physical-mental milestones was highly significant. The present study opens new vistas for future research.

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