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A CLINICAL STUDY OF THE PREVALENCE OF PSYCHIATRIC COMORBIDITIES AMONG PATIENTS WITH CANNABIS DEPENDENCE

Psychiatry

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ABSTRACT

Background: The prevalence of patients suffering from psychiatric disorder along with co-occurring substance use disorders and vice-versa are increasing through time which worsen treatment outcome and increase relapse.
Objectives: to assess the prevalence of psychiatric comorbidities among cannabis dependent patients.
Material and Method: 40 cases of cannabis dependence who attended psychiatry opd of Gauhati Medical College were selected based on ICD 10 criteria. The psychiatric comorbidities were assessed in them using MINI INTERNATIONAL NEUROPSYCHIATRIC INTERVIEW.
Result: In our study of 40 cannabis dependent patients psychiatric comorbidities were found in 39(97.5%). The comorbidities were mood disorder in18 (45%), psychotic disorder 16 (40%), antisocial personality disorder 3 (7.5%) and anxiety disorder in 2 (5%).
Conclusion: From the present study we came to the conclusion that psychiatric comorbidities are common among cannabis dependent patients.

KEYWORDS

cannabis dependent, psychiatric comorbidities

Introduction

Comorbidity denotes the presence of a distinct clinical entity that has existed or may occur during the clinical course of a patient with the index disease. [1] Psychiatric comorbidities are common among substance users and vice-versa. There is evidence that taking cannabis leads to acute adverse mental effects in a high proportion of regular users.[2]

In a study done on 44 schools in Victoria , Australia on 1601 students aged 14-15 years found 66% of males and 52% of females use cannabis with 10% of males and 4% of females using it daily .The prevalence of depression and anxiety was found to be more in females compared to males.[3] It was also found that adolescent females are particularly at risk of developing depression from cannabis use though they may not use as heavily as their male peers.[4]

In National Comorbidity Survey (NCS) it was found that among those with a 12 month diagnosis of any substance use disorder, 36% had at least one anxiety disorder whilst 25% had at least one affective disorder.[5]

The aim of the study is to assess the prevalence of psychiatric comorbidities among cannabis dependent patients.

Materials and Method

This is a descriptive and analytical cross-sectional study conducted on 40 patients who attended the psychiatry OPD of Gauhati Medical College And Hospital, Guwahati from August 2015 to July 2016 and fulfilled the criteria for cannabis dependence based on ICD 10.

The psychiatric comorbidities were assessed in them using MINI INTERNATIONAL NEUROPSYCHIATRIC INTERVIEW(7.0.0 for DSM-5). Semi-structured proforma was used for socio-demographic profile.The study was approved by the Institutional Ethics Committee. Informed consent was obtained from the patients. The software GraphPadInStat version 3.1 was used for statistical analysis.

Results

Out of 40 cannabis dependent patients, majority belonged to 17-49 years age group with mean age of 26.95 years. Of them all were males, 77.5% were Hindus, most of them were unmarried (77.5%). Table 1 has shown the socio-demographic profile of the patients. Out of 40 cannabis dependent patients, 39(97.5%) were having psychiatric comorbidities. Table 2 and Table 3 have shown the prevalence of psychiatric comorbidities among cannabis dependent patients.

Table 1.Demographic Distribution

Category	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	40	100
	Female	0	0
Religion	Hindu	31	77.5
	Muslim	7	17.5
	Christian	2	5
Marital status	Married	9	22.5
	Unmarried	31	77.5
Educational status	Illiterate	15	37.5
	Class<=12	16	40
	Class> 12	9	22.5
Occupation	Unemployed	7	17.5
	Employed	28	70
	Student	5	12.5

Table 2. Prevalence of psychiatric comorbidities among cannabis dependent patients

Psychiatric diagnosis	N	Percentage
Psychotic disorder	16	40.0
Antisocial personality disorder	3	7.5
Generalized anxiety disorder	2	5.0
Manic episode	3	7.5
Bipolar type 1 with psychotic features	7	17.5
Bipolar type 1 disorder	5	12.5
Bipolar type 2 disorder	1	2.5
Major Depressive Disorder	2	5.0
No diagnosis	1	2.5
Total	40	100.0

Table 3. Diagram showing prevalence of psychiatric comorbidities among cannabis dependent patients.
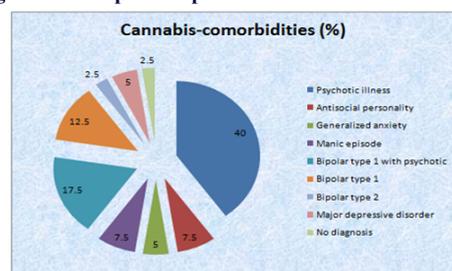
Discussion

Our study sample mostly belonged to age group 17-49 years and all were males which is consistent with previous studies all reporting higher percentage of males in their studies.[6][7]In the present study most of the patients were unmarried 31(77.5%) which is consistent with previous study which showed that cannabis use reduced with marriage. [8] In the study, among the cannabis dependent patients, 15 (37.5%) were illiterate and 16 (40%) studied upto or less than class 12 which is consistent with studies reporting high dropout rates from school among adolescent cannabis users.[9][10][11]

In this study, among 40 cannabis dependent patients 18 (45%) have a comorbid mood disorder which include manic episode 3 (7.5%), bipolar type I with psychotic features 7 (17.5%), bipolar type I without psychotic features 5 (12.5 %), bipolar type 2 (2.5%) and major depressive disorder 2 (5%) which is consistent with the findings of Guillem E et al. who conducted a study to see the prevalence of psychiatric disorders in 90 cannabis users and mood disorder was found in 48% of them.[12]

In the present study, among 40 cannabis dependent patients, 2 (5%) had comorbid generalized anxiety disorder whereas in the study done by Thomas et al. to see the comorbidities associated with cannabis use found that 22% had comorbid anxiety disorder.[13] Antisocial personality disorder was found in 3(7.5%) whereas previous studies revealed that comorbid antisocial personality disorders were very common among substance dependent patients [14] .

Psychotic disorder was found to be most prevalent among the cannabis dependent patients 16 (40%) which is consistent with previous study done by Le Bec et al. who reported that there was a relationship between cannabis and psychosis onset and cannabis consumption can also be an independent risk factor of psychotic disorders.[15] In the study done by DeQuardo et al. found that among schizophrenia patients 20% of female and 48% of male patients had comorbid substance use and the most common substance was cannabis.[16]

Conclusion:

From the present study, it can be concluded that cannabis dependence is commonly associated with comorbid psychiatric disorder. So early detection and treatment of psychiatric comorbidities are very essential while treating the patients of cannabis dependence for the prevention of future relapses and for better treatment outcome. Greater understanding of how cannabis dependence disrupts some of the brain functions making an individual more prone to develop psychiatric illness and vice versa would help clinicians to offer better treatment to these patients. However, community based study is required to conclude more accurately.

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