

Comorbidity of positive and negative symptoms in male drug abusers

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This study was conducted in a private psychiatric hospital during the period 2003-2004 aiming to study positive and negative symptoms in substance abusers as regarding the prevalence of these symptoms, the role of these symptoms on the etiology of the substance use and the effect of these symptoms on the prognosis of the drug abused patients. A sample of 50 addicts was studied clinically using full psychiatric examination using Kasr El-Eini psychiatric sheet, clinical examination by two MD qualified doctors, chemical assessment by urine screening for drugs and psychometric test using positive and negative syndrome scale (PANSS) by Kay, et al (1987). The results showed that regarding positive symptoms according to PANSS, the most prevalent positive symptom is suspiciousness/persecution (80%), followed by hostility (76%), grandiosity and excitement (both equal 70%), delusion (60%) and disorganization (40%) ; while the least positive symptoms is hallucinatory behavior (10%). These indicate an increased control of intentional inhibition defined as decreased in the frequency of hallucination on PANSS. These positive symptoms are very high positives in only three patients ; all these clinically positive symptoms are related to opiates addicts. From those opiates addicts, one patient had single use of opioids, while two patients were poly-substance users. There were no differences between these positive symptoms and types of substances. While, concerning the negative symptoms according to PANSS, the most prevalent negative symptom was blunted affect (50%), followed by emotional withdrawal and poor rapport (both equal, 48%) and passive/apathetic social withdrawal (46%). stereotyped thinking (40%), difficulty in abstract thinking (10%) and the least negative symptom was the lack of spontaneity and flow of conversation (8%). These negative symptoms are clinically very highly negative in five patients and three patients of them were options dependant, one patient was cannabis dependant, and only one patient used other substances. From these five patients, three patients had used single substance, while two patients were poly substance users. There were no differences between these negative symptoms and types of substances. Concerning the general psychopathology symptoms, the most prevalent symptom of them is anxiety (96%), followed by depression (94%), tension (90%), guilt feeling (80%), while the least prevalent are mannerisms and posturing & unusual thought content (both equal 10%), and finally disorientation (6%). Patients who had very high general psychopathology symptoms are representing only 4 patients (8%). Meanwhile as concerning types of patients according to the most used method: cf. Singh, Kay, and Opler (1987), 70% are positive subtype, 20% are negative subtype, while 10% are mixed type.