

Nicotine dependence in schizophrenic and bipolar disorder patients : A comparative study

Erfan, Salwa. Amer, Dalya

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This study aimed to determine the prevalence of smoking and the severity of nicotine dependence in patients with schizophrenia and bipolar disorder and find the relationship between smoking status and some sociodemographic and clinical characteristics. A sample of consecutive admissions of all patients with schizophrenia (n=70) and bipolar disorder (n=46) admitted to psychiatric units of a private hospital over a period of three months was recruited. Patients were diagnosed according to DSM-IV. Demographic and clinical data were collected. The total sample (n=116, male=75.9%) was assessed as regards the cigarette smoking status and the age of initiation of smoking. For the smokers, the severity of nicotine dependence was assessed using the Fagerstrom Tolerance Scale. A control group (n=30) smokers, who were age and sex matched with the case smokers, were assessed for the severity of nicotine dependence. This study concluded that nicotine dependence is higher in patients with schizophrenia and bipolar disorder compared to normal controls. Factors that influence cigarette smoking in psychiatric patients include diagnosis, sex and history of substance abuse. Age of initiation of smoking may be related to the onset of the disorder.¹