

Risk factors of metabolic syndrome among Egyptian patients with schizophrenia

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The high prevalence of metabolic syndrome (MS) in schizophrenia has been increasingly recognized in the mental health literature in recent years. The MS is a cluster of the most dangerous known cardiac risk factors (diabetes and prediabetes, abdominal obesity, high cholesterol level, and high blood pressure "BP"; according to the International Diabetes Federation criteria (IDF, 2007). The existence of an increased mortality risk among people with mental illness due to physical health factors has been demonstrated by several authors. Poor diet, lack of exercise, negative symptoms, stress, smoking, and abnormalities in the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis has all been proposed as precursors to the link. This study aimed to determine the risk factors of metabolic syndrome in a sample of Egyptian patients with schizophrenia. Sixty three patients were screened for metabolic syndrome using the IDF for the following: age, gender, waist circumference, blood pressure, high-density lipoprotein level, low-density lipoprotein level, blood sugar levels, total cholesterol level, triglycerides level, weight, body mass index, insulin resistance level, duration and doses of antipsychotics, smoking status, family history of diabetes and cardiovascular disease, and personal history of polycystic ovarian syndrome. 24 patients (38.09 %) met the criteria for MS. Increased waist circumference, higher body mass index, raised triglycerides level, increased blood sugar level, older age, emerged as significant predictors of metabolic syndrome in the sample. 39 (61.91 %) patients did not meet the full criteria for the syndrome; however, 31 out of these 39 patients (49.2 %) had 1-2 criterion of the syndrome. This study adds further support for the systematic screening for metabolic syndrome in patients receiving antipsychotic drugs. The need for intervention programs which screen for and address the modifiable risk factors of metabolic syndrome is recommended.