

Article: 0521

Topic: EPW13 - e-Poster Walk Session 13: Addictive Behaviours part 1

Suicide Attempts and Alcohol Use Disorder

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Introduction: The prevalence of alcohol abuse increased over 10% in the last decade, with special impact in women. It is not known how the characteristics of suicide attempts vary with different forms of alcohol involvement. The aim of this study is to clarify the role of alcohol use disorder and acute alcohol consumption in suicide attempts.

Objectives: Perform a brief literature review on the alcohol use disorders and suicide behaviours in those patients.

Methods: A PubMed database review, with 'alcoholism' and 'suicide attempts' as keywords.

Results: Alcohol abuse and suicide may be intimately linked. This association is related to impulsivity, aggression, social norm transgression, poor judgment, abnormal speech, perceptual blunting and increased pain threshold, which may all contribute to the suicide attempt. Moreover, mental disorders (particularly depression) are often associated with suicide. The lifetime prevalence of suicide attempts in patients with alcohol dependence is about 40% and mortality for suicide is 7%. Thus, patients with alcohol abuse should be screened for psychiatric symptoms and suicidality. Clinicians should assess the severity of suicidal symptoms and other depressive signs and symptoms in patients with alcohol abuse.

Conclusions: Suicide attempts are common in patients with alcohol use disorder. Future studies should contribute to a deeper knowledge of these events and respective treatment.