

TITLE: A STUDY TO ASSESS THE STRESS, COPING STRATEGIES AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN WIVES OF ALCOHOL DEPENDENT INDIVIDUALS

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Introduction: Divorce rates are high among wives of alcoholics and the most frequently identified cause is domestic strife in the form of harassment, torture or beating from the husband and or in-laws. However, there is only limited literature in this regard.

Aims and objectives: To study the stress, various coping styles and domestic violence among the wives of alcohol dependent individuals, who are admitted to the de-addiction centre of a tertiary care psychiatric centre in India.

Methods: An exploratory descriptive design was adopted. Wives of 75 alcohol dependent individuals, admitted in the de-addiction centre of National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences, Bangalore were selected. Data was collected by personal interviews with all 75 wives using socio-demographic information schedule, Perceived Stress Scale, Coping with Drinking Questionnaire, and Domestic Violence Questionnaire.

Results: Wives of alcohol dependent patients had high levels of perceived stress. Avoidance, discord, fearful withdrawal and sexual withdrawal were the most common coping components identified. Domestic violence was experienced by 90% women, mostly intellectual (69%), emotional (59%), social (58%), physical (47%), economic (42%) and sexual violence (27%). Domestic violence was found to increase the stress and influences the coping styles of these women.

Conclusions: Domestic violence is a major problem in wives of alcoholics. Routine screening for domestic violence is needed during the intake of alcoholic for substance abuse treatment so that appropriate interventions can be planned. There is a need for substance abuse treatment providers to be trained on the issue of domestic violence.