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Prevention of Premature Death of Somatic Causes in Patients with Mental Illness and Comorbid Substance Use Disorder

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Introduction

Physical comorbidities are common in patients with mental illness and substance use disorder. Both regular use of alcohol and cannabis have been associated with adverse health effects. However, their physical comorbidities can also be explained by other unhealthy lifestyle choices, i.e. lack of physical activity, poor nutrition and smoking.

Aim

The aim of this study is to analyse baseline and follow up data after one and a half year of a 3-year interventional programme of improvement of physical health in patients with mental illness and comorbid substance use disorder.

Methods

All patients with mental illness and substance use disorder referred to Department M at Aarhus University Hospital Risskov, Denmark from 1 July 2013 and onwards are included in the programme. The study takes an active awareness and motivational interviewing approach to increase knowledge and understanding of physical health problems. The intervention includes health promotion activities, and physical health parameters are monitored. Further guidance on healthy food intake, smoking cessation and a physically active life is provided.

Results

50 patients are expected to be participating in the programme after one and a half year. Preliminary results after one-year show that 89,7 % smoke cigarettes, their level of physical activity is low, which is seen in the extent of their sedentary behaviour. Further there are problems with insufficient food intake among patients.

Conclusions

This study indicates, that patients with mental illness and comorbid substance use disorder need guidance on a healthier lifestyle. They show an interest in this interventional programme.