

P02-03 - THE IMPACT OF ALCOHOL ON ADMISSIONS TO AN IRISH PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - A RETROSPECTIVE SURVEY

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Objectives: Alcohol use and related harm is a growing problem in Ireland with far-reaching consequences for health services generally. Areas which are most affected include accident and emergency departments and psychiatric hospitals or units. The purpose of this paper is to examine the role of alcohol in psychiatric admissions to an Irish psychiatric hospital

Methods: The inpatient records for all patients admitted over a one year period were examined retrospectively. All 378 patients admitted within that time were included and their admission records were examined manually for age, gender, diagnosis of psychiatric illness, co-morbid alcohol abuse, and the role of alcohol in precipitating the admission. Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences, version 11.5.

Results: 21.7% of admissions had alcohol dependency syndrome and it is the primary diagnosis in 10.1%. Alcohol was a factor in the admission of 29.1% of patients. Of the 110 patients in this category, 42 did not have a primary diagnosis of alcohol dependency syndrome, i.e. 61.8% had a primary diagnosis of a psychiatric illness other than alcohol dependency syndrome.

Conclusions: Alcohol is a factor in a large proportion of psychiatric admissions. It has been associated with poor compliance, exacerbation of symptoms and relapse. It is important to recognise the role of alcohol in psychiatry morbidity, both as a primary diagnosis (alcohol dependency syndrome), and also where the primary diagnosis is another psychiatric illness.