

P-139 - COMORBIDITY OF PANIC DISORDER WITH AGORAPHOBIA AND ALCOHOL-RELATED DISORDERS

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Introduction: Symptoms of Alcohol-Induced Disorders may resemble characteristic features of Panic Attacks. It is also known that individuals with fears occasionally use alcohol as an anti-anxious agent.

Objectives: The objective of the study was to investigate the relationship between some common fears and Alcohol-Related Disorders. We have sorted out 61 inpatients with the diagnosis of "Panic Disorder (PD) with Agoraphobia" according to the DSM-IV criteria.

Results: The rate of Alcohol Dependence among first-degree relatives of the patients was quite high (24, 6%).

Approximately 10% had Alcohol Abuse within 5 years prior to PD onset.

Alcohol-Induced Panic Attacks (13,1%) were accompanied by predominance of somatic symptoms and fear of a life-threatening illness. Most individuals (95,1%) have completely abandoned any experience with alcohol in the first 3 months after manifestation of PD. Some months later, the repeated Panic Attacks could lead to avoidance of a variety of situations. About one-third occasionally used alcohol when they were travelling by public transport. Some patients (9,8%) took alcohol every time they intended being alone out of home which eventually led to Alcohol Dependence (6,5%).

When agoraphobia occurred soon after special treatment (so-called "coding from alcohol") just only the smell and view of alcohol beverages could provoke panic-like symptoms (8,2%).

Conclusion: Both alcohol consumption and anti-alcohol treatment may immediately precede the onset of Panic Attacks. PD alone is associated with low risk of Alcohol Use Disorders. In contrast, agoraphobic symptoms are very likely to be accompanied with the frequent use of alcohol in fearful situations.