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## Alcoholism and marital adjustment

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### Abstract

Alcoholism is a serious medical disease with signs and symptoms that vary depending on the amount and frequency of consumption. Progressing alcoholism will significantly disrupt the lives of users and their families. In the present study researcher has used the Descriptive Research design to describe the socio-demographic variables and the marital adjustment of the respondents. The universe of the present study consisted of married male alcoholics' who are under de-addiction treatment at SOCSEAD de-addiction center, Tiruchirappalli, during April to June 2014. The universe of this study is infinite because the universe is not consistent in nature as all the inpatient and outpatients were taken in to the universe of this study. The analysis revealed that a little more than half (51.1 percentage) of the respondents had low level of marital adjustment. Remaining 48.9 percent of the respondents had high level of marital adjustment. It is also revealed that the marital adjustment among the respondents who are frequently consuming alcohol is very poor. There is significant relationship between the respondents' span of alcoholism and their marital adjustment. Hence longer the duration of alcohol dependency poorer would be the marital adjustment.

**Keywords:** Alcoholism, marital adjustment, span of alcoholism, consumption frequency, alcohol dependency.

### Introduction

#### Alcoholism

Alcoholism is a serious medical disease with signs and symptoms that vary depending on the amount and frequency of consumption. Progressing alcoholism will significantly disrupt the lives of users and their families.

Physical signs of alcohol overconsumption and intoxication are recognizable by most adults:

- Slurred or incoherent speech
- Poor balance and clumsiness
- Delayed reflexes
- Stomach pains, vomiting or nausea
- Loss of consciousness or blacking-out
- Redness of the face during or after periods of consumption

It is possible for a person to reach a level of intoxication that becomes life-threatening (alcohol poisoning). The respiratory system becomes depressed, and the person will stop breathing.

#### Signs of Alcohol Dependence (Alcoholism)

Untreated alcohol abuse can progress to an addiction to alcohol characterized by physical dependency and/or inability to stop despite serious consequences. Once they begin drinking, alcoholics have little to no control over the amount they consume. Alcohol dependence indicates that the user has made obtaining and consuming alcohol a predominant focus of her life. Signs and symptoms of alcohol dependence represent a serious medical illness:

- Significant hangovers, and increase in time needed to recover from after-effects of alcohol use
- Increased amount of alcohol consumed because of increased tolerance; or, decrease in the effects of alcohol use without substantial increases in the amount consumed
- Reduced attention to personal and professional responsibilities

- Acknowledgement of side effects of medical complications from alcoholism
- Repeated unsuccessful efforts to reduce alcohol consumption
- Withdrawal symptoms when unable to consume alcohol

### Consequences of Alcohol Use

Drinking consequences represent a domain independent of dependence symptoms and should be measured separately. While many screening instruments and diagnostic clinical interviews contain interview questions designed to identify negative consequences, having your clients complete a self-administered questionnaire will provide a detailed picture of negative consequences across a variety of life domains, and in the case of marital or family assessment, from different family member perspectives.

A thorough assessment of consequences also can be useful when evaluating treatment effects, since these measures have been shown to be sensitive to changes in drinking-related problems over time. Communicating these assessment results often is useful in helping the drinker appreciate the connection between drinking and negative consequences across life domains.

Long-term alcohol abuse poses great dangers to an alcoholic's physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual health. In addition to serious ramifications for the user's career, family and friends, alcoholism can cause irreversible damage to critical organs and body systems:

- Liver
- Nervous system
- Heart
- Stomach (intestines)
- Brain

Alcohol abuse and addiction also produce other medical side effects. Alcoholics frequently attribute these complications to other health conditions, as they attempt to avoid ownership of the consequences of their drinking. Common medical side effects include:

- High blood pressure
- Sexual problems
- Cancer
- Stomach problems
- Osteoporosis, especially in women

Alcoholism often causes severe social consequences on a person's life as well. Being drunk or hung over at work frequently results in termination from a job, leaving a person and her dependents in severe financial trouble. Domestic violence, marital conflict, legal problems and isolation from friends and family are also common results of alcohol abuse, which may be worsened by the presence of co-occurring anorexia or bulimia.

The problems of alcoholism have impact on the marital life especially in the following areas.

- Violence
- Marital conflict
- Infidelity
- Jealousy
- Economic insecurity
- Divorce
- Fetal alcohol effect

Cranford *et al.*, (2011) <sup>[4]</sup> conducted a longitudinal study on Husbands' and wives' alcohol use disorders and marital interactions as longitudinal predictors of marital adjustment, the relationships among wives' and husbands' lifetime alcoholism status, marital behaviors, and marital adjustment were tested. Participants were 105 couples from the Michigan Longitudinal Study (MLS), an ongoing multimethod investigation of substance use in a community-based sample of alcoholics, nonalcoholics, and their families. At baseline (T1), husbands and wives completed a series of diagnostic measures, and lifetime diagnosis of alcohol use disorder (AUD, as defined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th ed.), was assessed. Couples completed a problem-solving marital interaction task 3 years later at T2, which was coded for the ratio of positive to negative behaviors. Couples also completed a measure of marital adjustment at T4 (9 years after T1 and 6 years after T2). Results showed that husbands' lifetime AUD predicted lower levels of their wife's positive marital behaviors 3 years later but was not related to their own or their wife's marital adjustment 9 years from baseline. By contrast, wives' lifetime AUD had direct negative associations with their own and their husband's marital satisfaction 9 years later, and wives' marital behaviors during the problem-solving task predicted their own and their husband's marital satisfaction 6 years later. Findings indicate that marital adjustment in alcoholic couples may be driven more by the wives' than the husbands' AUD and marital behavior. Implications for intervention with alcoholic couples were discussed.

### Impact of alcoholism on marital life

- **Marital distress:** Alcohol abuse increases the feelings of marital distress. Individuals in marriages in which one or both spouses is an alcoholic report higher levels of marital distress or trouble than do married individuals who are not married to alcoholics.
- **Anger:** Marital satisfaction is related strongly to a couple's ability to communicate effectively. But heavy alcohol use is associated with more negative and hostile communication, more expressions of anger, and less warmth and unity in the relationship. These factors decrease a couple's satisfaction in their marriage and create greater tension.
- **Everyday family responsibilities:** Alcohol abuse decreases marital satisfaction because it decreases the drinking spouse's ability to participate in everyday household tasks and responsibilities. This inability leads to greater stress on the non-drinking spouse and decreases satisfaction in the marriage.
- **Psychological distress:** Alcohol abuse increases the psychological distress of the non-drinking spouse. An adult's alcohol abuse also is related to children's increased social, emotional, behavioral, and academic problems, which, in turn, leads to more stress in the family and less marital satisfaction.

### Alcoholism and the risk of divorce

- With alcoholism and marriage, alcohol problems are related to increase rates of marital violence, poor communication, and feelings of marital distress that lead to a greater risk of divorce.
- Differences between spouses in their drinking behaviors decrease marital quality and increase the likelihood of divorce. One reason for this increased likelihood is that

drinking has an impact on the amount of time that partners spend together, especially if the alcoholic frequently drinks away from home. The more time spent apart, the less satisfied the nonalcoholic spouse becomes and the greater the potential for divorce.

**Aims of the study**

The aim of this study is to assess the marital adjustment among the alcoholics.

**Objectives of the study**

- To study the social demographic details of the respondents.
- To assess the marital adjustment among the respondents.
- To find out influence of variables on are another.

**Research Hypotheses**

1. There is significant difference between the alcohol consumption frequencies of the respondents with regard to their marital adjustment.
2. Higher the span of alcohol consumption and lower will be the marital adjustment.

**Research design**

In the present study researcher has used the Descriptive Research design to describe the socio-demographic variables and the marital adjustment of the respondents.

**Universe**

The universe of the present study consisted of married male alcoholics' who are under deaddiction treatment at socsead de-addiction center during April to June 2014. The universe of this study in infinite because the universe is not consistent in nature as all the inpatient and outpatients were taken in to the universe of this study.

**Sampling Techniques**

Among the universe 90 respondents were selected by using convenient sampling technique.

**Inclusive criteria**

All the married male alcoholics.

**Exclusive criteria**

Patients with Psychiatric illness.

**Tools for the data collection**

The tools selected in accordance with the aim and objectives of the study. It consisted of self prepared Socio-demographic interview schedule along with marital adjustment scale by Locke, H.J., & Wallace, K.M. (1959) marital adjustment scale. It is a 15-item scale that measures marital satisfaction. It was initially used to differentiate Well-adjusted couples from distressed couples. The 15 item are answered on a variety of response scales.

**Analysis and discussion**

**Findings related to socio-demographic variable**

It was revealed from the analysis that, nearly 1/2(44.4 percentage) of the respondents were belonged to the age group of 31-40 years. More than 2/4<sup>th</sup> (47.8 percent) of the respondent's educational qualification were up to 12<sup>th</sup> standard. A little more than 3/5<sup>th</sup> (61.1 percentage) of the respondents were Hindus. More than 1/4<sup>th</sup> (33.3 percent) of the respondents were in private job. 32.2 percent of the respondents were self-employed. A little less than 3/4<sup>th</sup> (71.1 percent) of the respondents get 0-10000 income per month. More than 3/5<sup>th</sup> (68.9 percent) of the respondents have 0-2 children. More than 1/2(58.9 percent) of the respondents belonged to nuclear family. More than 3/5<sup>th</sup> (66.7 percent) of the respondents came from urban area. Nearly 1/2(45.6 percent) of the respondents have 0-5 years of drinking habit. More than 3/5<sup>th</sup> (64.4 percent) of respondent's family size was 0-5 in numbers.

**Findings related to alcoholism related problems**

Nearly 1/2(47.8 percent) of the respondents consume alcohol due to their hard work. A little more than 1/2 (51.1 percent) of the respondent's factors influences to consume alcohol is their peer group. Exactly 3/5<sup>th</sup> (60.0 percent) of the respondents drink daily. Exactly 1/2 (50.0 percent) of the respondents have presence of physical ailments. 14.5 percentages of the respondents have liver problem. A little more than 3/4<sup>th</sup> (76.7 percent) of the respondents know about ill health effects of alcohol. More than 1/2 (54.4 percent) of the respondents lost some their properties due to alcoholism. Majority (85.6 percent) of the respondents wanted to have de-addiction. A little less than 3/4<sup>th</sup> (70.0 percent) of the respondents were involving in domestic violence. More than 1/4 (31.1 percent) of the respondents did not involve in any type of domestic violence. More than 3/5<sup>th</sup> (67.8 percent) had the experience of frequently changing the job. A little more than 1/2 (55.6 percent) of the respondents met accidents due to alcoholism.

**Table 1:** Distribution of the respondents by their marital adjustment

| Marital adjustment | No. of respondents | Percent |
|--------------------|--------------------|---------|
| Low                | 46                 | 51.1    |
| High               | 44                 | 48.9    |
| Total              | 90                 | 100.0   |

The above table shows that 1/2 (51.1 percentage) of the respondents had low level of marital adjustment. Remaining 48.9 percent of the respondents had high level of marital adjustment.

**Table 2:** Analysis of variance between occupations of the respondents with regard to their marital adjustment

| Occupation         |                | Mean  | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F                                    |
|--------------------|----------------|---|----------------|----|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| Marital adjustment | Between Groups | G1=105.0000<br>G2=89.7000<br>G3=77.5000<br>G4=84.5172<br>G5=82.7333<br>G6=72.3333 | 4585.914       | 5  | 917.183     | F=0.826<br>P>0.05<br>Not significant |
|                    | Within Groups  |   | 93282.141      | 84 | 1110.502    |                                      |

G1 = Govt. = Private job G3 = Agriculture G4 = Self-employed G5 = Coolie G6 = Unemployed

The above table shows that there is significant variance between occupations of the respondents with regard to their marital adjustment. The respondents who are unemployed perceived very less marital adjustment than the others. Even

though there is no significant difference between the respondents' occupation and their marital adjustment, the respondents who are having secured job like government employment have better marital adjustment than the others.

**Table 3:** Analysis of variance between alcohol consumption frequencies of the respondents with regard to their marital adjustment

| Alcohol consumption frequencies |                | Mean  | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F                                    |
|---------------------------------|----------------|---|----------------|----|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| Marital adjustment              | Between Groups | G1=111.5000<br>G2=95.4286<br>G3=85.0000<br>G4=86.7778<br>G5=72.6667 | 8705.127       | 5  | 1741.025    | F=1.640<br>P>0.05<br>Not significant |
|                                 | Within Groups  |   | 89162.929      | 84 | 1061.463    |                                      |

G1 = Special occasion G2 = Once in a week G3 = Once in a month G4 = Daily G5 = Frequently

The above table shows that there is no significant variance between alcohol consumption frequencies of the respondents with regard to their marital adjustment. It is also revealed that the marital adjustment among the respondents who are frequently consuming alcohol is very poor.

**Research hypothesis 1: There is significant difference between the alcohol consumption frequencies of the respondents with regard to their marital adjustment**

From the above ANOVA table it is inferred that there is no significant variance between alcohol consumption frequencies of the respondents with regard to their marital adjustment. Hence the research hypothesis 1 is rejected.

**Table 4:** Karl Pearson Co-efficient of correlation between socio demographic variable and marital adjustment

| S. No | Variable                                  | Correlation value | Inference                 |
|-------|---|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 1     | Age and marital adjustment                | .202              | P>0.05<br>Not significant |
| 2     | Income and marital adjustment             | .050              | P>0.05<br>Not significant |
| 3     | Span of alcoholism and marital adjustment | -.222(*)          | P<0.05<br>Significant     |

It is revealed from the above table that there is no significant relationship between the age and income of the respondents and their marital adjustment. It is also understood from this table that there is significant relationship between the respondents' span of alcoholism and their marital adjustment. Hence longer the duration of alcohol dependency poorer would be the marital adjustment.

**Research Hypothesis 2: Higher the span of alcohol consumption and lower will be the marital adjustment**

From the above analysis it was revealed that longer the duration of alcohol dependency poorer would be the marital adjustment. Hence the research hypothesis 2 is accepted.

**Suggestions**

It is revealed from this study that a significant percent of the respondents' marital adjustment is low. Through the analysis it is clear that the marital adjustment is worse among the respondents who are frequently consuming alcohol than those of rarely consuming category. The span of alcoholism also has significant influence on marital adjustment. Alcoholism has direct effect on marital adjustment among the couple, hence it is advisable that alcohol addiction is not only good for health but also it is affecting the marital life of the victims.

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