

Relationship between Childhood Maltreatment and Alcohol Addiction in Middle Adulthood

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Childhood trauma and maltreatment have been frequently identified in the life histories of patients in treatment for substance use disorders. This paper examines the relationships between the childhood profiles who reported to have undergone childhood maltreatment and alcohol addiction characteristics. In this regard, the methodology adopted was the following: twenty- five alcohol addicted male patients between the age of forty to sixty years from Mampitiya rehabilitation hospital were recruited. Childhood maltreatment/trauma was assessed using Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ),(Bernstein & Fink, 1998) and by a semi structured interview questionnaire consisting of questions relevant to childhood and alcohol consumption. Content and narrative analysis methods were used with predetermined themes (The socio-economic background and the educational level of the participants were also considered). It was found that the mean age of subjects was 45.2 yrs. The majority were raised in low socio-economic backgrounds (88%) and were poly drug users. On the CTQ 56% reported physical neglect, 60% emotional neglect, 72% emotional abuse and 84% for physical abuse. Overall, 74% of participants reported experiencing at least one type of abuse. Subjects who scored high on CTQ are heavy users of alcohol with an early age onset (< 15 yrs) compared with the subjects with low to moderate scores. The findings of the study portray that a majority of alcohol addicted patients has undergone at least one form of childhood maltreatment in their childhood. The results suggest childhood maltreatment and trauma occur due to many factors, with socio-economic problems, poverty, inadequate love, and care serving as risk factors for alcohol addiction in later life.

Keywords: Childhood, Maltreatment, Trauma, Alcohol, Addiction