Study of alcoholism in elderly - The etiology and effects on health

Dr. Ch. Srilakshmi¹, Dr. K. Sivaprasad² MD, Dr. Indirapriyadarsini³ MD.

¹Post Graduate  ²Associate Professor  ³Assistant Professor

I. Introduction

- Alcoholism is common but unrecognised problem in elderly people.
- The effects of alcohol in elderly people compared to young are combined effects of alcoholism and age-related comorbid conditions.
- Problems related to alcohol use in elderly people have interrelated medical, behavioural, social and environmental factors.
- Advancements of healthcare facilities, awareness about them and education have improved life expectancy leading to increase in proportion of elderly people. Ageing leads to progressive, gradual loss of function of various organs and increased incidence of diseases.

II. Aims and objectives

1. To study prevalence of alcoholism and alcohol use disorder in elderly.
2. To study etiological factors and effects of alcohol on behaviour and health.

III. Methods and Methodology:

- Hospital based analytical study of 100 elderly patients admitted in medical wards in tertiary care hospital, Tirupati.
- Patients with age more than 60 years are included.
- CAGE criteria and DSM - V are used to detect alcoholism and alcohol use disorder.

IV. Results

Alcoholism and alcohol use disorder

- Nonalcoholics - 45%
- Alcoholism - 55%
- Alcohol use disorder - 11%
Study of alcoholism in elderly - The etiology and effects on health

**AGEDISTRIBUTION**

- 60-70YRS- 39 (70.9%)
- 62>70-80YRS- 16 (29.09%)
- 30%>80YRS- 0 (0.0%)

**SEX DISTRIBUTION**

- FEMALE- NONALCOHOLICS- 34%
- FEMALE- ALCOHOLICS- 1%
- MALE- NONALCOHOLICS- 11%
- MALE- ALCOHOLICS- 54%

**ETIOLOGY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EARLYONSET (70.9%)</th>
<th>LATEONSET (29.09%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HIGHLEVELSOFSTRESS</td>
<td>17(30.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEPRESSIONDUE TO LONELINESSANDHEALTHPROBLEMS</td>
<td>9 (16.63%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEERPLEASUREANDEASYAVAILABILITY</td>
<td>13(23.63%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIFFICULTY IN MIXING IN SOCIETY AND MAKING NEW FRIENDS</td>
<td>4 (7.27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STRUGGLING INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP</td>
<td>16 (16.63%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RETIREMENT</td>
<td>3 (5.45%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DOI: 10.9790/0853-1804169698  www.iosrjournals.org 97 | Page
EFFECTSONHEALTH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SYSTEMINVOLVED</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CENTRALNERVOUSSYSTEM</td>
<td>14(25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEVERANDSEPSIS</td>
<td>10(18.18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARDIOVASCULARSYSTEM</td>
<td>5(10.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIVERANDGISYSTEM</td>
<td>5(9.09% EACH)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H/OOFFALL_ANDRESPIRATORYSYSTEM</td>
<td>4(7.27% EACH)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RENALSYSTEM</td>
<td>4(7.27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HYPERTENSIONANDDIABETISMILLITES</td>
<td>3(5.4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

V. Discussion

- Inthestudy, alcoholism was seen in 55% and alcohol use disorder was seen in 11%.
- Alcoholismismoreinmalescomparedtofemales.
- Early onset of alcoholism is seen in 70.9% and late onset of alcoholism is seen in 29.09%.
- Causes, for early onset alcoholism is high level of stress (30.9%), for peer pleasures and easy availability (23.63), struggling with interpersonal relationship (16.36).
- Causes, for late onset alcoholism is depression due to loneliness or health problems (16.36%), difficulty due to difficulty in mixing in community (7.27%), retirement (5.4%)
- Effectson health due to alcoholism are mainly on central nervous system - dementia, depression, cognitive dysfunction, peripheral neuropathy, cerebellar damage, CVA (25%), fever and sepsis (28.18%) due to malnourishment, nutritional deficiency, immunosupression,
- Coronary artery disease (10.8%)
- Alcoholic liver disease and GI bleeding (9.09%)
- CKD, H/O falls, respiratory disease (7.27% each)
- Hypertension and diabetes mellitus (5.4%)

VI. Limitations

- CAGE criteria is insensitive for detecting binge drinking, frequency, pattern and amount of alcohol consumed.
- Modified diagnostic criteria should be developed for elderly people including different aspects of health due to comorbidities, depressive illness and de-emphasizing social, legal, occupational aspects and more emphasis on medical, behaviour, social factors.

VII. Conclusions

- The study shows, alcoholism is more prevalent in elderly people with effect on health mainly involving CNS, CVS, GIS system with high level of stress being major cause followed by consuming for pleasure and easy availability.
- An elderly population is increasing, therefore, there is need to study effects of alcoholism in elderly and to develop better screening criteria involving comorbid conditions and pattern of consumption.
- The continued regular or irregular intake of alcohol with ageing process with gradual deterioration of organs system to lastly result in senility as pregnancy known as alcoholism in elderly people.
- In my observations, one and half years as a resident, symptom complex in alcoholism and elderly people are more or less the same, however, alcoholics appear earlier and they never (or with great difficulty) reach elderly age group.

References


Dr. Ch. Srilakshmi. “Study of alcoholism in elderly-The etiology and effects on health.” IOSR Journal of Dental and Medical Sciences (IOSR-JDMS), vol. 18, no. 4, 2019, pp 96-98.