

## SUBSTANTIATION AND CONTENT OF PSYCHO-EDUCATION OF PATIENTS WITH ALCOHOL DEPENDENCE

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<https://doi.org/10.35339/ic.6.4.253-257>

### Abstract

**Subjects & methods.** On the basis of the Kharkiv Regional Clinical Narcological Hospital No. 9 and the Military Medical Clinical Center of the Northern Region, a comprehensive examination of 150 male patients aged 20 to 55 years with alcohol addiction syndrome was conducted. **Results.** According to the results of the study, among the examined patients, persons with a persistent alcohol abuse were prevalent, the average AUDIT score in the main group was 4.0, indicating that there were serious alcohol problems; the style of alcohol abuse of patients of the main group was correlated with issues of the presence of danger for physical, psychological, and mental health. Dangerous alcohol consumption was found in 35.2%, high probability of alcohol dependence was found in 60.1%. The system of rehabilitation of patients with alcohol dependence with the use of psychoeducation has been developed and tested. Against the background of psychoeducational activities, positive dynamics of stress-coping behavior was observed. After conducting rehabilitation measures, coping strategies aimed at solving problems were noted in 45.1% of the examined patients of the main group and 32.6% of people of the control group, coping strategies aimed at emotions were in 31.4% and 22.4% respectively, 15.9% and 32.6% respectively – at avoidance, 6.7% and 12.4% – at distraction. **Conclusions.** Thus, the study identified the foundations and principles of psycho-education for the system of complex rehabilitation of patients with alcohol dependence

**Keywords:** *alcohol addiction syndrome, alcohol dependence, psychoeducation, coping strategies, rehabilitation.*

### Introduction

In recent years, among the population of Ukraine there has been a significant increase in the consumption of alcoholic beverages and as a consequence an increase in the number of patients with alcohol dependence [1, 2].

According to the WHO data for 2010, the average annual consumption of alcohol in Ukraine is about 13.9 liters of pure ethanol per year (more than 2 liters of spirits per month) per capita, including all persons 15 years and older. The criteria for severe episodic use of alcohol in Ukraine correspond to about 35.2% of men and 12.1% of women (consuming 60 grams and more

of pure alcohol in one case over the past 30 days) [3, 4].

The modern period of development of our country is characterized by a considerable amount of destructively-destabilizing and socially predetermined stress factors, which results in a significant increase in the long-term stress load in which the Ukrainian population lives. This forms a number of adverse factors in increasing the level of use of psychoactive substances, in particular, alcohol [5, 6].

Low indicators of the effectiveness of treatment for patients with alcohol dependence necessitate the search for certain criteria for their effective use and the development of complex differentiated therapeutic programs on this basis that include various combinations of modern pharmacological and psychotherapeutic approaches. Analyzing the literature data, it has to be noted that despite the large arsenal of means and methods, available to the addiction medicine,

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the effectiveness of alcohol dependence treatment continues to be insufficient [7–9].

Modern scientific research on alcohol dependence is devoted to updating the concept of psychosocial rehabilitation of patients, their social reintegration and improvement of quality of their life. In this regard, the relevance of finding new psychotherapeutic approaches to the treatment of alcohol addiction and development of effective schemes that meet current standards of treatment is increased. Psycho-education can be considered one of such approaches. Its increasing importance in world psychotherapeutic practice is gaining more and more recognition as for increasing the intensity, efficiency and effectiveness of psychotherapeutic assistance to patients with alcohol dependence [10–13].

The foregoing stipulated the relevance and necessity of this study.

## **2. Purposes, subjects and methods:**

**2.1. Purpose:** To develop and evaluate the effectiveness of psycho-educational programs in the system of psychosocial rehabilitation of patients with alcohol dependence.

### **2.2. Subjects & Methods**

To achieve this goal, a comprehensive survey of 150 male patients aged 20 to 55 years was conducted on the basis of the Kharkiv Regional Clinical Narcological Hospital No. 9 and the Military Medical Clinical Center of the Northern Region (with the informed consent in compliance with the principles of bioethics and deontology). The patients were diagnosed with a syndrome of alcohol dependence according to the diagnostic criteria of the ICD-10 (F 10.2δ) and grouped: F10.20, currently abstinent – 31.9 %; F10.24, currently using the substance (active dependence) – 22.6 %; F10.25 continuous use – 29.2%; F10.26, episodic use (dipsomania) – 16.3 %.

All respondents who were included in the study gave voluntary consent to participation, were fluent in Russian and Ukrainian languages. This allowed to perform a complete clinico-psychopathological and psycho-diagnostic survey. The contingent of the surveyed persons was homogeneous in baseline. This allowed the results of the study to be considered as representative of the general population.

All patients received regulated psychopharmacotherapy according to the standards of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine within the limits of the provision of the medical institution. The main group consisted of 105 subjects, control group comprised 45 patients who received standard regulated therapy in the hospital. The

patients in the main group participated in the psycho-educational program, based on our own research.

The study implied clinico-psychopathological and psychodiagnostic methods of examination. The clinico-psychopathological research was based on generally accepted approaches to psychiatric and narcological examination by interviewing and observation, which was supplemented with the use of the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) [14]. This test is used to detect disorders associated with alcohol abuse and to determine the extent of its use. The survey was conducted using diagnostic and research criteria of the ICD-10.

Psychodiagnostic study included the study of the features of stress-breaking behavior "Methods of coping" (in the adaptation of T. A. Kryukova, 2002) [15].

Standard statistics used for evaluating study results.

### **Conflict of interests**

The authors of the article declare no conflict of interest.

### **3. Results and discussion**

The research was conducted in three stages. At the first stage, the definition of biological and psychosocial predictors of alcohol dependence, clinical psychopathological phenomenology and personality traits of patients were made. Based on this, the rationale and development of the psycho-education system of patients with alcohol dependence was carried out. At the second stage, the actual psycho-educational effects were realized, the effectiveness of which was evaluated at the third stage of the study, particularly 6 months after the start of treatment.

According to the results of the study, the surveyed patients were mainly persons with a constant style of alcohol abuse, the average score for AUDIT in patients with the main group was 4.0. This indicated that there were serious alcohol problems. The style of alcohol abuse by patients of the main group with a high degree of reliability correlated with the issues of the danger to physical ( $p \leq 0.001$ ), psychological ( $p \leq 0.001$ ) and mental health ( $p \leq 0.001$ ).

In the clinical picture of alcohol disorders, alcohol abuse was permanent in nature, with loss of situational control, palimpsests.

In the clinical picture of alcohol dependence, dysphoria was observed in 38.1% of the patients. Its features included irritability (65.9%), anger (69.1%), aggression (42.3%); affective reactions (27.3%) which were manifested by pronounced

irritability (72.1%), distraction (51.4%), impatience (49.2%); anxiety-depressive disorders (34.6%) that were characterized by a feeling of tension (38.9%), anxiety, internal tension with the inability to relax (54.8%), asthenic manifestations (29.1%), hyperesthesia (45.1%).

In 53.2% of surveyed patients with alcohol addiction, coping strategies were focused on avoidance, in 31.3% on distraction, in 11.3% on emotions, in 4.4% on solving problems.

Based on the data obtained, we have developed and tested a system of rehabilitation of patients with alcohol dependence using psycho-education, aimed at improving the ability of patients to solve their own problems. That is, on the disclosure and the ability to apply the skills of self-regulation and self-actualization of the patient, which is deformed in patients with alcohol dependence.

The psycho-educational effect was directed to the following features: focus on the alcohol problem and on the patient; structuring and use of methods of activating consciousness, changes in the habitual patterns of thinking, behavioral changes, activation of experience and expression of emotions, patient support.

The main tasks in conducting psycho-educational lessons were: filling in the informational specific (narcological) knowledge deficiency available to patients and their families; awareness of a patient of a morbid condition, formation of motivation for treatment; development of behavioral skills in the "crisis"; correction of "alcohol" patterns of behavior, correction of alcohol dependence of patients' social positions; counteract the possibility of relapse of the disease.

Psycho-educational classes were held in closed groups (i.e., after the beginning of the cycle, new participants are not accepted), with the number of participants from 10 to 15 people. Psycho-educational intervention consisted of 4 modules: increasing the level of special (narcological) knowledge of the patient and his family; development of skills for solving life problems; training of communication skills; coaching skills training.

Implementation of modules was carried out in the form of lectures, discussions, using auxiliary visual information (photos, video materials) and printed materials (leaflets, booklets, brochures). In addition, patients and their relatives were given homework (for example, self-preparation of their ideas about some topics from among those discussed in the group lesson). As a monitoring

tool, patients were invited to keep a diary in which they reflect the time course and practical application of the knowledge gained.

The basis of psycho-education of patients with alcohol dependence is the patient's awareness of a morbid condition, an analysis of their own personality characteristics and peculiarities of their perception in society; formation of patient motivation for treatment; development of skills of adequate behavior in a psycho-traumatic situation; correction of "alcohol" patterns of behavior.

The effectiveness of the developed complex rehabilitation of patients with alcohol dependence with the use of psycho-education was carried out in comparison with traditional measures on the basis of evaluation of the time course of clinico-psychopathological and pathopsychological characteristics of patients and quality of life. Catamnesis was 6 months.

Analysis of the clinical results of the use of the developed system showed that in the main group for the AUDIT test, in 65.3% of the examined, relatively safe (or complete absence) alcohol consumption was detected (0-7 points), in 23.1% of the surveyed, risky use of alcohol was maintained (8-15 points). Among the surveyed control groups, 55.1% had a dangerous alcohol use (16-19 points), and 25.8% had a high probability of alcohol addiction (20 points or more). In the clinical picture of alcohol disorders in patients in the control group, alcohol abuse was permanent with a loss of situational control and palimpsests.

In the analysis of the duration and quality of remission was established (after 6 months): 70.1% of the surveyed in the main group noted a complete remission of alcohol dependence compared with 41.5% of patients in the control group; incomplete remission, respectively, in 26.2% and 49.1% of the surveyed accordingly; persistent alcohol abuse in 3.7% of the surveyed in the main group and 9.4% of the control group.

Perception of their own dependent status and understanding of the need for therapeutic work was formed in 77.6% of the surveyed in the main group.

A positive follow-up of stress-breaking behavior was noted following psycho-educational events. After carrying out rehabilitation measures, 45.1% of the surveyed in the main group and 32.6% in the control group noted coping strategies aimed at solving problems. In 31.4% and 22.4% respectively, coping strategies were aimed at

emotions. In 15.9% of the surveyed in the main group and in 32.6% in the control group, the coping strategies were aimed at avoidance, in 6.7% and 12.4%, respectively, at the distraction.

The study showed effectiveness of psychoeducation in therapy and psychosocial rehabilitation of patients with alcohol dependence, correlating with the data of modern researchers [16, 17] and indicating the need for further development of rehabilitation measures for patients with alcohol addiction, which will improve

the quality and duration of remission, contribute to successful social adaptation of patients and significantly improve their quality of life.

### Conclusions

Thus, the study identified the foundations and principles of psycho-education for the system of complex rehabilitation of patients with alcohol dependence, the main purpose of which is to develop the patient's ability to independently solve their own problems of alcoholic origin and prove their effectiveness.

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*Received: 03-Sep-2019*

*Accepted: 13-Dec-2019*