

Psychological Distress Correlates Marital Adjustment: A Study among the Wives of Persons Dependent on Alcohol (WPDA)

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Abstract

Alcoholism is a major public health problem all over the world (WHO, 2004) and it has been frequently referred to as a 'family disease' to underline the fact that excessive drinking affects not just the drinker but others in the family as well. WHO Global Strategy (2010) stated that special attention needs to be given to people other than the drinkers such as spouse or partner, as they may be affected by the harmful use of the drinking. All the marriages are aimed at happiness. Marriage involves the legal commitment that is quite important in any adult life. But selecting a partner and entering into a marital relationship required one's maturity and personal achievement. Choice of marital partner is one of the most important decisions in one's life. There are so many reasons for people's marriage like they need companionship, happiness and to escape from an unhappy situation. Strong and healthy married life requires adjustment. If person can do adjustment in his/her married life, the life could be much better than those who are low on adjustment.

Keywords: Alcoholism, marriage, relationship, mankind, drinkers, partner, maturity.

Introduction

Women have always been strong. They are always on the forefront of struggle for the betterment of mankind. They have given strength and have been of great support to their male counterpart. Women play multiple roles in their life. Especially after marriage they play many roles and handle all the circumstances in a better way at home as well as in their work environment. All the marriages are aimed at happiness. Marriage involves the legal commitment that is quite important in any adult life. But selecting a partner and entering into a marital relationship required one's maturity and personal achievement. Choice of marital partner is one of the most important decisions in one's life. There are so many reasons for people's marriage like they need companionship, happiness and to escape from an unhappy situation. Strong and healthy married life requires adjustment. If person can do adjustment in his/her married life, the life could be much better than those who are low on adjustment.

Alcoholism is a major public health problem all over the world (WHO, 2004) and it has been frequently referred to as a ‘family disease’ to underline the fact that excessive drinking affects not just the drinker but others in the family as well. WHO Global Strategy (2010) stated that special attention needs to be given to people other than the drinkers such as spouse or partner, as they may be affected by the harmful use of the drinking. Alcoholism is considered as an ongoing stressor, not only for the individual, but for family members as well (Cleary, P., & Mechanics, D (1983). Tomori, 1994). Spouses are particularly affected given the intimate nature of their relationship and are known to be exposed to high rates of domestic violence (Hurcom, Copello & Orford, 2000). The negative social consequences of alcohol consumption may diminish the individual’s ability to adapt leading to emotional distress and thereby increasing the likelihood of psychological problems (Kahler, McCrady & Epstein, 2003).

Several studies have also shown that spouses of alcoholics often present significant rates of mental and physical problems, communication problems, low social activity and poor marital satisfaction (Amruthraj, B, & Jaiprakash, I. (1985), Moos et al., 1990). Spouses of alcohol dependent persons have higher rates of psychological, stress-related medical problems, make greater use of health care systems and run a higher risk of developing own abuse than other people (Schnurr & Green, 2004). In a recent study done by Kishor et al. (2013) he reported 43% of spouses of men with alcohol related problems had major depressive disorder (MDD) and the depression had significant correlation with the severity of the alcohol related problems. Alcohol is associated with marital dissatisfaction, negative interaction patterns and higher levels of marital violence (Marshall, 2003, Zetterlind, U., & Berglund, M. (2007).). Women with alcoholic partners report significantly lower marital satisfaction than their male partners (O’Farrell & Birchler, 1987) and much of this marital dissatisfaction appears to be related to the extent to which alcohol use impairs family functioning (Zweben, 1986). Marital distress and individual psychopathology may exacerbate each other (Halford et al., 1999).

According to Thomas (1977) Marital adjustment is “the state in which there is an overall feeling in husband and wife of happiness, satisfaction with their marriage and with each other”. Usually couples marry with full of high expectations from each other. Dalack (1990) defined marriage as socially legitimate sexual union, begun with a public announcement and undertaken with some ideas of performance. There is a list of six areas of marital adjustment, which is defined by the psychologist, such as, religion, social life, mutual friends, in-laws, money and sex (Lazaru & Delingis 1983). Another psychologist defines ten areas of marital adjustment, i.e. values, couple growth, communication, conflict resolution, affection, roles, cooperation, sex, money, and parenthood (Margolin, 1980). Kinnunen and Feldt, (2004) Economic strain is directly linked to increased couple disagreements and has direct impact on marital adjustment.

Dave (2015) conducted a study to find out the marital adjustment among working and non working women. It was found that there is significant difference in marital adjustment among working and non working women. Jamabo & Ordu (2012) shows that both working and non working class women exhibit no clear difference in their marital adjustment. Rogers & May (2003) viewed that working class women are generally more satisfied with their lives and marriage than non working women even though there exit a husband with the problem of Alcohol. Bradbury & Fincham (1990) studied that women feel more depressed and stressed after marriage due to their partners drinking behaviour. Examining the relationship between the marital satisfaction or adjustment and psychological distress would help to identify the adaptive coping behaviours so that it can be used to improve the better functioning of the wives of alcoholics which would also indeed help recovery of their husbands (Kahler, McCrady & Epstein, 2003).

These studies provide us with insight into the Wives of Persons Dependent on Alcohol’s issues, however, there aren’t enough researches examining Psychological Distress, and Marital Adjustment. Moreover, a combination comparing these two variables (Psychological Distress, and Marital Adjustment) together and how it has an impact on the Wives of Persons Dependent on Alcohol’s has not

been attempted. Hence, the current study is aimed to examine the psychological distress, and marital satisfaction among the wives of alcohol dependent men. Thus, the present research was undertaken to analyze these aspects.

The Research Questions

The following research questions have come into sight...

- Do the Wives of Persons Dependent on Alcohol (WPDA) have the Psychological Distress?
- If so, what is their level of Psychological Distress?
- Do the Wives of Persons Dependent on Alcohol (WPDA) have Marital Adjustment?
- If so, what is their level of Marital Adjustment?
- Is there any correlation between Psychological Distress and Marital Adjustment?

Aim

The main aim of the present study is to find out the relationship between the level of Psychological Distress and Marital Adjustment among the Wives of Persons Dependent on Alcohol (WPDA), with the following specific objectives.

Specific Objectives

- To understand the selected socio demographic profile of the care givers of the WPDA.
- To measure the level of Psychological Distress and Marital Adjustment of the WPDA.
- To find out the relationship between the Psychological Distress and Marital Adjustment for the WPDA.

Research Design

The author has used Descriptive Research design for the present study. An attempt has been made to describe the socio demographic profile of the WPDA, to study the Marital Adjustment and Psychological Distress of the WPDA, and to find out the association between the above. Hence most suitable design would be Descriptive Research design.

Research Hypotheses

After having carefully reviewed various literatures the following research hypothesis has been formulated.

- Higher the Psychological Distress Lesser will be the Marital Adjustment for the WPDA.

Universe

All the Wives of Persons Dependent on Alcohol (WPDA) who have admitted their husbands at TRISHUL- a 60 Bedded De-Addiction Centre, run by M.S.Chellamuthu Trust and Research Foundation, A Psycho Social Rehabilitation Centre, Madurai. All the men who are diagnosed as Persons Dependent on Alcohol by Consultant Psychiatrists of the centre as per DSM-IV criteria from 1st January 2018 to 31st June 2018, who are attending the 21 days treatment, constitute the Universe. So far 173 such men have attended and these persons dependent alcohol constitute as Universe for the present study.

Inclusion Conditions

- Persons Dependent on Alcohol (PDA) who have at least two years of Marital Life.
- Currently living with their spouse.
- Diagnosed as Persons Dependent on Alcohol by Consultant Psychiatrists (DSM-IV).

Exclusion Conditions

- Those who are not cooperating till the completion of Research study

Sampling

The researcher in consultation with the Psychiatric Social Workers working at the De-addiction centre have prepared a list of Persons Dependent on Alcohol from the universe by adopting the inclusion and Exclusion conditions. After words from the list, Sixty Persons Dependent on Alcohol were selected randomly using Lottery method. Their respective wives have been considered as the Unit of Enquiry for the present study. Thus simple random sampling technique was implemented for this study to draw the samples.

Tools for Data Collection

- To understand the selected socio, economic and demographic profile the author has prepared a semi-structured interview schedule in consultation with the psychiatrists and psychologists working in the trust.
- To measure the level of Psychological Distress the 28 items General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-28) by Goldsberg, D.P. & Hillier, V.F (1979) was administered. The scale has 4 sub dimensions namely 1) Somatic Symptoms 2) Anxiety & Insomnia 3) Social Dysfunction 4) Severe Depression and Total Psychological Distress. It has high reliability (0.94) and Validity (0.97). Higher the score higher will be the Psychological Distress.
- To measure the Marital Adjustment the Marital Adjustment Questionnaire (MAQ) , by Pramod Kumar (1997) from Sardar Patel University, Gujarat was administered. This scale has 25 Yes or No type questions. This tool has high Reliability (0.987) and Validity (0.993). Higher the score higher will be the Marital Adjustment.

Methods of Data Collection

During the 21 days treatment for the PDA, there will be Individual, Group as well as Family counselling sessions. These sessions will be moderated by the professionally trained Social workers, Psychologists and Psychiatrists. More inputs will be provided on Psycho Social Rehabilitation for the PDA and WPDA. Before starting these meetings, the translated interview tools have been given to WPDA and required, relevant information have been obtained from them.

Data Analysis

After the data collection over from the Wives of Persons Dependent on Alcohol, the data were edited, coded and entered in the Computer. By using the Evaluative Trail Version of Statistical Packages for Social Sciences Ver. 14.0 (SPSS), the appropriate statistical tests were employed to verify the formulated hypothesis.

Table Socio Demographic Details of PDA

S.No	Factors	Persons Dependent on Alcohol (PDA)		
		N (60)	%	
1	Age			
	20 - 25	19	31.7	
	26 - 30	31	51.7	
	31 & Above	10	16.6	
2	Duration of Drinking			
	Below 5 Yrs	18	30.0	
	5 to 10 Yrs	26	43.3	
	10 & Above Yrs	16	26.7	
3	Education			
	Up to Primary	15	25.0	
	Secondary	24	40.0	
	Higher Secondary	21	35.0	

Source: Primary data

It is very clear that 51.7 per cent of the PDA are in the age group of (26 to 30) years, 43.3 per cent of them are abusing alcohol for (5 to 10) years, 35.0

per cent of them are educated Higher Secondary level of education and 45 per cent of them are doing Unskilled jobs.

Table Socio Demographic Details of WPDA

S.No	Factors	Wives of Persons Dependent on Alcohol (WPDA)	
1	Age		
	20 - 25	29	48.3
	26 - 30	23	38.3
	31 & Above	8	13.4
2	Education		
	Up to Primary	30	50.0
	Secondary	21	35.0
	Higher Secondary	9	15.0
	Occupation		
	Unskilled	48	80.0
	Semi - Skilled	12	20.0
4	Duration Of Marital Life		
	Below 5 Yrs	26	43.3
	5 to 10 Yrs	18	30.0
	10 & Above Yrs	16	26.7
5	Family Monthly Income		
	Below 2500	26	43.3
	2501 to 5000	23	38.3
	5001 & Above	11	18.4
6	Place of Living		
	Rural	31	51.7
	Urban	29	48.3

Source: Primary data

It has been found that nearly fifty per cent of the WPDA (48.3%) are in the age group of (20 to 25) years, educated up to Primary level only (50.0%), doing Unskilled labour (80.0%), nearly one third

of them (30.0%) have (5 to 10) years of marital life, 43.3 per cent of them have their total monthly income as (Below Rs.2500/-), and 51.7 per cent of them are hailing from Rural areas.

Table Results on the Level of Psychological Distress for the WPDA

S.No	Dimensions of Psychological Distress	Low (Below Mean)		High (Above Mean)		Total (60)
		N	%	N	%	
1	Somatic Symptoms	24	40.0	36	60.0	60
2	Anxiety & Insomnia	26	43.3	34	56.7	60
3	Social Dysfunction	18	30.0	42	70.0	60
4	Severe Depression	34	56.7	26	43.3	60
5	Total Psychological Distress	21	35.0	39	65.0	60

Source: Primary data

To measure the level of Psychological Distress for the Care Givers, the 28 items General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-28) by Goldsberg, D.P. & Hillier, V.F (1979) was administered. It was observed that 60.0 per cent of the WPDA have

Somatic Symptoms, followed by, 56.7 per cent of them have Anxiety & Insomnia, 70.0 per cent of them have Social Dysfunction, 43.3 per cent of them have Severe Depression and on the whole 65.0 per cent of WPDA do have Psychological Distress.

Table Results on the Level of Marital Adjustment for the WPDA

S.No	Marital Adjustment	Low (Below Mean)		High (Above Mean)		Total (60)
		N	%	N	%	
1	Total Marital Adjustment	43	71.7	17	28.3	60

Source: Primary data

It is evident from the table that 71.7 per cent of WPDA have low level of Marital Adjustment and only 28.3 per cent have high level of Marital

Adjustment.

Table Association between Psychological Distress & Marital Adjustment for the WPDA

S.No	Dimensions of Psychological Distress	Total Marital Adjustment	Stat Result
1	Somatic Symptoms	'r' = - 0.68	P < 0.05 Sig
2	Anxiety & Insomnia	'r' = - 0.59	P < 0.05 Sig
3	Social Dysfunction	'r' = - 0.71	P < 0.05 Sig
4	Severe Depression	'r' = - 0.66	P < 0.05 Sig
	Total Psychological Distress	'r' = - 0.87	P < 0.05 Sig

Source: Primary data

It has been found that there exists a negative and significant association between the level of Psychological Distress and the level of Marital Adjustment for the WPDA .('r' = - 0.87, P < 0.05 Sig). Which means, when the level of Psychological Distress increases the level of Marital Adjustment decreases.

More over the Sub Dimensions like, Somatic Symptoms, Anxiety & Insomnia, Social Dysfunction, and Severe Depression, increases the level of Marital Adjustment will decrease. Thus the formulated Hypothesis is verified.

Suggestions

Based on the findings of the present study, it is suggested that proper and periodic Psycho Education could be provided to the Wives of Persons Dependent on Alcohol. Further the World Health Organization's (WHO) 10 Life Skills Training Programme could be

implemented to the Wives of Persons Dependent on Alcohol. Finally, to reduce the Psychological Distress for them, the importance of Yoga and Meditation could be initiated.

Implications

The basic idea, may be thought of now is a rehabilitation program not just for the Persons Dependent on Alcohol, but the Wives of Persons Dependent on Alcohol as well so that their Marital Adjustment, Coping with the continuing Psychological Distress, Quality of life, and other Psychological variables are improved and consequently their coping skills and resilience becomes better.

Conclusion

To summarize, it can be stated, this study has added to the understanding of the level of

Psychological Distress and level of Marital Adjustment in Wives of Persons Dependent on Alcohol and the relationship between psychological distress and Marital Adjustment of Wives of Persons Dependent on Alcohol.

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