



Maladjustment among Children of Alcoholics– A Mapping Review

¹N. Thilagavathi, ²Sampoornam. W, ³P. Padmavathi

¹Ph.D Nursing Scholar, The Tamil Nadu Dr.M.G.R. Medical University, Chennai, India

²Professor, Annai JKK Sampoornani Ammal College of Nursing, The Tamil Nadu Dr. M.G.R. Medical University, India

³Principal, Dhanvantri College of Nursing, The Tamil Nadu Dr. M.G.R. Medical University, India

Introduction

Alcohol is a widespread problem and a major public health problem. Alcohol addiction is now the third leading cause of lifestyle-related death. According to a report published by the World Health Organization (WHO), almost 3 million people died from the harmful use of alcohol in 2016. This represents 1 in 20 deaths. More than three quarters of these deaths involved men. Overall, the harmful use of alcohol is responsible for more than 5% of the global burden of disease.

The term adult child of alcoholics (ACoA) was coined to describe the unique characteristics common to people who grew up with one or both parents who were alcoholics. Research shows that families of alcoholics learn some typical coping strategies within the family system. This invariably triggers additional stress, feelings of hopelessness, withdrawal, and depression in the alcoholic. Thus, a vicious circle of alcohol, stress and maladjustment turned out to exist.

Children of alcoholics often show more dissonant tendencies and less stability (more inertia and activity) than problem children. Children of alcoholics and problem children showed more problems, maladjustment, and less stability than normal people.

Internalizing and Externalizing symptoms

Multiple regression analyzes were performed on others (N=416) and fathers (N=346) separately in a high-risk community sample to test the unique effects of negative parental influence on adolescent maladjustment (internalizing symptoms, externalizing symptoms and negative affect), prospective impact). Two years later, in addition to the alcoholism and emotional turmoil of the parents, major disruptions in the family environment and parenthood in Pune, India. Teen sexuality was tested as a moderator. This study demonstrates that negative maternal (but not paternal) influence has a unique prospective effect on internalizing symptoms of puberty in girls and negative effect in both sexes, but does not predict symptoms of puberty and externalization at puberty. The results suggest that negative maternal influence may have unique effects on adolescent adjustment, distinct from the effects of clinically significant parental psychopathology, parenting styles, and disturbances in the home environment (Moirra Haller & Laurie Chassin, 2011).

A study was conducted at the Department of Psychiatry of a tertiary hospital in Bangalore to examine the mental functioning of offspring of alcohol-dependent parents and its relationship to the severity of alcohol addiction alcohol. Including 80 children aged 11 to 18, and their alcohol-dependent fathers. The results showed that 47.5% of the subjects had obvious internalizing symptoms and 48.7% had obvious externalizing symptoms. There was a higher correlation between internalizing scores in girls (P = 0.004) and externalizing symptoms in boys (P = 0.008). However, no correlation was found with the severity of paternal dependency. The study revealed a high prevalence of psychosis in the externalizing and internalizing behaviors of children of alcohol-dependent fathers. Therefore, early detection of these problems and intervention ensures better functioning in this group (Kshamaa HG, Aswath M and Shivaraju PT, 2017).

Ottilingam Somasundaram Ravindranet, al 2017, conducted a case-control design, using the Child Behavior Checklist, Aggression Questionnaire and Malhotra Temperament Scale to investigate behavior problems, aggression and temperament characteristics were assessed. More aggressive and had more behavioral and temperament problems than the control group. The study concluded that, in COA, children from families with alcoholic fathers were more likely to have problematic behaviors, temper tantrums and externalizing and internalizing problems to a greater extent than children of the control group.

Self-esteem and Adjustment

Selwyn Stanly and C Vanitha (2008) studied the psychosocial correlates among adolescent alcoholics in the city of Tiruchy, Tamil Nadu. This is a comparative study examining self-esteem and coping performance in a group of 50 adolescents with COA and a matched reference group of adolescents from non-alcoholic homes. The results showed that emotional adaptation ($r=0.59$, $p<0.01$) was superior to academic ($r=0.42$, $p<0.01$) and social ($r=0.52$ adaptation, $p<0.01$) and familial ($r=0.65$, $p<0.01$). They found that teenage alcoholics had low self-esteem and less coping.

A comparative study of self-esteem and adjustment was conducted in adolescent children of alcoholic and non-alcoholic fathers in selected communities in Coimbatore. The research sample was 100 adolescent children. It included 50 adolescents whose fathers were alcoholics and 50 adolescents whose fathers were non-alcoholics. The results suggest that teenage children of alcoholic fathers are more likely to have self-esteem and adjustment problems than nonalcoholic fathers. Significant differences exist between adolescent children of alcoholic and nonalcoholic fathers based on comparisons of self-esteem and adjustment problems (Kaur D and Ajinkya S., 2014).

Literature search on the psychological effects of adult alcohol abuse on spouses and children was carried out. The families of alcoholics under current scrutiny differed from other families in that there was an environment of negativity, judgment, hostility and exclusion that was ultimately passed on to their children, according to the study. Alcoholics show maladjustment in their relationships with their wives and children and may show dissatisfaction and disinterest in the relationship. Despite the small number of examinations in our study, it is clear that alcoholic families exhibit characteristics of dysfunction and maladjustment. Therefore, special attention should be given to the needs of the family in the face of alcohol addiction.

Thomas DeepaShaji (2012) conducted an exploratory survey to identify the problems faced by children of alcoholic fathers attending selected drug treatment centers in Mangalore, India. Sixty children (ages 10 to 14) of alcoholic fathers participated in the study. In a sample of 60 children, 16.6% of children of alcoholic fathers had severe problems, 61.7% moderate problems, and 21.7% mild problems.

Cross-sectional studies on Maladjustment among Children of Alcoholics (CoA)

A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted on the home environment of child alcoholics in Chettikulam, Tamil Nadu. The sample was 72 children aged 14 to 17. The study concluded that families with alcoholic parents are likely to lead to lower academic performance and higher rates of behavioral problems. The results suggest that interventions should be planned to reduce their worries and help them cope, thereby improving their mental health (Nancy Sam Deva Asir R.M, 2014).

A cross-sectional observational study was conducted to assess the impact of parental alcohol dependence on child development and behavioral outcomes in a teaching hospital of tertiary care, Maharashtra, India. The study sample was 25 children, ages 6 to 18, whose parents had at least one diagnosed alcohol dependence disorder. The study showed that both men and women scored high on outsourcing and internalizing COA. Girls had higher internalizing scores, while boys had higher externalizing scores. COA faces a variety of emotional, anxiety, physical, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder and oppositional defiant behaviors (Jasmeet Sidhu, et al., 2015).

A cross-sectional comparative study was conducted in a selected public high school in the city of Bangalore to compare social competence between COA and non-COA. Using simple random sampling techniques, 100 COAs and 100 non-COAs were recruited for the study. The Children's Alcohol Screening Test (modified) and the Social Competence Scale were used in the study. The results showed statistically significant differences between COA and non-COA in prosocial attitudes, social competitiveness, social leadership, social tolerance, social maturity, social skills and integrated skills. The study concluded that COA had low levels of social competence. (Dayananda, et al., 2018)

Conclusion

Skills are abilities that help children cope with stress, thereby reducing their risk of alcoholism and other psychosocial problems. Most programs teach specific emotional and problem-oriented coping skills. Emotion-focused coping is the process by which children seek social support or use strategies such as distancing or reframing the negative aspects of a situation to emphasize the positives.

Problem-focused coping highlights the difficulties of living in an alcoholic household, such as having to explain a relative's unusual behavior to a friend. Emotion-focused and problem-focused skills are not mutually exclusive, and children who learn both are better able to manage their lives. The children of alcoholics have no choice but to adapt to the environment and the family in which they have been brought up.

In the future, untreated affected children may pass on their problems to adult relationships and families. Few studies have examined the effects of parental alcohol abuse on children. In the absence of previous research in this area, the prevalence of alcoholism is very high in both rural and urban areas.

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