

Abstract

Background: Mental illness is a risk factor for the development of addiction, e.g. as a result of self-medication, and vice versa, addictive behavior can contribute to the development of mental illness. Disorders from the use of addictive substances concurrently with another mental disorder, the so-called "dual diagnosis", has a high prevalence among users of addictive substances. Clients with psychiatric comorbidity have a higher incidence of risky behavior or suicide and a higher need for services and care.

Objective: The objective of this work was to determine the prevalence of psychiatric comorbidity associated with the use of addictive substances in clients using the services of an aftercare center and to describe the factors that accompany its occurrence.

Methods: A secondary analysis of data was performed from the provided anonymized database of clients actively using the services of the aftercare center as of March 1, 2023. In addition to the sociodemographic data of the clients, data on the use of addictive substances, the nature of the addiction disorder, the presence of disorders in the field of mental health and factors, were analyzed which could influence their occurrence and clinical severity in the client.

Results: The research group consisted of 79 clients of the outpatient and residential program of the aftercare center for users after treatment, now abstinent from addictive substances (except tobacco). Psychiatric comorbidity was present in 71 % of clients. The most common mental disorders were (to varying degrees in different user groups) neurotic, stress and somatoform disorders and affective disorders (mood disorders). Clients with psychiatric comorbidity had a higher incidence of factors that can complicate the course of their addiction disorder or its treatment and have an adverse effect on their quality of life: previous experience with the use of addictive substances, a higher incidence of unemployment and problems with the law, treatment attempts and suicidal behaviour.

Conclusion: Almost three quarters of the clients of the aftercare center with a diagnosis of addiction to addictive substances have comorbidity in the form of another mental illness. Expanding the existing programs of the aftercare center with a program aimed at clients with a dual diagnosis and their specific needs could contribute to the efficiency of care and support for these clients.

Key words

dual diagnosis – mental disorders – comorbidity – addictive substances