Assessment the Causes of Substance Abuse –Related Relapse among Patients with Addiction in Baghdad City

تقييم أسباب الانتكاس المرتبط بتعاطي المخدرات بين المرضى الذين يعانون من الإدمان في مدينة بغداد

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الخلاصة

خلفية البحث: واحدة من أكثر المشاكل التي تواجه العاملين في مجال الصحة في وحدات الإدمان هو انتكاس المريض المدمن بعد فترة من العلاج. لم تجرى أي دراسات حول انتكاسة الإدمان في العراق.

الهدف: تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى تقييم العوامل المسببة التي تؤثر على الانتكاس المرتبط بتعاطي المخدرات. ومعرفة العلاقة بين الخصائص الديموغرافية وسبب الانتكاس.

المنهجية: أجريت دراسة وصفية من 15 تشرين الثاني 2015 إلى 15 نيسان 2016 على مريض مدمن في مدينة بغداد. العينات الوخيمة (غير الاحتمالية) ل 65 مدمنا منهم من مرضى العيادات الداخلية في مستشفى ابن رشد التعليمي النفسي ووحدة الطب النفسي بمستشفى بغداد التعليمي الذين خضعوا لعلاج الاعتماد على المواد وكان لديهم حلقة واحدة على الأقل من الانتكاس خلال فترة الإدمان. تستخدم الدراسة الاستبانة الذاتية. وقد تم تحليل البيانات باستخدام الإحصاء الوصفي (التكرارات والنسب المئوية والوسط الحسابي والانحرافات المعيارية) والإحصاءات الاستدلالية باستخدام (مربع كاي لمعرفة العلاقات بين أسباب الانتكاس والخصائص الاجتماعية الديموغرافية للمدمنين).

النتائج: كشفت نتائج الدراسة الحالية أن جميع المرضى المنتكسين هم من الذكور الذين تتراوح أعمارهم بين 18 عاما إلى ما اكثر من 50 عاما. تراوح عمر بداية تعاطي مواد الإدمان بين 9 سنوات و 29 سنة. ومعظم المرضى انتكسوا خلال الأشهر الست الأوليات بعد العلاج. وكانت النسبة الأعلى من المرضى المدمنين هم مدمني الكحول. وأظهرت النتائج أن الأسباب الرئيسية للانتكاس هي الشعور بالرغبة الملحة في التعاطي، وتوافر المادة، وعدم المعرفة بخطر العودة إلى الإدمان وتوتر العلاقات الأسرية. اذ ان لا علاقة ذات دلالة إحصائية بين عمر ومهنة مرضى الإدمان وسبب الانتكاس. هناك علاقة كبيرة بين الدخل الشهري وسبب الانتكاس.

الاستنتاج: خلصت الدراسة إلى أن الشعور بالرغبة الملحة في التعاطي، وتوافر المادة، وعدم معرفة خطر العودة إلى الإدمان وتوتر العلاقات الأسرية هي السبب الرئيسي للانتكاس. هناك علاقة كبيرة بين الدخل الشهري وسبب الانتكاس. إذ ان لا توجد علاقة ذات دلالة إحصائية بين عمر ومهنة مرضى الإدمان وسبب الانتكاس.

التوصيات: أوصت الدراسة بأن برامج العلاج يجب أن تركز على تعليم المرضى كيفية التعامل مع الانتكاس والتحكم في الشعور بالشوق لتعاطي المخدرات.

ABSTRACT

Background: One of the most problems that face the health workers in addiction units is the relapse of addict patient after a period of treatment. No studies are conducted about the addiction relapse in Iraq.

Aims of study: The current study aims to assess the causative factors affecting the substance abuse-related relapse. And find out the relationship between the demographic characteristics and the cause of relapse.

Methodology: A descriptive study was conducted from November 15th 2015 to April 15th 2016 on addict patient in Baghdad City. Purposive (non-probability) samples of 65 relapsed addicts who are inpatient in Ibn-Rushd Psychiatric Teaching Hospital and the Psychiatric unit of Baghdad Teaching Hospital who had undergone treatment for substance dependency and they had at least one episode of relapse during the period of addiction. The study uses the self-administrated questionnaire. The data has been analyzed by using the descriptive statistics (Frequencies, Percentages, Means and Standard Deviations (SD)) and the inferential statistics (Chi-square to find out the relationships between the causes of the relapse and the socio-demographic characteristics of addicts).

Results: the findings of the current study revealed that all relapsed patients are males with age ranged from 18 years to more than 50 years. The age of onset of substance abuse ranged from 9 years to more than 29 years. Most of addict patients were relapsed during the first six months after treatment. The highest percentage of the addict patients was addicted to alcohol. The results indicated that the main causes of relapse were the feeling of urgent desire for abuse, the availability of the substance and lack of knowledge about the risk to return to addiction and the tension of family relations. There is no significant relationship between the age and occupation of addict patients and the cause of relapse. There is a significant relationship between monthly income and cause of relapse.

Conclusions: the study concluded that the feeling of urgent desire for abuse, the availability of the substance, lack of knowledge about the risk to return to addiction and the tension of family relations are the main cause of relapse. There is a significant relationship between monthly income and cause of relapse. There is no significant relationship between the age and occupation of addict patients and the cause of relapse.

Recommendations: the study recommended that the treatment programs should be focusing on teaching the clients how to cope with the relapse and control the feeling of craving for substance abuse.

Keywords: substance abuse, relapse, addiction, addict patient.

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INTRODUCTION:

Substance abuse is a global and an important challenging and costly health problem which leading to physical, mental and psychiatric outcomes in persons, families and communities [1]. It has a profound effect on all areas of society; this includes high costs in terms of healthcare provision, the effect on individuals in terms of physical and psychological problems and their families, and has harmful effects on society through criminal and violence issues [2]. There are 76.3 million people with alcohol use disorders worldwide and 15.3 million with drug use disorders [3]. Al-Hemiary, 2015 reported in their survey that there is a high rate of alcohol and drug abuse in Iraqi population [4]. Relapse means the return to uncontrolled substance use, it occurs when a client resumes an abusive pattern of use after a period of treatment, the problem of relapse remains to be challenge to many substance abusers post treatment for substance dependency [5].

Many factors are being associated with relapse such as peer group influence, poor family support and personality characteristics [6]. Insufficient rehabilitation phase, lack of programming for the occupation of addicts after discontinuing, low self –esteem, presence of family problems, negative mood states, presence of addicted friends and contaminated environment, are cited as a cause of relapse [7]. Motivation to stop substance abuse and insight into the addiction problems are good prognostic factors to avoid relapse [8]. The abstinent individuals who are contributed in rehabilitation program should be integrated back into society unless the treatment may fail; craving and relapse depend on successful treatment [9].

AIMS OF THE STUDY:

1. To assess the cause of substance abuse related relapse among addicts from their viewpoint.

2. To find out the relationship between the cause of relapse and demographic characteristics of addicts.

METHODOLOGY:

A descriptive study was conducted from November 15th 2015 to April 15th 2016 on addict patients in Baghdad City. Purposive (non-probability) samples of 65 relapsed addicts who are inpatient in Ibn-Rushd Psychiatric Teaching Hospital and the Psychiatric unit of Baghdad Teaching Hospital who had undergone treatment for substance dependency and they had at least one episode of relapse during the period of addiction. The study uses the self-administrated questionnaire. To assess the causes of relapse the study adopted by Barakat and Al-Halak assessment scale [10]. The questionnaire comprised three parts:

A- The socio-demographic characteristics of the addict patients such as: age, sex, marital status, educational level, occupation and monthly income.

B- The data related to substance abuse such as: age of onset of substance abuse, type of substance abuse, duration of last interruption from substance abuse and number of previous interruptions from substance abuse.

C- Assessment of the causes of substance abuse related relapse (26 items), and it divided into three domains which include: personal factors and personal skills (10 items), socio-cultural factors (10 items) and family factors (6 items). The response to these items is (Yes, No), the rating and scoring for these items are yes = 2 and no = 1.

The data has been analyzed by using the descriptive statistics (Frequencies, Percentages, Means and Standard Deviations (SD)) and the inferential statistics (Chi-square to find out the relationships between the causes of the relapse and the socio-demographic characteristics of addicts).

RESULTS:

Table (1): Distribution of the sample according to their demographic characteristics

Demographics		f	%
Age (years)	18-25	14	21.3
	26-33	20	30.8
	34-41	21	32.3
	42-49	6	9.4
	≥ 50	4	6.4
	Total	**65**	**100%**
Sex	Male	65	100
	Total	**65**	**100%**
Marital status	Single	21	32.3
	Married	32	49.2
	Divorced	10	15.4
	Married more than one time	2	3.1
	Total	**65**	**100%**
Educational level	Illiterate	13	20
	Read and write	17	26.2
	Primary degree	16	24.6
	Intermediate degree	16	24.6
	Secondary degree	3	4.6
	Total	**65**	**100%**
Occupation	Employee	18	27.7
	Unemployed	47	72.3
	Total	**65**	**100%**
Monthly income	Sufficient	18	27.7
	Barely sufficient	30	46.2
	Insufficient	17	26.1
	Total	**65**	**100%**

The results in table (1) indicated that the age of the relapsed patients ranged from 18 to more than 50 years with mean 33.65 and SD= 8.983. The highest percentage (32.3%) is located in the age group 34-41 years. all of them are males (100%), and 49.2% are married. And 26.2% of addict patients were at read and write level of education, and 46.2% reported that they had barely sufficient monthly income.

Table (2): Distribution of the sample according to the data related to substance abuse.

Data related to substance abuse		F	%
Age of onset	9-18 years	21	32.3
	19-28 years	32	49.2
	More than 29 years	12	18.5
	Total	**65**	**100%**
Type of substance abuse	Alcohol	32	49.2
	Sedatives and Anxiolytics	20	30.7
	CNS Stimulants	5	7.6
	Opioids	6	9.4
	Inhalants	2	3.1
	Total	**65**	**100%**
Duration of last interruption from substance abuse after treatment	1-6 months	52	80
	7-12 months	9	13.8
	Up to 13 months	4	6.2
	Total	**65**	**100%**
Number of previous interruptions from substance abuse	1 time	21	32.3
	2 times	27	41.5
	3 times	15	23.1
	Up to 4 times	2	3.1
	Total	**65**	**100%**

Table (2) shows that the age of onset of substance abuse ranged from 9 to more than 29 years with mean 24.02 and SD= 6.540, the highest percentage (49.2%) is located in the age group 19-28 years. The highest percentage (49.2%) of the addict patients was addicted to alcohol. Most of addict patients were relapsed during the first six months after treatment and interruption from substance abuse. 41.5% of the addict patients were had two interruptions.

Table (3): Descending distribution of the sample according to the causes of substance abuse relapse (N=65).

No.	Items	Yes		No		Mean	SD.
		f	%	f	%		
Personal factors and personal skills							
1	Feeling of urgent desire for abuse	58	89.2	7	10.8	1.89	0.312
2	Weakness of the will	56	86.2	9	13.8	1.86	0.348
3	The emergence of psychiatric symptoms such as (anxiety, sadness and stress)	54	83.1	11	16.9	1.83	0.378
4	Disease and body pain	48	73.8	17	26.2	1.74	0.443
5	Exposure to psychiatric trauma	47	72.3	18	27.7	1.72	0.451
6	The desire to have pleasure	47	72.3	18	27.7	1.72	0.451
7	Inability to acquire skills of change in substance abuse habit	47	72.3	18	27.7	1.72	0.451
8	Low self-esteem	43	66.2	22	33.8	1.66	0.477
9	Feeling of isolation and difficult	39	60	26	40	1.60	0.494
10	To improve sexual ability	30	46.2	35	53.8	1.46	0.502
Socio-cultural factors							
11	Availability of the substance	56	86.2	9	13.8	1.86	0.348
12	Lack of knowledge about the risk of return to addiction	56	86.2	9	13.8	1.86	0.348
13	Not receiving adequate support from those around me to resist the return to addiction	50	76.9	15	23.1	1.77	0.425
14	Weakness of religious faith	47	72.3	18	27.7	1.72	0.451
15	Peer pressure	46	70.8	19	29.2	1.71	0.458
16	Return to mingle with addicts	43	66.2	22	33.8	1.66	0.477

No.	Items	Yes		No		Mean	SD.
		f	%	f	%		
17	Inadequate treatment	41	63.1	24	36.9	1.63	0.486
18	Lack of government institutions or civil society to support addicts	41	63.1	24	36.9	1.63	0.486
19	The contempt of others	40	61.5	25	38.5	1.62	0.490
20	The nature and type of work encourages me to return to substance abuse	31	47.7	34	52.3	1.48	0.503
Family factors							
21	Tension of family relations and frequent quarrels	46	70.8	19	29.2	1.71	0.458
22	Inability to cope with family problems	45	69.2	20	30.8	1.69	0.465
23	Have money to buy the substance	42	64.6	23	35.4	1.65	0.482
24	Inability to face marital problems	40	61.5	25	38.5	1.62	0.490
25	The unemployment	39	60	26	40	1.60	0.494
26	Exposure to physical or sexual abuse in childhood	24	36.9	41	63.1	1.37	0.486
	Total for all domains					**1.46**	**0.502**

The table reflects the frequency distribution of questions relating to the causes of substance abuse relapse. As regards to the personal factors domain; the results indicated that the main cause of relapse and return to substance abuse again was the feeling of urgent desire for abuse which it made 89.2% of the respondent's answers. Regarding the socio-cultural factors domain, the highest percentage (86.2%) of the sample reported that the availability of the substance and lack of knowledge about the risk to return to addiction was the major cause of relapse. Concerning the family factors domain; the highest percentage (70.8%) of the respondents reported that the tension of family relations and frequent quarrels was the main cause of relapse.

Table (4): The Relationship between the Age of Addict patients and the Cause of Relapse

Age of addict patients	Cause of relapse (All domains)						Pearson chi-square value	Linear by linear association	Sig.
	Yes		No		Total				
	f	%	f	%	f	%			
18-25 years	7	10.8	7	10.8	14	21.5			
26-33 years	8	12.3	12	18.5	20	30.8			
34-41 years	10	15.4	11	16.9	21	32.3	2.142	0.141	NS
42-49 years	2	3.1	4	6.2	6	9.2			
≥50 years	3	4.6	1	1.5	4	6.2			
Total	30	46.2	35	53.8	65	100%			

DF= 4, p value ≤ 0.05, Sig= significance (2-sided), NS= not significant.

The table indicated that there is no relationship between the age of addict patients and the cause of relapse.

Table (5): The Relationship between the employment of Addict patients and the Cause of Relapse

Employment	Cause of relapse (All domains)						Pearson chi-square value	Linear by linear association	Sig.
	Yes		No		Total				
	f	%	F	%	f	%			
Employee	6	9.2	12	18.5	18	27.7			NS
Unemployed	24	35.4	23	36.9	47	72.3	1.646	1.621	
Total	30	46.2	35	53.8	65	100%			

DF= 1, p value ≤ 0.05, Sig= significance (2-sided), NS= not significant

The table showed that there is no relationship between the employment of addict patients and the cause of relapse.

Table (6): The Relationship between the monthly income of Addict patients and the Cause of Relapse

Monthly income	Cause of relapse (All domains)						Pearson chi-square value	Linear by linear association	Sig.
	Yes		No		Total				
	f	%	F	%	f	%			
Sufficient	7	10.8	11	16.9	18	27.7			
Barely sufficient	16	21.6	14	21.5	30	46.2	1.174	0.024[*]	S
Insufficient	7	10.8	10	15.4	17	26.1			
Total	30	46.2	35	53.8	65	100%			

DF= 2, p value ≤ 0.05, Sig= significance (2-sided), S= significant relationship.

The table presents that there is a significant relationship between the monthly income of addict patients and the cause of relapse.

DISCUSSION

The findings in table (1) show that all addict patients were males with age ranged from 18 to more than 50 years with mean 33.6 years and SD = 8.983, this may be due to men tend to drink more than women, and they are more likely to be substance abusers and they have a financial independence in this age which allowing them to easily acquire an addictive substance, this result was consistent with (Sharma *et al*, 2012) who reported that all subjects in their study were males [6], and close to Hammerbacher and Lyvers, 2005 who found that the clients were over 18 years of old with mean 31.8 years [11]. Table (1) also indicated that the highest percentage of subjects in the sample are married and were at read and write level of education, and they reported a barely sufficient monthly income, these results were similar to findings of (Kassani *et al*, 2015) who found that married subjects were more than other groups [1], and close to (Sharma *et al*, 2012) who reported that the highest percentage of the sample were at primary educational level and had lower middle class of socio economic status [6].

The current study results show in table (2) that the age of onset of substance abuse ranged from 9 to more than 29 years with mean 24.02 and SD= 6.540, this due to that adolescence and early adulthood considered to be a critical period in the vulnerability to substance abuse. Most of addict patients were relapsed during the first six months after treatment; this result is supported by Moharam and Micheal, 2012 [12] and Ramo and Brown, 2008 [13] and Kassani *et al*, 2015 [1] who are found a similar findings in their studies and reported that relapse occurred within the first 6 months after an episode of treatment. The findings also indicated that the highest percentage (49.2%) of the addict patients were addicted to alcohol; In Iraq, easy availability of alcohol more than other types of substances, (Al-Hemiary *et al*, 2015) reported in their survey that the prevalence of alcohol abuse in Iraq was higher than drug abuse [4].

The findings in table (3) show that the first cause of relapse and return to substance abuse again in the personal factors and personal skills domain was the feeling of urgent desire for abuse, this may be explained by that in the anticipation stage of the addiction cycle which is commonly called "craving" a person begin to seek substance again after a period of abstinence. (Sharma *et al*, 2012) reported that craving and drug cues as a risk factor for relapse [6], Chetty and Taut, 2011 stated that urges and cravings being too difficult to resist [5].

The findings also revealed that the availability of the substance and lack of knowledge about the risk to return to addiction was the major cause of relapse in the socio-cultural factors domain, the widespread and easy availability of drugs and alcohol linked to increase tendency to substance abuse thus will increase the chance of relapse too. The respondents reported that the tension of family relations and frequent quarrels was the main cause of relapse in the family factors domain, to avoid the family problems and inability to cope with those problems, the addict may return to abuse again. Hammerbacher and Lyvers, 2005 reported that relationship conflicts considered a risk factor of relapse [11].

In table (4) the findings revealed that there is no relationship between the age of addict patients and the cause of relapse. This result was incongruent with Sharma et al, 2012 who suggested that subjects who had a relapse were younger than those who maintained abstinence; older age in substance abuse was associated with lower rates of relapse [6].

The current study results show in table (5) that there is no relationship between the employment of addict patients and the cause of relapse, this result was disagree with (Kassani

et al, 2015) who indicated that employment is a risk factor for substance abuse relapse and there is a positive relationship between employment and lower rates of relapse [1].

The results of the present study revealed that there is a significant relationship between the monthly income of addict patients and the cause of relapse, this result was agree with (Sharma *et al*, 2012) who found a significant relationship between economic status and substance abuse relapse [6], (Kadari *et al*, 2003) reported that substance abusers were belonging to low socio economic class [14].

CONCLUSIONS:

All addict patients who participated in the study were males with age ranged from 18 to up to 50 years. The age of onset of substance abuse ranged from 9 to up to 29 years. Most of them were relapsed during the first six months after treatment.

Most of relapsed patients were to alcohol. The main cause of relapse and return to substance abuse again in the personal factors and personal skills domain was the feeling of urgent desire for abuse. The major cause of relapse in the socio-cultural factors domain was the availability of the substance and lack of knowledge about the risk to return to addiction. The respondents reported that the tension of family relations and frequent quarrels was the main cause of relapse in the family factors domain. There is no relationship between the age of addict patients and the cause of relapse. There is no relationship between the employment of addict patients and the cause of relapse. There is a significant relationship between the monthly income of addict patients and the cause of relapse.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Raising awareness of youths through different media about the danger of substance abuse and addiction.
2. Civil society organizations and government institutions must provide adequate care and support the addicts in order to help them return to society through rehabilitation and job creation.
3. The treatment programs should be included the families to improve the family relationships.

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