

EARLY ONSET ALCOHOL USE: A DIFFERENT PERSONALITY PROFILE?

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INTRODUCTION

Early onset of substances use disorders (SUD) has been related to some personality characteristics and a higher prevalence of social, psychiatric and organic problems. It is also associated with a poor outcome.

OBJECTIVES

To describe personality differences between patients with early onset of alcohol use (EO, age≤15) and late onset of alcohol use (LO, age≥16), both affected of acute non-substance use psychiatric disorders (Non-SUD) and alcohol related substance use disorders (alcohol SUD), who were admitted in a dual diagnosis unit.

METHODS

Data on demographic, family, and clinical factors were gathered among subjects admitted to our dual diagnosis unit between September 2007 and September 2010, all of them meeting DSM-IV criteria of alcohol SUD. To explore the psychometric characteristics we used the Temperament and Character Inventory-Revised (TCI-R). Statistical analysis was performed by using SPSS program.

RESULTS

- From the whole sample (N=188), age 36,8±9,2, most of them (71,4%) were male and 91,3% admitted from emergency room. Mean length of stay were 19,7±14,0. Main reason for admittance were hallucinations/delusions (37,7%), behavioral disturbances (20,5) and suicidal ideation (20%).
- Most prevalent non-SUD were personality disorders (50,3%), psychotic disorders (42,3%), depressive disorders (13,2%) and adjustment disorders (9,1%). In our sample, most common comorbid SUD were alcohol (59,5%), cocaine (45%) and cannabis (29,1%).
- We found some significative differences relating to sociodemographic, substance use characteristics and organic problems between both LO and EO subjects (see table 1).
- Most frequent dual diagnosis in EO subjects were psychosis+cannabis SUD (8,7%) and depression+alcohol SUD (5,8%) while in LO group were psychosis+cocaine (26,2%) and psychosis+alcohol (20,2%) (p=0,05).
- Referring to personality profile we found that EO group was characterized by higher scores in impulsiveness, disorderliness, harm avoidance, eagerness of effort, responsibility, resourcefulness, enlightened second nature, social acceptance and lower anticipatory worry and dependence (see table 2).

Table 1. Comparative data between both early-onset alcohol use group (EO) and late-onset alcohol use group (LO)

		Early-onset alcohol use group (EO) (N=85)	Late-onset alcohol use group (LO) (N=103)	P value
Sex, %	Male	78,6%	64,7%	0,049**
Age, years (mean, SD)		35,9±9,7	37,2±7,7	NS
Marital status, %	Married/Coupled	17,5%	14,1%	NS
Legal problems, %		51,4%	15,9%	0,001**
Level of education, %	No education	4,9%	4,7%	NS
	No high school diploma	89,3%	84,7%	
	High school diploma or college	4,9%	10,6%	
Employment, %	Unemployed	72,8%	79,8%	NS
Parental substance abuse background		59,8%	72,0%	NS
Parental mental illness background		64,3%	64,6%	NS
Length of admission (mean, SD)		20,6±15,5	18,8±11,5	NS
Clinical characteristics at admission	Hallucinations/delusions	42,2%	29,3%	NS
	Suicide attemp/suicide ideation	18,6%	20,7%	
	Others	39,2%	50,0%	
Main drug of abuse	Sedatives	73,8%	54,1%	0,006**
HCV positivity		27,5%	11,8%	0,026**
Polydrug (3 or more comorbid SUD)		2,0±1,1	1,6±1,0	0,027**
Personality disorder		40,5%	54,7%	NS
SUD	Cocaine SUD	48,5%	44,7%	NS
	Cannabis SUD	37,9%	23,5%	NS
	Opioid SUD	18,4%	14,1%	NS
	Sedatives SUD	20,4%	14,1%	NS
	Amphetamines SUD	5,8%	8,2%	NS
	Hallucinogens SUD	4,9%	2,4%	NS
	Volatil SUD	0,0%	1,2%	NS
ASI subscales (mean, SD)	Psychiatric status	5,8±1,3	4,8±1,8	0,043**
	Medical status	1,8±2,0	1,4±1,5	NS
	Alcohol use	5,5±2,3	4,9±2,1	NS
	Drug use	5,0±2,8	3,9±2,9	NS
	Family status	5,6±1,7	5,6±1,3	NS
	Employment	3,9±2,1	4,4±2,4	NS
	Legal status	2,5±2,4	2,1±2,2	NS

Note: SD, standard deviation.
 **P<.05; absence of *indicates nonsignificance.

Table 2. TCI-R scores in both early-onset alcohol use group (EO) and late-onset alcohol use group (LO)

		Early-onset alcohol use	Late-onset alcohol use	p
Temperament				
Novelty seeking		108,9±15,9	103,9±16,7	NS
	Exploratory excitability	106,9±18,3	110,7±21	NS
	Impulsiveness	102,9±16,4	97±14,5	0,03**
	Extravagance	110,7±20,18	104,9±21,6	NS
	Disorderliness	127,6±19,2	117,4±21,7	0,004**
Harm avoidance		30,7±4,9	28,7±7,6	0,019**
	Anticipatory worry	71,7±18,5	79,8±17,9	0,011**
	Fear of uncertainty	30,7±4,9	28±7,6	NS
	Shyness	25,9±6,6	27,3±6,5	NS
	Fatigability	33,1±5,9	30,5±7,4	NS
Reward dependency		19,1±5,2	18±5,6	NS
	Sentimentality	34±7,3	35,2±7,5	NS
	Openness to warm communication	24,4±5,6	24,7±5	NS
	Attachment	23,1±4,8	22,4±6,6	NS
	Dependence	54,5±12,4	59,2±14,9	0,013**
Persistence		29,4±4,3	28,5±7,6	NS
	Eagerness of effort	34,7±7,5	31,6±8	0,022**
	Work hardened	19,5±5,5	18,9±4,7	NS
	Ambitious	19,2±4,6	17,9±3,1	0,057
	Perfectionist	29,8±5,9	27,8±6,2	0,05**
Character				
Self-directedness		25,9±6,5	24,9±6,5	NS
	Responsibility	30,5±6,9	27,9±7,7	0,04**
	Purposeful	24,5±5,6	24,2±5,1	NS
	Resourcefulness	25,9±6,3	23,2±6,8	0,015**
	Self-acceptance	20,5±5,6	19,8±5,5	NS
	Enlightened second nature	17,7±3,9	13,9±4,6	0,001**
Cooperativeness		31,4±9,2	31±7,2	NS
	Social acceptance	32±5,8	29,4±7,1	0,021**
	Empathy	29,6±5,5	28±6,6	NS
	Helpfulness	17,6±3,2	17,3±3,8	NS
	Compassion	29±4,9	27,9±5,7	NS
	Pure-hearted conscience	25,6±7,4	27,3±6,3	NS
Self-transcendence		27,3±5,4	25,7±5,9	NS
	Self-forgetful	54,6±13,6	58,2±11,9	0,05**
	Transpersonal identification	21±7,1	23,1±5,9	NS
	Spiritual acceptance	55,2±11,3	58,3±12,7	0,080

Note: SD, standard deviation.
 **P<.05; absence of *indicates nonsignificance.

CONCLUSIONS

- EO, in relation to LO group, showed a specific profile characterized by higher impulsiveness and disorderliness.
- EO was a more severe group in terms of social, psychopathologic and substance problems.
- A broader knowledge on risk factors for alcohol early use will increase the efficacy of prevention strategies.

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We declare we have no conflict of interest regarding our poster