

# A CLINICAL STUDY OF DEFENSE MECHANISMS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH DEPRESSION IN INDIVIDUALS WITH ALCOHOL DEPENDENCE

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**Introduction-** Defense mechanisms are important psychological phenomena in individuals with alcohol dependence as well as with depression. The presence of maladaptive defences increases the propensity of depression in individuals with alcohol dependence. Also, the individuals with alcohol dependence are prone to using maladaptive defenses to cope with depression.

**Objectives-** To assess the various defense mechanisms in individuals with alcohol dependence and the severity of depression in individuals with alcohol dependence. Additionally, to explore the relationship between defense mechanism types and depression severity sub-groups in individuals with alcohol dependence.

## Materials & Methods

Hospital-based study.

Purposive sampling technique.

Inclusion criteria:

-Diagnosis of Alcohol dependence according to

ICD-10 (F10.2).

-Age: >18 years.

-Literate person.

-Informed consent.

Exclusion criteria:

-Co-morbid psychiatric disorders other than depression.

-Physical illness.

## Tools

- Semi-structured Sociodemographic proforma.
- Semi-structured Clinical proforma.
- MINI 6 (Mini International Neuropsychiatric Interview v6.0)
- SAD-Q (Severity of Alcohol Dependence Questionnaire; 20 items; self-rated)
- DSQ-40 (Defense Style Questionnaire; 40 items; self-rated)

## References:

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2. Hovanessian, S., Isakov, I., & Cervellione, K. L. (2009). Defense mechanisms and suicide risk in major depression. *Archives of Suicide Research*, 13(1), 74-86.
3. Schuckit, M. A. (1994). Alcohol and depression: a clinical perspective. *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica*, 89, 28-32.
4. Andrews, G., Singh, M., & Bond, M. (1993). The defense style questionnaire. *Journal of Nervous and mental Disease*.

- HAM-D (Hamilton Depression Rating Scale; 17 items; clinician-rated)

## Results

- In a total of 50 cases the mean age was 40(±6.5).
- A total of 60% had depression with 22% being very severe depressed, and 28% & 10% having severe & moderate depression respectively.
- A total of 68% qualified for severe dependence on SADQ and the rest had moderate alcohol dependence.
- A total of 56% and 44% qualified as early & onset alcohol dependence respectively.
- Statistically significant association found between Depression Severity & Early onset Alcohol Dependence, also between Alcohol dependence severity & Early onset Alcohol Dependence.
- Significant variances were revealed amongst depression sub-groups indicating increased Neurotic defense styles and decreased Mature defense styles in individuals with depression.
- Neurotic & mature factor scores differed significantly between the sub-groups of depression indicating higher Neurotic defense styles and lower Mature defense styles with higher Severity of Depression.
- Neurotic & mature factor scores differed significantly between the sub-groups of alcohol dependence severity indicating higher Neurotic defense styles and lower Mature defense styles with higher Severity of Alcohol Dependence.

## Conclusion

Individuals with alcohol dependence with depression have higher propensity of using neurotic defense mechanisms and lower propensity of using mature defense mechanisms as a part of their psychopathology.