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SELF-ESTEEM IN THE WIVES OF ALCOHOLIC SPOUSES – A STUDY

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ABSTRACT:

The patterns of alcohol intake around the globe are constantly evolving and alcohol is ubiquitous today. Alcohol dependency is seen today as the world's highly prevalent public health problem and therefore alcoholism is a matter of serious concern, not confined to any group, culture or country. The influence of the husband's alcoholism generates crisis for the wife and disturbs family's equilibrium. Specifically the wives of alcoholic spouses experience manifolds of physical, psychological and sexual threats and consequently they develop depression, guilt, tension, fear, loss of trust, low self-esteem and high suicide risk.

With repeated exposure to abuses the wife suffers from depression and it reduces her self-esteem. There are very few studies in the past focused on the self-esteem of the wives of alcoholic spouses. Self-esteem contributes highly to the

psychosocial wellbeing of an individual. The wives of alcoholic spouses are exposed constantly to negative environment and abusive relationship with the husband. The present study aims to bring out the impact of chronic alcoholism on the self-esteem of the wives of alcoholic spouses. The research used descriptive research design for the study. The present study is done among wives of alcoholic spouses who accompanied their husband for treatment at SOCSEAD (Sisters of the Cross Society for Education and Development) Trichy, from May 2016 to August 2016. The sample consisted of 50 wives of alcoholics who accompanied their husband to SOCSEAD for the treatment of their husbands. The researcher selected the 50 wives of alcoholic spouses (n=50) using Simple Random Method. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale was used for the collection of data.

Key Words: Alcoholism, Alcoholic spouses, Wives of alcoholic spouses, Self-esteem.

INTRODUCTION

Feelings of worth can flourish only in an atmosphere where individual differences are appreciated, mistakes are tolerated, communication is open, and rules are flexible - the kind of atmosphere that is found in a nurturing family" Virginia Satir. The patterns of alcohol intake around the globe are constantly evolving and alcohol is ubiquitous today. Alcohol dependency is seen today as the world's highly prevalent public health problem and therefore alcoholism is a matter of serious concern, not confined to any group, culture or country. Alcoholism creates a vicious cyclical relationship, which seemingly damages the families of alcoholics. The influence of the husband's alcoholism generates crisis for the wife and disturbs family's equilibrium. The World Health



Organization (WHO) estimated that there are about two billion consumers of alcoholic beverages and 76.3 million people with diagnosable alcohol-use disorders worldwide (WHO 2015).

India stands as one among the top 10 countries that has highest number of chronic alcohol dependents. In India, the State of Tamil Nadu stands first in the highest consumption of alcohol. In India the poor drink 2.5 to 3.5 litter per week; the middle class consume per week 1.5 to 2 litter; and the rich drink 0.75 to 1 litter per week. But, this quantity of intake is doubled in Tamil Nadu. The higher the intake of alcohol will also result in higher level of destruction not only to the individual but to the family and the society at large. Alcohol is brutally destroying the human lives in Tamil Nadu says Dr.Elango, President, Tamil Nadu Medical Association (The Hindu, Tamil 9th August 2015).

Marriage has been an important social institution. It is the basis for the family. P.S. Manohar and R. Kannappan (2010) observe that women experience some form of domestic violence in their life time. Specifically the wives of alcoholic spouses experience manifolds of physical, psychological and sexual threats and consequently they develop depression, guilt, tension, fear, loss of trust, low self- esteem and high suicide risk. The alcoholic spouse beat up the wife and says plenty of lies. They are not consistent in what they speak and keep changing their words. The families live in constant commotion. The people in the neighbourhood do not trust the wife because of her husband's alcoholism. The wife and the children live in an atmosphere without freedom and hostility. The inconsistent family situations, fear, lack of trust and disappointments with the alcoholic's' behaviour all affect the self-esteem of the wives of alcoholic spouse.

With repeated exposure to abuses the wife suffers from depression and it reduces her self-esteem. There are very few studies in the past focused on the self - esteem of the wives of alcoholic spouses. Self - esteem contributes highly to the psychosocial wellbeing of an individual. The positive self - esteem could be experienced in a positive and healthy family atmosphere. The wives of alcoholic spouses are exposed constantly to negative environment and abusive relationship with the husband. The present study aims to bring out the impact of chronic alcoholism on the self-esteem of the wives of alcoholic spouses. The research used descriptive research design for the study.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Jancy Raj (2000) had undertaken an extensive study on the emotional problems of the wives of alcoholics. The result of the present study shows that wives of alcoholics have low self-concept than the control group. Most of the wives try to adjust with their husbands and family circumstances, with various coping mechanisms like, keeping silence, avoiding arguments, keeping away from him etc. But at times they lose their control. As the years roll by the problems and sufferings increase which certainly affect the wife's self-concept. She tries to build up self-confidence in her to manage the households. But she fails to do so because of her weakened mental capacity. She tries to make personal worth and social self-esteem. The constant quarrel and unpleasant conditions at home destroy their self-esteem which ruins their family life.

Ranjan T.P.et.al., (2010) studied the presumptive stressful life events among spouses of alcohol dependence on sample 100 spouses of alcohol dependence (Experimental group) and 100 spouses of non-alcohol dependence (Control group). They found various problems faced by spouses of alcohol dependence that 73% wives of alcohol dependence were facing physical abuse while spouses of non-alcohol dependence were facing only 17%. Different types of emotional problems present were 89% in spouses of alcohol dependence including problems of insecurity. This in turn leads them to experience low self-esteem.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The alcohol abuse decreases marital satisfaction because it decreases the drinking spouse's ability to participate in everyday household tasks and responsibilities. The entire treatment procedure gives importance to the alcoholic patient and the wife who is equally sick is asked to be the care taker. They wives of alcoholic spouses are the victims of addiction who do not use chemicals, but are nevertheless victimized by the drug. They are not aware of the way they are affected by these effects of alcohol in their lives. They are humiliated by the husband in front of the children; they are beaten up and suffer from verbal abuse. They feel depressed and

unable to cope with these negative circumstances. They fight, cry, withdraw, and avoid facing the husband. These issues remain as a silent cry of these victims. The constant exposure in to these painful circumstances and experiences result in low self – esteem. In the past very less focus was given to the self-esteem of the wives of alcoholic spouses. So it is an urgent need to study the self-esteem of the wives of alcoholic spouses.

OBJECTIVES

- 1.To study the demographic features of the respondents,
- 2.To analyse the level of self-esteem in the wives of alcoholic spouses
- 3.To provide suggestion to improve the positive self -esteem.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Alcoholism

Alcoholism refers to continued excessive or compulsive use of alcoholic drinks and becomes unable to live a normal and healthy life. The person becomes physically dependent with the manifestation of withdrawal symptoms when the person stops alcohol. They also encounter personal, familial, legal and social problems arising from excess use of alcohol.

Alcoholic Spouse

It refers to a person (married male) who indulges in drinking alcohol excessively on a daily basis. A good number of them begin their day with a drink and end the day with heavy consumption of alcohol. He suffers from alcoholism and becomes dependant on alcohol for his existence.

Wife of an alcoholic spouse

It refers to wife of alcoholic spouse who are living with their alcoholic husband for more than two years and the age between 20-60 years.

Self-esteem

Self-esteem is commonly defined as the belief that a person is accepted, connected, unique, powerful, and capable.

Method of data collection

The present study is done among wives of alcoholic spouses who accompanied their husband for treatment at SOCSEAD (Sisters of the Cross Society for Education and Development) Trichy, from May 2016 to August 2016. The sample consisted of 50 wives of alcoholics who accompanied their husband to SOCSEAD for the treatment of their husbands. The researcher selected the 50 wives of alcoholic spouses (n=50) using Simple Random Method.

Instrument used

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1965) is a 10-item scale that measures global self-worth by measuring both positive and negative feelings about the self. The scale is believed to be uni-dimensional. All items are answered using a 4-point Likert scale format ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table No - 1
Personal profile of wives of alcoholic

Particulars	No.of respondents (n=50)	Percentage (100%)
Age		
20 to 30yrs	16	32.0
31 to 40yrs	17	34.0
41 to 50yrs	15	30.0
51 to 60yrs	2	4.0

Religion		
Hindu	45	90.0
Muslim	2	4.0
Christian	3	6.0
Domicile		
Rural	3	6.0
Urban	45	90.0
Semi-Urban	2	4.0
Educational Qualification		
Illiterate	9	18.0
Upto 8 th std	20	40.0
High School	13	26.0
12 th std	4	8.0
Graduates	2	4.0
Others	2	4.0
Occupation		
Govt.	2	4.0
Private	3	6.0
Business	2	4.0
No job	23	46.0
Others	20	40.0
Respondent's Monthly Income		
Below Rs.2000	8	16.0
Rs.2000 to 5000	10	20.0
Rs.5000 to 10000	6	12.0
Above Rs.10000	2	4.0
Nil	24	48.0
Family Monthly Income		
Below Rs.2000	2	4.0
Rs.2000 to 5000	11	22.0
Rs.5000 to 10000	26	52.0
Above Rs.10000	11	22.0
Duration of alcoholic behavior in spouse		
Below 5yrs	4	8.0
5 to 10yrs	10	20.0
Above 10yrs	36	72.0
Amount spent per day		
Below Rs.200	10	20.0
Rs.200 to 500	13	26.0
Above Rs.500	27	54.0
Total family members		
2	5	10.0
3	16	32.0
4	25	50.0
5	4	8.0

Source Primary data

The result showed that one third (34 per cent) of the respondents were in the age group of 31 to 40yrs. A vast majority (90 per cent) of the respondents were Hindus and from the urban area. More than one third (40 per cent) of the respondents studied upto 8th standard and nearly half (46 per cent) of the respondents were unemployed. It was also observed that more than half (52 per cent) of the respondents received Rs.5000 to 10000 as monthly family income. Vast majority (72 per cent) of the respondents' husbands were consuming

alcohol for more than 10yrs. It was an alarming information that more than half (54 per cent) of the respondents expressed that their husband spent Rs.500 and above spend per day for consuming the alcohol.

Table No - 2
Distribution of the respondents and their level of Self esteem

Particulars	No.of respondents (n=50)	Percentage (100%)
Low	28	56.0
High	22	44.0
<i>Mean: 22.08 / Median: 22.00 / S.D.: 3.752 / Min.: 15/ Max.: 31</i>		

Source: Primary data

The above table reveals that more than half (56 per cent) of the respondents were low level self esteem and remaining 44 per cent of the respondents were high level self esteem.

Table No - 3
Research hypothesis (H₁): There is a significant difference between age, educational qualification of the respondents and their overall self esteem.
Null hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant difference between age, educational qualification of the respondents and their overall self esteem.

Overall Self esteem	n	Mean	S.D	SS	Df	MS	Statistical inference
Age							
Between Groups				14.026	3	4.675	f=0.318 0.812>0.05 Not Significant
20 to 30yrs	16	22.13	4.097				
31 to 40yrs	17	22.18	3.877				
41 to 50yrs	15	22.27	3.575				
51 to 60yrs	2	19.50	2.121				
Within Groups				675.654	46	14.688	
Educational qualification							
Between Groups				128.161	5	25.632	f=2.009 0.096>0.05 Not Significant
Illiterate	9	22.67	3.122				
Upto 8 th std	20	21.50	3.395				
High School	13	20.69	4.131				
12 th std	4	25.75	4.272				
Graduates	2	26.50	.707				
Others	2	22.50	2.121				
Within Groups				561.519	44	12.762	

Statistical test: Oneway ANOVA ‘f’ test was used the above hypothesis

Inference: The above table shows that there is no significant difference between age, educational qualification of the respondents and their overall self esteem. Hence, the calculated value greater than table value (p>0.05). So that the research hypothesis (H1) is rejected and the null hypothesis (H0) is accepted. The age and the educational qualification does not add or minimise the level of self-esteem. The exposure of the wives of alcoholic spouses with the husbands’ continuous ill treatment, humiliations in front of the family members, physical and verbal attacks make them to have low self-esteem.

FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

The wives of alcoholic spouses in the most productive age group of 31 to 40 years of age suffer from very

devastating experiences. 72% of the respondents expressed that their husband used alcohol for more than 10 years and consumed alcohol for Rs.500/- and above. This can cause very serious economic drain on the family income. The Self-esteem scale revealed that more than 56% of the respondents suffered from low self-esteem. There is no significant difference between age, educational qualification of the respondents and their overall self-esteem. Hence, the calculated value greater than table value ($p > 0.05$). So that the research hypothesis (H1) is rejected and the null hypothesis (H0) is accepted. The study suggests the following based on the above findings,

1. The treatment of the alcoholic spouses should have a systematic plan to enhance the self-esteem of the wives.
2. The alcoholic spouses must be motivated to help the wives to improve their positive self-esteem through their love and care.
3. Family centered therapy must be introduced in helping the wives of alcoholic spouses for the improvement of their self-esteem.

CONCLUSION

The wife of an alcoholic spouse has low self-esteem and a negative self-picture caused by verbal or physical violence, social withdrawal, sadness and problems at work simply due to the alcoholic partner's unbalanced behaviour. These families become systems of manufacturing and perpetuating trauma. Trauma affects the internal world of each person, their relationships and their ability to communicate and be together in a balanced, relaxed and trusting manner. The wife of an alcoholic spouse has become the victim of husband's alcoholism. She suffers from low self-esteem and feels inferior and insecure to meet the demands of life. The entire family looks up to her for survival and sustenance. But she feels lost in her emotions and loses her energy to provide for the family. She has to act as a mother, wife and a caretaker of the husband. She feels drained off completely and needs to be taken care of. Everyone expects her to function in a normal way and she struggles to meet such expectations. So it is an urgent need for these wives of alcoholic spouses to have a therapeutic intervention to enhance their self-esteem.

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