

Substance use disorders and mental illness prior and during COVID-19 pandemic in Oran: a descriptive study

A.DAHDOUN^{1,2}, Y.CHAOUICHE^{1,2}, L. LANABI H¹, B. DJAOUI¹ L.HOUTI²

1. Psychiatry- Addictology Service, Sidi Chami EHS Psychiatrie. Oran, Algeria.
2. Labsis. University Oran 1. Algeria.

Introduction : Substance use disorders and mental illness are one of main causes of disability on the world (1). Several studies highlight that substance use disorders and mental illness frequently co-occur (2,3). The advent of COVID-19 had a serious impact on mental health among populations worldwide (4,5), especially in patients with dual diagnosis (6). In this study, we aimed to determine 3 key parameters: to describe clinical characteristics of individuals with substance use in Algeria comparing periods prior and during Covid-19 pandemic, to identify psychiatric comorbidities among substance users, and to highlight trends changes of drug use around Covid-19 pandemic.

Materials and Methods: Data were collected in Oran Psychiatry- Addictology service in North-West Algeria, from 1st January 2019 to 31 December 2021. Clinical diagnosis was established according DSM-5 diagnosis criteria and addictive data were collected using the WHO “ASSIST” V 3.0 French version questionnaire.

Results: A total of 722 cases of substance use disorders were identified, aged XX to YY year (mean age :19 years), mainly males (98%). The association of cannabis, alcohol and psychotropic was present among 86,3% patients. Middle age of first consumption is 16 years old. Access to care fell by 50% in the first year of the pandemic. Alcohol consumption alone increased from 5 % in 2019 to 24 % in 2020. The most frequently associated mental disorder is depression which is increased from 24,9 % in 2019 to 33,5 % in 2021.

Discussion: Reducing access to health services in the beginning of the pandemic impacted medication treatment and recovery addictology programs in Algeria as in other parts on the world. Covid-19 crisis causes more depression and influence trends of substance use with increasing alcohol consumption. These results are online with previous studies in different countries (7,8).

Conclusion: Psychological distress related to Covid-19 impacted mental health, substance use and access to health services in Algeria.

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