

Trauma profiles in schizophrenia, alcohol use disorder and dual diagnosis

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Background: Dual diagnosis (DD) of schizophrenia (SCZ) and alcohol use disorder (AUD) is frequent and associated with poorer outcomes than either condition alone. Trauma exposure is a shared environmental risk factor for both SCZ and AUD, but trauma profiles have rarely been compared across SCZ, AUD and DD within a unified framework.

Objectives: To characterize and compare physical and sexual trauma profiles, across developmental periods and cumulative burden, in patients with SCZ, AUD and SCZ–AUD DD.

Methods: We conducted a retrospective analysis of three harmonized cohorts (2008–2025) from specialized psychiatric departments in Hauts-de-France, including adults with DSM-IV/5 diagnoses of SCZ, AUD or SCZ–AUD DD. Trauma exposure was assessed using the 14-item “Life Events” questionnaire, recording physical and sexual trauma in childhood, adolescence and adulthood; group comparisons used non-parametric and chi-square/Fisher tests with Bonferroni-corrected post-hoc analyses.

Results: Physical trauma was significantly more frequent in DD than in AUD, with SCZ showing an intermediate prevalence that did not differ from DD after correction; during childhood and adulthood, DD patients displayed roughly twice the prevalence of physical

trauma compared with the other groups. Sexual trauma was more prevalent in DD than in AUD, while differences between DD and SCZ were smaller and not significant after correction. Across childhood, adolescence and adulthood, DD showed the highest rates of physical trauma, and DD patients had a significantly higher cumulative trauma load than both SCZ and AUD, supporting a polytrauma phenotype.

Conclusions: SCZ–AUD dual diagnosis is characterized by a distinct polytrauma profile, with increased childhood and adulthood physical trauma and higher cumulative trauma burden than SCZ or AUD alone. These findings support systematic trauma screening and integrated, trauma-informed care for patients with SCZ–AUD comorbidity.

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