

The relationship between substance abuse, nicotine use and positive and negative symptoms in schizophrenic patients at Mathari Hospital, Nairobi, Kenya

Abstract:

Substance abuse in 224 Kenyan schizophrenic patients was assessed using the Scale for the Assessment of Negative Symptoms, the Scale for the Assessment of Positive Symptoms, the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test and the Fagerström Test for Nicotine Dependence in a cross-sectional study. The most commonly abused substances were tobacco, alcohol and cannabis. Higher rates of substance abuse were reported in males than in females. Abuse of other substances showed similar trends but at a lower level. The lifetime prevalence rates for tobacco use and dependence were 37.1% and 28.6%, respectively. No correlation was found between SAPS and SANS scores and substance abuse. Since psychoactive substances cause confusion and complicate recovery, adequate measures should be put in place to identify and manage the problems associated with substance abuse