

SUBSTANCE USE AND PHYSICAL HEALTH IN PATIENTS WITH BIPOLAR DISORDER UNDER MAINTENANCE TREATMENT

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Background: To date, little is known about the impact of substance use on physical health of patients with bipolar disorder. This study provides data on the impact of tobacco, alcohol and cannabis upon weight, metabolic profile and cardiovascular risk in these patients.

Methods: Naturalistic, cross-sectional, multicenter study conducted in Spain. Current use of tobacco, alcohol and cannabis was registered based on patient self-reports. Patients were evaluated for presence of metabolic syndrome (MetS) according to modified NCEP ATP III criteria, for cardiovascular risk using the Framingham function (CHD) and the Systematic COronary Risk Evaluation (SCORE) function (CMR).

Results: The mean age was 46.6 years and 49% were male. Fifty-one percent used tobacco, 13% alcohol and 12.5% cannabis. Mean body mass index (BMI) was 27.9 kg/m², 22.4% had MetS and ten-year CHD and CMR risks were 7.6% and 1.8% respectively. Patients who used tobacco had significantly higher CHD risk (8.82 versus 5.74, $p < 0.01$), and used more antipsychotic (1.23 versus 1.04, $p 0.002$) and overall (3.18 versus 2.71, $p 0.01$) drugs for the treatment of their bipolar disorder. Patients who used cannabis had significantly lower BMI (26.0 versus 28.2, $p < 0.05$) and lower CMR (0.37 versus 1.99, $p < 0.001$), however, when controlling by age, severity of mania and presence of metabolic syndrome these associations disappear.

Conclusions: Substance use, mainly tobacco, is high in patients with bipolar disorder. Use of tobacco is associated with higher cardiovascular risk and greater number of antipsychotic and overall drugs for the bipolar disorder.