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TOBACCO WITHDRAWAL PROGRAM AT AN INPATIENT ALCOHOL THERAPY UNIT

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Introduction: Alcohol and tobacco dependence are correlated: Alcohol addicted subjects are three times more likely to be smokers than the general population, and people who are dependent on tobacco are four times more likely to suffer from alcohol dependency than the general population.

Some authors indicate it is too difficult to quit both alcohol and tobacco and that tobacco withdrawal may jeopardise the alcohol recovery. Numerous studies however showed the benefit of tobacco cessation by subjects with alcohol use disorder.

Aims: The aim of this study was to examine the outcome of tobacco withdrawal in patients addicted to alcohol and tobacco in an inpatient alcohol therapy unit.

Material and methods: Patients admitted to our institute for alcohol dependence were invited to participate in a smoking withdrawal program after completing alcohol withdrawal therapy.

Results: 106 subjects could be reached. 31.1 % were female and 68.9% male.

67% have completed the 3 week tobacco therapy program, 33% withdrew.

22.6% found it difficult to quit smoking after alcohol withdrawal.

53.8% accomplished abstinence for at least 1 week, 27.6% remained abstinent for more than 1 year.

71.7% of the subjects who still smoked could reduce their cigarette consume.

3.8% suffered from alcohol craving.

We can see a tendency that the risk of relapse is lower for tobacco abstinent patients than for smokers.

Conclusion: The results showed a clear tendency that the risk for alcohol relapse in tobacco abstinent patients is lower than for smokers. We recommend withdrawing alcohol and nicotine during an inpatient stay.