

P01-03

SMOKING CESSATION AND GENDER IN FIRST PSYCHOTIC PATIENTS AFTER LONG-TERM FOLLOW-UP

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Introduction: Patients with schizophrenia and bipolar disorder appear to have more difficulties with smoking cessation than the general population. Moreover, gender and unsuccessful smoking cessation are associated with depression and negative emotional experience. Less attention has been given to the association of cigarette smoking in women and the use of other substances.

Objectives: To determine the influence of gender and substance abuse on smoking cessation in a long-term follow up after a first psychotic episode.

Method: Patients were evaluated at years 1, 3, and 5 obtaining information about functional outcome, positive and negative symptoms and substance use. At 8th year, functional outcome and use of substance were recorded. Patients were classified in two groups: those who stopped smoking during follow-up, and those who did not stop.

Results: At baseline, rates of tobacco smoking were high with no differences between genders. Difficulty with smoking cessation was associated with female ($p=0.017$) and typical antipsychotics ($p=0.032$). Those who used alcohol continuously were less likely to stop smoking ($p=0.050$) controlling for typical antipsychotics. The interaction with gender was not significant. Continuous cannabis use was not associated with smoking cessation, but women who use cannabis continuously were less able to stop smoking than men (adjusted $p=0.036$).

Conclusions: Women are less prone to quit smoking than men during long-term follow-up after the development of psychosis. Different treatments should be considered for men and women in relation to tobacco dependence in patients with psychotic disorder. Treatment for women smokers should probably be more supportive and intensive.