

DEXAMETHASONE SUPPRESSION TEST AND DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS AMONG ALCOHOLICS ARE CONNECTED WITH FAMILY HISTORY OF ALCOHOLISM

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Clinicians and researchers have long considered stress to play major role in the development and continuation of alcohol use disorders. There are studies which reveal that alcohol dependent individuals manifest dysfunction in hormonal stress response system - the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis. Some data indicate that there is a connection between the HPA axis dysfunction and a family history of alcohol dependence.

Aim: Investigation of the relationship between the HPA axis function, depression and family history of alcohol problem (FHA).

Method: 40 abstinent, alcohol dependent patients (9 females and 31 males) of inpatient treatment program were tested during the hospitalization with questionnaires (including family history of alcohol problem (FHA) and depressive symptoms measured by Beck Depression Inventory (BDI)) and with dexamethasone (DEX) suppression test.

Results: 22,5 % of subjects had abnormal results of DEX test.

There was significant ($p < 0,05$) correlation between DEX test and depressive symptoms among alcohol dependent subjects with positive FHA. There was no such correlation in negative FHA group. Abnormal DEX test was connected with higher scores in BDI.

Conclusions: There are correlations between depression, HPA-axis function and family history of alcohol problem.