

# Marital Satisfaction Among Spouses of Male Patients with Alcohol Dependence Syndrome

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## ABSTRACT

### *BACKGROUND*

One third of Indians consume alcohol and there is an alarming annual increase in alcohol consumption. Majority of spouses of alcohol dependent males are also the primary care-takers of their husbands and are at risk of domestic violence. Marital dissatisfaction could reduce their involvement in getting their spouses treated for alcohol dependence. Our aim was to study the marital satisfaction among the spouses of patients with alcohol dependence.

### *METHODOLOGY*

This study was conducted on spouses of male patients with alcohol dependence syndrome attending the psychiatry department of a tertiary care medical college hospital in Kanchipuram District in Tamilnadu. 200 consecutive male patients with alcohol dependence syndrome using the ICD 10 criteria were recruited. Severity of alcohol dependence was assessed using Short Alcohol Dependence Data (SADD). Marital satisfaction among the spouses was assessed using ENRICH Marital Satisfaction (EMS) Scale. Analysis of the data was done using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.0.

### *RESULTS*

The mean age of alcohol dependent men and their spouses were  $43.05 \pm 9.39$  and  $37.58 \pm 8.86$  years respectively. Most of the spouses (83.5%) had done their primary education only and 50% were house-wives (unemployed). Majority of men earned between Rs.5000 to 10,000 and most of them were unskilled workers belonging to the lower socio-economic group in the rural areas. The mean SADD and EMS scores were  $25.05 \pm 8.891$  and  $31.76 \pm 14.45$  respectively. 74% of men in our study population were highly dependent on alcohol. Amongst the spouses of men with severe dependence 68.9% reported moderate and 28.3% reported low marital satisfaction.

### *DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION*

Majority of alcohol dependent men suffered from severe dependence. An inverse relationship between marital satisfaction scores and severity of alcohol dependence was observed. Alcohol dependence and its severity was noted to have an adverse impact on marital satisfaction among spouses of the dependent patients

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**RUNNING TITLE: Marital Satisfaction in Spouses of Alcohol Dependents**

## INTRODUCTION

One third of Indians consume alcohol and there is an alarming annual increase in alcohol consumption.<sup>(1)</sup> A recent WHO report also states, there is an annual increase in global alcohol consumption.<sup>(2)</sup> Heavy drinking is more common in men, in lower socio-economic groups, in those with lower educational levels and in the young.<sup>(3)</sup> Majority of spouses of alcohol dependent males are also the primary care-takers of their husbands and are at risk of domestic violence.<sup>(4)</sup> Marital dissatisfaction and maladjustment reduce their involvement in getting their husbands treated for alcohol dependence.<sup>(5)</sup>

## MATERIAL & METHODS

This cross – sectional study was conducted on spouses of two hundred consecutive males with alcohol dependence syndrome attending the psychiatry department of a tertiary care medical college hospital in Kanchipuram District in Tamilnadu after obtaining the institutional ethical committee approval and written informed consent from participants. Males ( $\geq 18$  years of age) fulfilling the diagnostic criteria for alcohol dependence according to ICD 10 and their spouses who offered consent to participate in the study were included. Spouses with major physical illness or unable to accompany the husband with alcohol dependence syndrome to the psychiatry department and those not offering consent to participate in the study were excluded. Socio-demographic profile was obtained using a semi-structured proforma. Severity of alcohol dependence in male alcoholics was assessed using Short-form Alcohol Dependence Data (SADD). Marital satisfaction among spouses was assessed using ENRICH Marital Satisfaction (EMS) Scale.

## STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Analysis was done using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.0. Descriptive statistics were

analysed and expressed as mean and standard deviation for numerical variables and frequencies for nominal and ordinal variables. The relationship between continuous variables was evaluated using the Student's t-test. Statistical significance was considered when  $p < 0.05$ . Co-relation between the variables was analysed using Spear-man's co-relation co-efficient test.

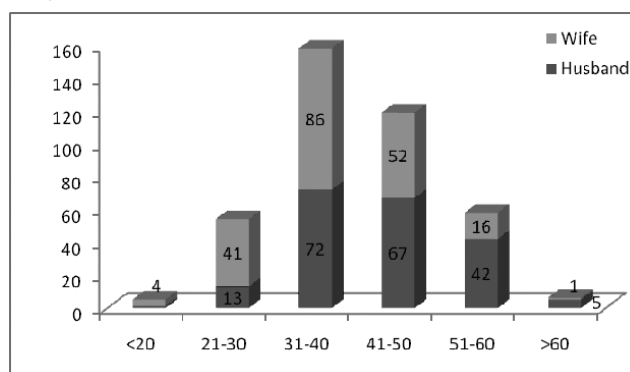
## RESULTS

### SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

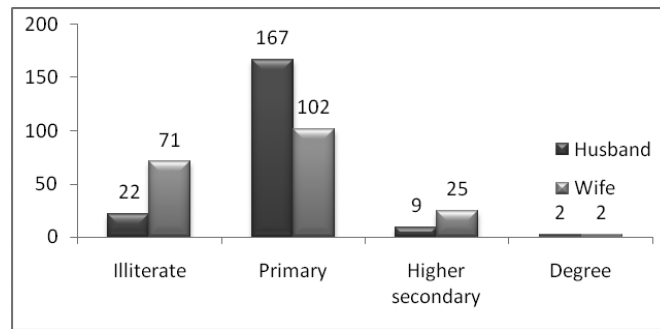
The age of the alcohol dependent men ranged from 21 to 67 years with mean age of  $43.05 \pm 9.39$  years while the age of spouses of alcohol dependent men ranged from 19 to 63 years with a mean of  $37.58 \pm 8.86$  years. Chart 1 depicts the age distribution among alcohol dependent male patients and their wives. Frequency was highest in 31 to 40 years age group in both husband and wives. They constituted around 36% and 43% of the study population. Chart 2 depicts the educational status of alcohol dependent men and their spouses. Majority of the participants (83.5% of men and 51% of wives) had only attended primary school. Around 11% of men and 35.5% of women were illiterate. Only 1% of the study participants had a university degree.

Chart 3 depicts the employment status of alcohol dependent men and their spouses. Majority of men (83.5%) were semi-skilled workers while most of the wives (50.5%) were unemployed. Chart 4 shows the income earned by the alcohol dependent men and their spouses per month. 98% of men earned between Rs.5000 to 10,000 while most of the women were housewives and the families largely belonged to the lower socio-economic status and residing rural areas. Chart 5 depicts the general health condition and presence of co-morbid physical illness among spouses of alcohol dependent men during the period of the study. 73.5% of spouses did not suffer from any physical illness, 10.5% suffered from asthma, 9.5% had diabetes mellitus and 6.5% had a history of seizures.

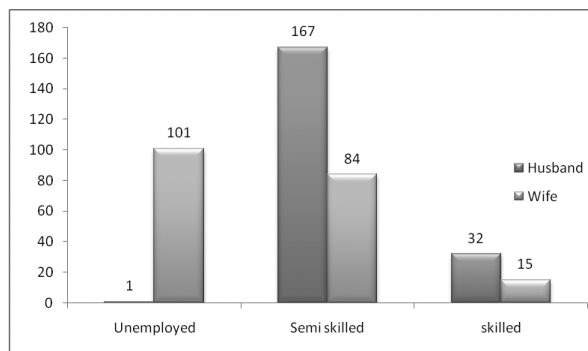
**Chart 1: Age distribution among alcohol dependent male patients and their spouses**



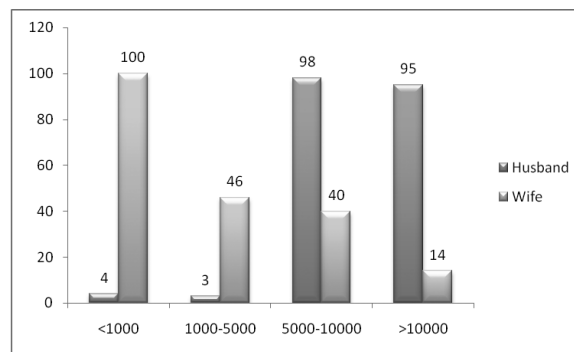
**Chart 2: Educational status among alcohol dependent men and their spouses**



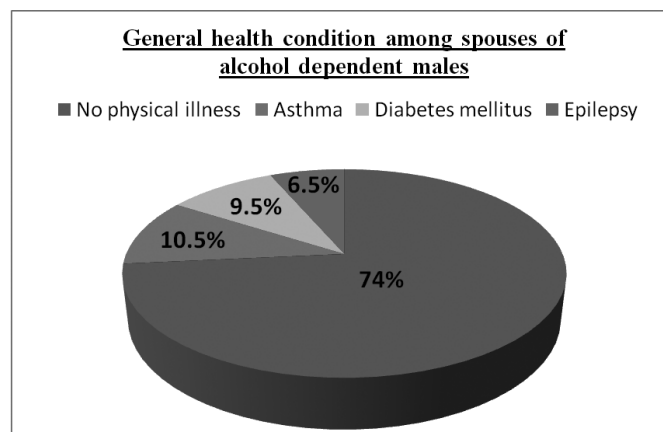
**Chart 3: Employment status among alcohol dependent men and their spouses**



**Chart 4: Income of alcohol dependent men and their spouses**



**Chart 5: General health condition among spouses of alcohol dependent males**



**SCALES & SCORING**

Table 2 classifies the men according to their levels of alcohol dependence based on SADD scores. 74 % of men in our study population were highly dependent on alcohol while 13 % were found to have low and medium dependence. Majority of wives had their EMS scores in the moderate (21 - 40) and lower ( $\leq 20$ ) zones of the scale indicating lesser degree of marital satisfaction in spouses of men with alcohol dependence syndrome. Table 3 depicts the frequency distribution of SADD versus EMS scores when classified.

All men with low dependence had all their spouses in the high marital satisfaction range. Majority of spouses (13%) with high marital satisfaction had their husbands who were with low alcohol dependence. Amongst wives of men with severe dependence 68.9% reported moderate and 28.3% reported low marital satisfaction. Spearman's correlation coefficient obtained a moderate negative correlation coefficient of -0.582 between ENRICH Marital Satisfaction and SADD score which was significant with p-value of 0.0001 (Table 4).

**Table 1: Short Alcohol Dependence Data (SADD) & Enrich Marital Satisfaction (EMS)**

Scores	RANGE (n=200)	MEAN $\pm$ SD (n=200)	MEDIAN (n=200)
Total SADD (1- 45)	8-44	25.05 $\pm$ 8.891	29
EMS (12.96 – 60)	14-60	31.76 $\pm$ 14.45	27.5

**Table 2: Level of alcohol dependence based on SADD Score**

Level of dependence based on SADD Score	Frequency	Percent
Low dependence (1-9)	26	13
Medium dependence (10-19)	26	13
High dependence (20-45)	148	74
Total	200	100

**Table 3: Frequency distribution of SADD versus EMS scores when classified**

	Low satisfaction score ( $\leq 20$ ) in EMS	Moderate satisfaction score (21-40) in EMS	High satisfaction score (41-60) in EMS
Frequency	Number	Number	Number
Low dependence score (1-9) in SADD (%)	0	0	26 (100)
Medium dependence score (10-19) in SADD (%)	02 (7.6)	07 (26.9)	17 (65.3)
Severe dependence score (20-45) in SADD (%)	42 (28.3)	99 (68.9)	07 (04.7)
TOTAL	44	106	50

**Table 4: Spearman's correlation coefficient for ENRICH marital satisfaction scores SADD score**

Dependent score	Independent scores	Co-relation	P value
EMS score	Total SADD score	-0.582	0.0001

**DISCUSSION:**

In our study, the age distribution among alcohol dependent male patients and their wives was highest in 31 to 40 years age group. They constituted around 36% and 43% of the study population. This result is similar in a study done by Dandu et al where majority of wives of alcohol dependent males were in age group between 31 to 40 years.<sup>(4)</sup> Sarkar et al in their study from eastern India also found that majority of the alcohol dependent cases were from the age group of 20 - 49 years (85%).<sup>(5)</sup> A study from Bangalore, India found preponderance of the alcoholic cases in the age range of 20 - 50 years.<sup>(6)</sup> Another study by Soni et al also had the mean age of alcohol dependent men as  $32 \pm 7.2$  and that of controls  $34 \pm 5.8$ .<sup>(7)</sup>

Observations from our study revealed that majority comprising, 83.5% of both alcohol dependent men and their spouse had completed only their primary schooling. Similar results were noted by Ghosh P et al where 60.86 % of spouses of alcohol dependent men were educated only up to the primary level.<sup>(8)</sup> Studies done by Sarkar et al and Soni et al observed that majority of alcohol dependent men had completed their primary schooling only.<sup>(5,7)</sup> Around 50 % of wives of alcohol dependent men were home makers (unemployed) in our study. According to Ghosh P et al and Bagul, 78.26 % and 68.3 % respectively of spouses of alcohol dependent men were unemployed in their study.<sup>(8,9)</sup> In our study, majority of men earned between Rs.5000 to 10,000 and most of them were unskilled workers. This is similar to previous studies where most of the alcohol dependent men were unskilled workers (37.68 %, 76 % and 55 % respectively).<sup>(5,7,9)</sup>

In our study, on administering SADD to measure the severity of alcohol dependence, mean score obtained was  $25.05 \pm 8.891$ , indicating significant dependence. 13% of patients had low, 13% had medium and 74% had high dependence in our study. This is similar to a study done by Soni et al where on administering SADD, the mean score found was  $24.86 \pm 10.1$ , indicating significant dependence in alcohol dependent men, 46 % of them were found to be moderately dependent on alcohol consumption, while 42 % were severely

dependent according to SADD scores.<sup>(7)</sup> Also, another study done by Bagul et al where SADD scores were administered, SADD scores ranged from 4 - 45 and mean score was 20.35. Severity of alcohol dependence on SADD in males with alcohol dependence suggested significant dependence. Almost equal numbers of alcohol dependent males were found in the moderate and high dependence range.<sup>(9)</sup>

The scores on ENRICH marital satisfaction scale (EMS) were in range of 14 to 60. The mean EMS score was 31.76. Majority of the scores were in the lower range indicating lesser degree of marital satisfaction. All wives of those with low dependence scores reported higher satisfaction. This is similar to a study done by Kishore et al where the marital satisfaction scores were in the range from 1 - 57 and almost all of the spouses had scores at the lower end of the scale indicating lower degree of marital dissatisfaction (mean  $26.7 \pm 12.8$ ). Also, marital satisfaction scores decreased as severity of dependence increased. Hence he concluded that the severity of alcohol dependence obtained from SADD scores was strongly associated with marital dissatisfaction in the spouses.<sup>(10)</sup>

In a study done by Vimala et al, marital satisfaction was negatively correlated with severity of alcohol dependence thereby concluding that spouses of alcohol dependent men had lower levels of satisfaction.<sup>(11)</sup>

**CONCLUSION:**

In our study, among all wives who reported lower marital satisfaction, 95 % of husbands had high dependence scores. This study concludes that alcohol dependence in men can significantly impact on the quality of marital life among the spouses.

**LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

This is a hospital - based study, at risk of recruitment bias. Marital satisfaction was based on self-report only. The study only had a cross sectional design and follow up of the participants would have been useful to find out if successful treatment improves marital satisfaction. More research involving a larger community - based sample is required to corroborate the findings of our study.

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