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The characteristics of drug abusers attending detox hospital in Oman and pattern of health care services utilization

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Background: It is indicated that Oman is witnessing an increase in issues pertinent to alcohol and drug abuse.

Aim: The aim of this study was to identify the characteristics of drug abusers attending detox hospitals in Oman and their pattern of health care services utilization.

Methodology: A cross sectional study was conducted in a tertiary care center for alcohol and drug abuse. The participants seeking consultation for alcohol and drug abusers were selected by the systematic random method. A six-part questionnaire was designed to solicit socio-demographic background and clinical data, healthcare utilization and its barriers.

Results: Among 293 alcohol and substance abusers, 99% were males. The most common age of onset for alcohol and drug problems was shown to be between the ages of 15 to 19 years old. Variables such as peer pressure were seen to be integral in leading to first exposure incidences with alcohol and drug problems. The majority of attendees were poly-drug abusers and many of them were making use of intravenous drugs. In a majority of cases, cannabis and alcohol were the first substances being consumed. Hepatitis C and psychiatric disorders were found to be common co-morbidities. Those dependent on cannabis and benzodiazepines were the most to perceive 'improvement' upon receiving healthcare.

Conclusion: To our knowledge, this is the first study that explored socio-demographic background, clinical data, health care utilization and its barriers and 'improvement' perception among alcohol and drug abusers attending drug detox units in Oman.

Biography

Abdullah Al Madhani is a senior Psychiatry Resident at Oman Medical Specialty Board in Sultanate of Oman. He is also a registered doctor at Ministry of Health in the Sultanate. His research interests are addiction and drug abuse. Recently, he has focused more on psychological interventions for people with alcohol and drug abuse.

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