



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The relationship between childhood abuse and depression in a sample of Chinese people who use methamphetamine



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KEYWORDS

Childhood abuse or neglect;
Depression;
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Abstract

Background/Objective: Previous studies have shown that childhood abuse is associated with symptoms of depression. This study aims to examine the prevalence of childhood abuse or neglect and its correlation with depression among a sample of Chinese people who use methamphetamine.

Method: People who use methamphetamine (MA) ($N = 1,173$) were recruited from government-operated drug rehabilitation centres in Anhui province, China. Participants were assessed using the short form of Childhood Trauma Questionnaire and the Beck Depression Inventory-II for childhood abuse or neglect and depression symptoms.

Results: A total of 44.6% of people who use MA reported moderate/severe childhood abuse or neglect, and 56.9% of this sample were diagnosed with depression. Emotional abuse, sexual abuse, emotional neglect and physical neglect were revealed to increase the risk of depression. Multivariable regression analyses showed that depression scores were significantly predicted by gender, duration of drug use, sexual abuse and emotional neglect (model $R^2 = .08$, $p < .001$). The interaction between emotional neglect and duration of drug use on the depression was statistically significant.

Conclusions: These analyses indicate that sexual abuse and emotional neglect increase the severity of depression in individuals who use MA in drug rehabilitation centres of China.

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PALABRAS-CLAVE

Abuso o negligencia en la infancia; depresión; metanfetamina; China; Investigación transversal

La relación entre el abuso infantil y la depresión en una muestra de personas chinas que utilizan metanfetaminas

Resumen

Antecedentes/Objetivo: Estudios previos han demostrado que el abuso infantil está asociado a síntomas depresivos. El objetivo es investigar la prevalencia del abuso infantil entre consumidores de metanfetaminas en muestras chinas y su correlación con la depresión.

Método: Se reclutan consumidores de metanfetamina (MA) del centro de rehabilitación de drogas del gobierno chino ($N = 1.173$). Los participantes fueron evaluados utilizando la forma corta del Childhood Trauma Questionnaire y el Inventario de Depresión de Beck-II para abuso infantil o negligencia y síntomas depresivos, respectivamente.

Resultados: El 44,6% de los consumidores de MA reportaron abuso infantil moderado/grave, de los cuales el 56,9% fueron diagnosticados con depresión leve a grave. El abuso emocional, abuso sexual, abandono emocional y negligencia física fueron asociados al incremento del riesgo de depresión. El análisis de regresión multivariada indica que la depresión se predice de manera significativa según el sexo, la duración del consumo de drogas, el abuso sexual y el grado de negligencia emocional ($R^2 = 0,08$; $p < 0,001$). El efecto de la negligencia emocional y del tiempo de consumo de drogas sobre la depresión fue significativo.

Conclusiones: El abuso sexual y el abandono emocional aumentan la gravedad de la depresión en pacientes de centros de rehabilitación de drogas en China.

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The pernicious effects of childhood abuse on psychiatric health are well documented. Childhood abuse is associated with depressive symptoms, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and implicit emotion regulation deficits in studies performed on samples from communities (Afifi, Boman, Fleisher, & Sareen, 2009; Dias, Sales, Mooren, Mota-Cardoso, & Kleber, 2017; Powers, Etkin, Gyurak, Bradley, & Jovanovic, 2015). The association of childhood abuse and subsequent substance abuse has also been reported in many studies (Ai, Lee, Solis, & Yap, 2016; Enoch, 2011); childhood sexual and/or physical abuse of people who use methamphetamine (MA) was greater than those who did not (Meade et al., 2012). Childhood abuse was related to age of onset and severity of MA dependence (Messina et al., 2008). Childhood physical abuse could predict the age at first drug use (Svingen et al., 2016). Adverse experiences in childhood could increase the vulnerability of MA-associated psychosis (Ding, Lin, Zhou, Yan, & He, 2014).

An association between depression and childhood abuse or/and neglect has been found in previous studies. Individuals experienced childhood abuse were associated with twice the elevated risk of developing depressive episodes (Nanni, Uher, & Danese, 2012). Childhood sexual and physical abuse were related to high levels of depression in adults (Lindert et al., 2014). Emotional abuse and neglect, physical and sexual abuse were related to depressive symptoms in women samples (O'Mahen, Karl, Moberly, & Fedock, 2015). In addition, depression is considered to be associated with drug abuse. Twelve months and lifetime drug abuse were found to be associated with a major depressive disorder (Grant et al., 2016). One report also showed that 41.6% of adults with amphetamine abuse and dependence have lifetime depression disorder, according to national epidemi-

ologic data (Conway, Compton, Stinson, & Grant, 2006), and MA use was significantly associated with the severity of depression (Glasner-Edwards et al., 2009).

Numerous studies had found correlations among childhood abuse, depression and drug abuse, but the conclusions of the studies differed. One of the reasons is that participants in the studies may be from different countries or regions. According to the Global Burden of Disease (GBD) 2010, 9.3 million (57.8% of the world) cases of amphetamine dependence were estimated to be the most common forms of drug dependence in Asian regions (Degenhardt, Whiteford, & Hall, 2014). China has experienced a rapid increase in methamphetamine use over the past decade. In terms of people who use MA in China, there has been limited empirical research on childhood abuse or neglect, depression and the relationship between the two. This study aims to (1) report the prevalence of childhood abuse or neglect and depression in individuals who use MA in China, (2) compare demographic characteristics of and MA use/substance use and depression in participants of no/low and moderate/severe childhood abuse, and (3) estimate the multiple factor effect, or interaction, among childhood abuse or neglect, MA use/substance use and demographic characteristics on the risk of experiencing depression.

Method

Participants and procedure

Individuals who use MA were recruited from 7 government-operated drug rehabilitation centres in Anhui province, China. The eligibility screening criterion for MA as the main

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