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ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT

Correlation between plasma homocysteine levels and craving in alcohol dependent stabilized patients

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Abstract

Background & aims: Homocysteine is a sulphur amino acid strictly related with alcohol consumption. In alcoholics, hyperhomocysteinemia can increase the risk of various alcohol-related disorders such as: brain atrophy, epileptic seizures during withdrawal, and mood disorders.

Objective: To evaluate the correlation among serum homocysteine concentrations, craving, **hazardous and harmful patterns of alcohol consumption** in patients stabilized for withdrawal symptoms.

Methods: Participants were adult outpatients accessed at the Addiction Treatment Unit. Alcoholism was assessed using the following tools: Mini-International Neuropsychiatric Interview Plus (MINI Plus), Alcohol Use Disorder Identification test (AUDIT), Visual Analogic Scale for craving (VAS). Furthermore, during the first visit a blood sample was taken from all patients to measure the plasma concentration of both homocysteine and Carboxy Deficient Transferrin (CDT). Differences between groups in socio-demographic and clinical characteristics were analyzed using the t-test and the Mann-Whitney's U test for normally and non-normally distributed data, respectively. Correlation between clinical scale scores and plasma concentration of homocysteine and CDT was evaluated using the Pearson's correlation coefficient and the Kendall's Tau-b bivariate correlation coefficient for normally and non-normally distributed data, respectively.

Results: Our study included 92 patients. No difference was found in socio-demographic characteristics between groups. The group with high homocysteine had higher prevalence of mood

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