

Role of Assessment and Counselling in De Addiction with Respect to Alcohol

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Abstract: Alcohol addiction is a psychosocial issue characterized by a strong craving for alcohol and an increasing tolerance over time, requiring larger amounts to achieve the same effect. It severely impacts both personal and social life, often leading to the inability to meet basic needs and fulfill societal roles. Given its complex nature and detrimental effects, this paper emphasizes the importance of assessment and counseling in the de-addiction process. Using contemporary assessment tools like CAGE and ASI, along with Ayurvedic counseling methods, this paper provides a comprehensive approach to addressing alcohol addiction. To better understand the user's stage of addiction, the Transtheoretical Model by DiClemente and Prochaska is applied. The concept of sattvavajaya in Ayurveda, which focuses on purification to detoxify the body, is also discussed. This includes a tapering model for withdrawal, promoting self-control through yoga and meditation. Additionally, music therapy is introduced as an alternative approach for relaxation and stress reduction during the de-addiction process. The study concludes that effective de-addiction requires a combination of thorough assessment, detailed history-taking, empathetic support, and counseling through a holistic approach. Music therapy is also highlighted as a powerful tool for relaxation and stress management during recovery.

Keywords: Alcohol addiction, De-addiction, Assessment, Counselling, Ayurveda, Music therapy, सत्त्वावजय, CAGE, ASI, Transtheoretical model, Alternative therapy.

1. Introduction:

‘Addiction’ is a neuropsychological disorder characterized by a persistent and intense urge to use a drug or engage in a behaviour that produces natural reward, despite substantial harm and other negative consequences.^[1] Repetitive drug use can alter brain functions in synapses in a way that perpetuate craving and hence weakens self-control for people with preexisting vulnerabilities.^[2] Ayurveda also believes that मद्य (Alcohol) directly affects the mind. The three components of mind (Sattv, Rajas, Tamas) get agitated in the initial stage of intake of Alcohol.^[3] It gives prompt pleasure and a “feel good” state of mind. Company (peer pressure) plays an important role in adopting the quantity of intake. ^[4]

It is well explained in Charak Samhita that complete abstinence of Alcohol is not advised, as it holds properties that give relief to the people from complex life issues. ^[5] However it is emphasised that it should be taken with caution. Both contemporary psychologists and scientists of Ayurved have accepted the need for proper assessment before any kind of intervention is planned for the Addicts. In the following paper, methods of assessment will be discussed and counselling techniques from Ayurveda; also known as सत्त्वावजय will be described. The body of the paper shall contain two parts; one is Assessment and history taking and the second one is counselling.

2. Materials and Methods

This section provides a comprehensive review of modern literature regarding the definition of “Addiction” and methods used to assess the level of addiction in users. Exploring the tools for assessment, such as the CAGE and ASI questionnaires. Examining the beneficial effects of controlled and regulated alcohol consumption as described in the Charak Samhita (an Ayurvedic text).

3. Discussion

The term “drug addict” has fallen into disfavor due to its negative connotations and stigmatizing effects. It has been replaced with the term “Substance Use Disorder.” There is ongoing debate about whether substance abuse should be classified as a medical condition or a behavioral issue. Regardless, proper assessment remains essential to confirm a diagnosis, whether for initiating counseling or for referral to a specialist.

Assessment

Individual History

- Age at the onset of alcohol use
- Quantity of alcohol consumed
- Does the individual need to increase the amount to achieve the same effects?
- Does the user experience signs of intoxication?

Family History

- Is the user from a dysfunctional or broken family?
- Is there a family history of alcoholism, particularly in parents?

Social Influences

- Does the user often engage in disputes, especially with a spouse or at work?
- Is there any stigma or social labeling attached to the individual?
- Are financial difficulties a result of the addiction?
- Has the user lost employment due to their behavior?

Examination

- A complete Mental State Examination (MSE) is carried out.
- Assess the user's emotional state through a model called SAAD:
- S - Stress
- A - Anxiety
- A - Anger
- D - Depression

Stages of Addiction Recovery According to the Transtheoretical Model by DiClemente and Prochaska, recovery occurs in four phases

1. Precontemplation: The individual is unaware or in denial about their addiction.
2. Contemplation: There is awareness, but the person is ambivalent about change.
3. Action: Active steps are taken to address the addiction.
4. Maintenance: Continued efforts to maintain abstinence or reduced intake.

Assessment Tools

CAGE Questionnaire The CAGE questionnaire is a simple mnemonic that assesses alcohol dependence. It includes the following questions:

1. Have you ever thought you should cut down on drinking?
2. Have others ever annoyed you by criticizing your drinking?
3. Have you ever felt guilty about your drinking?
4. Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning to get rid of a hangover?

Answering "Yes" to two questions is a strong indicator of alcohol dependence, while three "Yes" responses confirm the diagnosis.

4. Addiction Severity Index (ASI)

The ASI is a widely used tool that evaluates the severity of substance abuse across various domains, including medical, psychological, employment, legal, and family functioning. This 30-minute interview helps assess the impact of addiction on an individual's life.

5. Counseling

Key Principles for Addiction Treatment

The World Health Organization (WHO) suggests nine guiding principles for addiction treatment services:

1. Treatment should be accessible to users in nearby locations.
2. Screening, diagnosis, and treatment should be integrated.
3. Treatments must be evidence-based and proven effective through research.
4. The dignity and human rights of patients should be upheld.
5. Special populations, such as adolescents, pregnant women, and sex workers, should be given targeted care.
6. The treatment process should not conflict with the criminal justice system.
7. Community involvement and patient-centered care should be promoted.
8. There should be clinical oversight and regulation of treatment programs.
9. Policy development and coordination at the government level are essential for service effectiveness.

Counseling Approach (सत्त्वावजय)

- Detoxification (शोधन क्रिया) treatments such as vomiting, purging, and enemas are recommended.
- A gradual reduction in alcohol intake is advised (पादांशिक क्रम).
- Ayurvedic guidelines suggest determining alcohol intake based on factors like food, water, age, disease, strength, and time of day. For example, food types, such as Vata, Pitta, and Kapha, impact the recommended intake.
- Complete abstinence is not always required in Ayurveda, as it recognizes the potential benefits of moderate consumption.

6. Self-Control Techniques

Ayurveda emphasizes self-discipline (मनः समाधि) through practices like Ashtanga Yoga, which includes:

- Yam, Niyam (ethical codes),
- Asana (postures),
- Pranayama (breathing exercises),
- Pratyahara (sense withdrawal),
- Dhyana (meditation),
- Dharana (concentration),
- Samadhi (mental absorption).

Alternative therapies, such as music therapy, may reduce stress and help individuals focus on positive aspects of life.

7. Psychoeducation

It is crucial to educate caretakers and family members to offer empathetic support to users, ensuring their dignity throughout the process.

8. Conclusion

Substance addiction is a multifaceted problem affecting an individual's physical, mental, and social wellbeing. Effective management requires a thorough assessment and personalized counseling. The involvement of the family, caregivers, and the community plays a vital role in the healing process, providing a supportive environment for recovery. Additionally, therapies such as music therapy can complement traditional treatment methods and enhance overall wellbeing.

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