

A Study on Family Environment among Children of Alcoholics at Chettikulam, Perambalur District

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Abstract: Living with a non-recovering alcoholic in the family can contribute to stress for all members of the family. Each member may be affected differently. Not all alcoholic families experience or react to this stress in the same way. The level of dysfunction or resiliency of the non-alcoholic spouse is a key factor in the effects of problems impacting children. Children raised in alcoholic families have different life experiences than children raised in non-alcoholic families. A child being raised by a parent who is suffering from alcohol abuse may have a variety of conflicting emotions that need to be addressed in order to avoid future problems. They are in a difficult position because they cannot go to their own parent for support. Some of the feelings can include the following: Anxiety, Embarrassment, inability to have close relationships, confusion, Anger and Depression. This study is undertaken to understand the problems of the children's family environment of Alcoholic parent. How the family environment affects the quality of life of children and what could be the role of other members in the family where the parent been alcoholic. How the other social relations plays a significant role in shaping the children and their future. This study focus on how family environment play a major role in individuals Family relationship, Personal growth and System maintenance

Key Words: Family environment, children of alcoholics(COAs), Alcoholic parent, Family relationship, Personal growth in children of alcoholics.

I. Introduction

In general, COAs appear to have lower self-esteem than non-COAs in childhood, adolescence and young adulthood. Children of alcoholics exhibit elevated rates of psychopathology. Anxiety, depression, and externalizing behavior disorders are more common among COAs than among children of non-alcoholics. Young COAs often show symptoms of depression and anxiety such as crying, bed wetting, not having friends, being afraid to go to school, or having nightmares. Older youth may stay in their rooms for long periods of time and not relate to other children claiming they "have no one to talk to." Teens may show depressive symptoms by being perfectionist in their endeavors, hoarding, staying by themselves, and being excessively self-conscious. Teenage COAs may begin to develop phobias.

Specific Problems Faced By Childrens Of Alcoholics Are:

- ❖ Physical and mental health problems
- ❖ Low verbal ability
- ❖ Difficulties in school
- ❖ Difficulty with abstraction and conceptual reasoning

Addiction in a family environment

Families affected by alcoholism report higher levels of conflict than do families with no alcoholism. Drinking is the primary factor in family disruption. The environment of children of alcoholics has been characterized by lack of parenting, poor home management, and lack of family communication skills, thereby effectively robbing children of alcoholic parents of modeling or training on parenting skills or family effectiveness. The following family problems have been frequently associated with families affected by alcoholism: increased family conflict; emotional or physical violence; decreased family cohesion; decreased family organization; increased family isolation; increased family stress including work problems, illness, marital strain and financial problems; and frequent family moves. Addicted parents often lack the ability to provide structure or discipline in family life, but simultaneously expect their children to be competent at a wide variety of tasks earlier than do non-substance-abusing parents. Sons of addicted fathers are the recipients of more detrimental discipline practices from their parents.

Poor family environment with Children of addicted parents have a high rate of behavior problems.

One study comparing children of alcoholics (aged 6-17 years) with children of psychiatrically healthy medical patients found that children of alcoholics had elevated rates of ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) and ODD (Oppositional Defiant Disorder) measured against the control group of children. Research on behavioral problems demonstrated by children of alcoholics has revealed some of the following traits: lack of empathy for other persons; decreased social adequacy and interpersonal adaptability; low self-esteem; and lack of control over the environment. Research has shown that children of addicted parents demonstrate behavioral characteristics and a temperament style that predispose them to future maladjustment.

II. Review Of Literature

Fisher GL, Jenkins SJ, Harrison TC Jr, Jesch K. (1993) In their study on Personality characteristics of adult children of alcoholics, other adults from dysfunctional families, and adults from non dysfunctional families. This study used the California Psychological Inventory (CPI) to examine the personality characteristics of adult children of alcoholics. The sample was non college age adults (N = 174). Subjects responding to advertisements were grouped into Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACOA) (56%), Adults with Dysfunctional Family Histories (ADFH) (21%), or Adults without Identified Dysfunctional Family Histories (AIDFH) (23%). Results indicated that the ACOA group was different from the AIDFH group on nine of the 28 CPI scales, but there were no significant differences between the ACOA and ADFH groups.

Steinhausen HC.(1995) Children of alcoholic parents. The author points out children of alcoholics are prone to genetic, environmental, and teratogenic risk factors. This study deals with the analysis of the environment of the family with an alcoholic parent. Within the section on psychopathology the special links to conduct disorders and delinquency, hyperkinetic disorders, substance abuse, anxiety and depression, and somatic problems are described. Special consideration is also given to the literature dealing with cognitive and neuropsychological functioning in the offspring of alcoholic parents. Finally, the limitations of current knowledge are emphasized.

Harter SL, Taylor TL (2000). Parental alcoholism, child abuse, and adult adjustment. This study shows a parallel findings in the adult children of alcoholics (ACOA) and child abuse literatures are integrated and extended by assessing long-term adjustment and childhood histories of parental alcoholism and sexual, physical, and emotional abuse in college students (N = 333). Abuse histories were most strongly related to adult symptom distress and social maladjustment. Parental alcoholism had no independent effects when controlling for abuse history. Parental alcoholism interacted with abuse history in relation to social adjustment, exacerbating the effects of emotional abuse. This study adds to a growing literature calling for more complex models of ACOA development that can account for the diversity of this population.

Enoch Gordis, M.D. NIAAA Director (2010) Children of Alcoholics: Are They Different? The children of alcoholics (COA) movement follows in the rich tradition of many popular movements that have focused public and professional attention on the problems of a vulnerable group. COA issues are not related primarily to alcoholism itself but to the social and psychological dysfunction that may result from growing up in an alcoholic home. The author points out the problems in COAs specific for parental alcoholism, and they occur as often in other dysfunctional families also. The environment of the family is also necessary to be good for a COA. If all children from dysfunctional homes are at equal risk, when compare with all other vulnerable groups.

III. Research Methodology

Introduction

In this chapter the researcher has given the methodology for carrying out the present study. It includes the statement of the problem, significance of the study, research design, universe, sampling tools of data collection, objective of the study, definition of the study, limitation of the data collections, problem encountered by the researcher.

Statement of the problem

A child being raised by a parent or caregiver who is suffering from alcohol abuse may have a variety of conflicting emotions that need to be addressed in order to avoid future problems. They are in a difficult position because they cannot go to their own parents for support. Some of the feelings can include the following: Anxiety, Embarrassment, inability to have close relationships, confusion, Anger and Depression

Significance of the study

This study is undertaken to understand the problems of the children's family environment of Alcoholic parent. How the family environment affects the quality of life of children and what could be the role of other members in the family where the parent been alcoholic. How the other social relations plays a significant role in shaping the children as well the alcoholic parent and their future.

Aim

The main aim of the study is to analyse the family environment among children's of alcoholics at Chettikulam, Perambalur District.

Objectives

- ❖ To study the socio-demographic details of the respondents
- ❖ To study the social, cultural and economical factors involved in the issue of alcoholism.
- ❖ To identify the determining factors on characteristics of a family with alcoholic parent.
- ❖ To test the independent and dependent variables and to find out the association, difference and correlation between these variables.

Research design

In the present study the researcher has attempted to make "a Study on family environment among children of alcoholics". The effort of the investigation is to provide a descriptive profile of the respondents. The design helped the researcher to portray the level of Family environment with a alcoholic parent for that purpose a descriptive cross sectional research design was used. The study also seeks to find out the relationship between certain variables associated with the burden level. Hence, it was felt apt to apply that design for the study.

Universe

The universe of this study belongs to children of alcoholic at Chettikulam village doing their education at Government Higher secondary school.

Sampling

The researcher adopted 72 samples from the universe. Sampling technique adopted by the researcher is systematic sampling.

Tools for data collection

The researcher has chosen self prepared interview schedule along with Family environment scale. The questions are designed in accordance with the objectives of the study.

Inclusion criteria for respondents

- Respondents between the age group of 14-17 are only included in this study.
- The above mentioned children who are all studying regularly in Government Higher secondary school at Chettikulam are only included in this study.

Exclusion criteria for respondents

- Respondents less than 14 years and more than 17 years are not included in this study.
- Respondents who are all irregular and not studying in Government higher secondary school are not included in this study.

Pilot study

A Pilot case study was undertaken with a few children and alcoholic parent of Chettikulam. Then from the findings of the case study face sheet was prepared along with a scale on Family Environment and was used at the field to collect the data for the analysis of the study.

Method's used for assessment of the respondent

- Subject information Sheet
- Concern form
- Socio demographic data sheet
- Children of Alcoholics Screening Test (CAST)
- Family Environment Scale (FES)

Children of Alcoholic Screening Test (CAST)

CAST developed by several authors (Hart, 1989; Maxwell, 1985; Schinke, 1989; Stacey 1985) CAST's external validity ($k = .78$). Reliability already checked with Indian samples in various researches. (ANNEXURE D).

The Family Environment Scale (FES)

The Family Environment Scale (FES) was developed by Bernice S. Moss and Rudolf H. Moss, to measure social and environmental characteristics of families. The scale is based on a three-dimensional conceptualization of families. They are 1. Family relationship Index, 2. Personal growth and 3. System maintenance

Operational definitions

Family environment

From the researcher point of view, family environment is the situation good or bad seen in the family and have some effects on the children.

Alcoholic

Alcoholic is person who has craving for alcohol and one who loses the control over because of the drinking habit.

Children of alcoholics

Children of alcoholics are the children of the above mentioned alcoholics.

Statistical test

The researcher used Chi-Square Test, t-test, and Karl Pearson Co-efficient of correlation.

IV. Analysis And Interpretation

Table: 1 Distribution On Age Of The Respondent

Sl No	Age	Frequency	Percent
1	14yrs	22	30.6
2	15 yrs	46	63.9
3	16-17 yrs	4	5.6
Total		72	100

Table: 2 Distribution On Sex Of The Respondent

Sl No	Sex	Frequency	Percent
1	Male	35	48.6
2	Female	37	51.4
Total		72	100

Table: 3 Distribution Of Respondent On Satisfied Relationship In The Family

S.NO	Satisfied relationship in the family	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	18	25
2	No	46	61.33
3	Sometimes	8	10.66
Total		72	100

Table: 4 Distribution Of Respondent Unable To Find Good Friends Circle Because Of Parent Alcohol Habit

S.NO	Unable to find good friends circle because of parent alcohol habit	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	59	81.94
2	No	13	18.05
Total		72	100

Table: 5 Distribution Of Respondent In Need For Happy Life

S.NO	Need for happy life	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	68	94.44
2	No	4	5.55
Total		72	100

**Dimensions In Family Environment Scale
Table – 6 Distribution On Family Relationship Index**

S.NO	Satisfied family relationship index	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	14	19.44
2	No	58	80.55
	Total	72	100

Table – 7 Distribution Of Respondents Personal Growth

S.NO	Possibility for Personal growth	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	32	44.44
2	No	40	55.55
	Total	72	100

Table – 8 Distribution Of Respondents On System Maintenance In The Areas Of Organisation And Control

S.NO	System maintenance in organisation and control	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	38	52.77
2	No	34	47.22
	Total	72	100

Karl Pearsons Co-Efficient Of Correlation Between Age Of The Respondent And Family Environment

S. No	Variable	Correlation Value	Statistical Inference
1	Age and FE	.139	P>0.05 Not significant

Karl Pearsons Co-Efficient Of Correlation Between Number Of Siblings And Family Environment

S. No	Variable	Correlation Value	Statistical Inference
1	No of Sibling and FE	-.013	P<0.05 significant

Association Between Satisfied Relationship In Family And Satisfied Family Environment

S. No	Satisfied family relationship	Satisfied family environment		Statistical Inference
		Lower level satisfaction	High level satisfaction	
1.	Yes	10	8	X ² = 3.769 df=4 P>0.05 Not Significant
2.	No	40	6	
3.	Sometimes	4	4	

One-Way Anova Difference Between System Maintenance (Organisation And Control) And Satisfaction In Family Environment

S. No	Over all Burden	Mean	S.D	SS	Df	Ms	Statistical Inference
1.	Between Groups	1.63	.731	.781	3	.415	F = .782 P > 0.05 Not Significant
2.	Within Groups			62.730	76	.667	

V. Findings, Suggestion And Conclusion

Number of siblings had a positive correlation with satisfied family environment. The researcher perceives that the if number of siblings increased more and more it will result in poor family environment.

The researcher has used various tests of distribution of respondents by their satisfaction in family environment. . Karl pearsons co-efficient of correlation used to find out relationship between age of the respondent and family environment Karl Pearsons co-efficient of Correlation to find out relationship between number of siblings and family environment. Chi square used to find out Association between satisfied relationship in family and satisfied family environment, and Association between Type of family and satisfaction in family environment and One-way ANOVA used to find out the difference between system maintenance (organisation and control) and satisfaction in family environment

General Findings

- 63.9% of the respondents belong to the age group of 15
- 51.4% belong to female gender
- Half of the respondents (50%) are doing 9th std
- 59.7% of the respondents are having 4-6 family members
- 84.7% are having 1-3 siblings
- 75% are Nuclear family
- 98.6% are having Hindu Religion
- 61.33% of the respondents don't get satisfaction in their family life.
- 84.72% are under addiction habit apart from the parent
- 81.94% of the respondents are unable to find good friends circle because of parent alcohol habit
- 55.55% of the respondents got frequent physical problems
- 69.44% of the respondents family members are not under psychiatric problem
- 94.44% of the respondents need happy life
- 80.55% of the respondents interested in music
- 61.11% of the respondents are interested in dance
- 84.72% of the respondents give respect to elders
- 80.55% showed interest in participate school competition
- 84.72% of the respondents interested in helping others
- 79.16% of the respondents not having more friends
- 61.11% are interested in eating vegetables and fruits
- 80.55% of the respondents are not satisfied with their family relationships.
- 55.55% of the respondents not showed any possible personal factors for growth
- 52.77% of the respondents have system maintenance (organisation and control)

VI. Suggestions

The above findings show that the quality of care given to the Children of alcoholics. It thus becomes essential to plan interventions that would reduce their worries, and help them in coping and thus improve their psychological well being. Children are the back bone of our society. So its essential to take care the living environment and the environmental conditions, which may change the child into a deviant personality. So much more attention should be in the research area for the welfare of the children of alcoholics

VII. Conclusion

The researcher conclude that, When compared to their peers from traditional Children's family environment of Alcoholic parent homes, children raised in alcoholic parent homes are at risk for a number of less desirable outcomes. Such outcomes include both lower academic performance and a higher incidence of behavioral problems. Instead, children are adversely affected by circumstances that co-occur with single-parent family configurations (such as economic disadvantage, residential instability, and inter-parental conflict) or are the consequence of such configurations (such as disrupted parenting).

In addition, a higher percentage of Alcoholic parent than Non alcoholic parent lives below the poverty line. Economic disadvantage is linked with lower academic achievement and increased behavioral problems among children. Fewer economic resources are also linked with residential instability, which further contributes to children's academic and behavioral difficulties. Differences in well-being for children from alcoholic parent families versus Non-alcoholic parent families typically disappear when differences in economic circumstances are taken into account.

Finally, children from all family types are at risk when they experience parenting that is inadequate in terms of warmth, control or monitoring.

Limitations of the Study

1. The present study was done in a tertiary school setting, in an rural area, and hence the results cannot be generalized to the population at large.
2. The study has been primarily cross sectional in nature.
3. Some of the Respondents have not respond well due to time constraint in school.

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