



Assessment of Burden, Quality of Life, and Sexual Dysfunction in Spouses of Patients with Substance Use Disorder

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Abstract

Substance Use Disorder (SUD) is a significant public health concern that affects not only the individuals consuming substances but also their families, particularly spouses. This study assesses the burden, quality of life (QOL), and sexual dysfunction experienced by spouses of SUD patients. A cross-sectional study was conducted at Shyam Shah Medical College, Rewa, with 200 participants (100 cases and 100 controls). The findings indicate that spouses of SUD patients experience significantly higher emotional, psychological, and social burdens, lower QOL scores, and a higher prevalence of sexual dysfunction. Recent research further supports these findings, emphasizing the link between caregiving burden and increased mental health risks in spouses of SUD patients. These findings underscore the necessity for targeted interventions, including psychological counseling, peer support groups, and relationship-focused therapies, to mitigate the effects of living with an SUD patient.

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I. Introduction

Substance Use Disorders (SUDs) present significant challenges not only to the individuals affected but also to their families, particularly their spouses. The burden of caring for an SUD patient encompasses emotional, financial, and social strains. Spouses of SUD patients often experience diminished quality of life (QOL) due to chronic stress and emotional turmoil. Additionally, recent studies from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2024) highlight the impact of SUD on sexual health, as ongoing psychological distress can contribute to sexual dysfunction, further straining marital relationships. This study aims to evaluate the burden, QOL, and sexual dysfunction experienced by spouses of SUD patients compared to a control group, with insights from global studies indicating that substance use negatively affects relationship satisfaction and increases the likelihood of co-occurring psychiatric disorders in spouses.

II. Methods

A cross-sectional study was conducted at Shyam Shah Medical College, Rewa, over a period of 18 months. A total of 200 participants were enrolled, comprising 100 spouses of SUD patients (cases) and 100 spouses of individuals without SUD (controls). Data collection tools included the Burden Assessment Schedule (BAS), WHO Quality of Life-BREF (WHOQOL-BREF), and Changes in Sexual Functioning Questionnaire (CSFQ). Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS software.

III. Results

1. Burden Assessment: The burden score was significantly higher among spouses of SUD patients (mean score: 90.66) compared to the control group (mean score: 61.53) ($p < 0.001$). The emotional and financial burdens were found to be the most distressing aspects for spouses of SUD patients.
2. Quality of Life (QOL): Spouses of SUD patients had significantly lower QOL scores across all domains—physical health (24.50 vs. 74.25), psychological health (25.37 vs. 75.00), social relations (23.17 vs. 74.00), and environment (24.97 vs. 76.00) ($p < 0.001$ for all domains).

Domain	SUD Spouses	Control Group
Physical Health	24.50	74.25
Psychological	25.37	75.00
Social Relations	23.17	74.00
Environment	24.97	76.00

3. Sexual Dysfunction: Spouses of SUD patients exhibited significantly higher levels of sexual dysfunction, with lower sexual satisfaction and higher rates of sexual aversion and decreased libido. Female spouses of SUD patients had a mean CSFQ score of 61.63, significantly higher than that of the control group (41.59) ($p < 0.001$).

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