

Psychological Impact of Alcohol Abuse Disorder on Families in Ndumberi Town, Kiambu County

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to establish the psychological impact of alcohol abuse in Ndumberi Ward, Kiambu County. This study was guided by the Family Systems Theory by Murray Bowen. The research design for this study was descriptive research design. The target population was 1200 worshippers of PCEA Ndumberi. Simple random sampling was used as the sampling technique. The sample size for this study was 120 respondents. A questionnaire on Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS) - 21 Items was adopted. Frequency tables and means were used for data analysis on all quantitative data while thematic analysis was used for qualitative data. The study findings indicated that the association between anxiety and family was statistically significant ($p=0.031<0.05$). This suggested that anxiety as an indicator of psychological impact of alcohol use disorder significantly influences families. The study concluded that psychological impact of alcohol use disorder significantly influences families in Ndumberi Town, Kiambu County.

Keywords: *Psychological Impact, Alcohol Abuse Disorder, Families*

1.0 Introduction

The World Health Organization (WHO) (2018) defines alcohol as an intoxicating substance that contains an active ingredient of alcohol ethanol. The psychoactive substances in alcohol are toxic and have dependent properties consumed worldwide (Monteiro, 2020). WHO (2018) characterized alcohol as a depressant drug when consumed since it depresses the actions of the central nervous system, including the heart and breathing rates.

There are different reasons why people consume alcohol. These include cultural, religious, and social practices and provide perceived pleasure to the user (WHO, 2018). This means for a person has an alcohol use problem, may be due to influence of different factors, including biological, environmental, social, and psychological factors. Foroud, Howard, Edenberg & Crabbe (2010) in their study on who is at risk for alcoholism in genetic research, found that there was a link between biological factors on genetic makeup, and physiological. The genetic factors accounted for 50 to 60 percent of the variance in risk for developing alcoholism in families. Alcohol use was found to offer a feeling of pleasure, encouraging the brain to repeat the behaviour hence developing dependency while certain brain chemicals make one susceptible to alcohol abuse (Galbicsek, 2020).

Globally, social factors contribute to a person's view of drinking. For instance, Monteiro, Rehm, Shield and Stockwell (2015) in a paper on alcohol consumption an overview of international trends found that alcohol is highly consumed when people travel for foreign tourism. The study noted that this type of consumption was under social practices and the impact per capita was high. The study also found that social drinking becomes a problem for the individual since they get hooked to the behaviour and continued drinking would result in addiction, affecting the families. The effects of alcohol abuse globally are estimated to cause three (3) million deaths yearly (Sudhinaraset, Wigglesworth, and Takeuchi, 2016). It is also estimated that 2 billion people or about three out of ten individuals, take alcohol globally (Flor & Gakidou, 2020). The study noted that in 2017, the Global Burden of Disease highlighted alcohol as a leading global factor for both premature death and disease burden among people aged 15 years to 49 years. WHO (2019) noted that in Europe 59.9% of the population are drinkers, 6.4% of males and 1.2 percent of females have alcohol dependency and 12.6 percent of males and 2.9 percent have an alcohol use disorder. This means that alcohol affects families all over the world.

1.1 Problem Statement

Family has been affected socially and psychologically by alcohol use disorder. This leads to adopting unhealthy coping methods, hence increased levels of stress, tension, and conflict between family members who learn maladaptive coping methods. Hutchinson, Mattick, Braunstein, Maloney and Wilson (2014) found out that substance abuse may result in psychological illnesses, including depression, anxiety, psychosis, and antisocial personality disorder. These issues increase family problems and negatively affect the spouse and the children through increased psychological distresses. The study also found that when one family member is affected by alcohol it creates damages and disrupts the family setup. Hence, resulting in several emotional reactions of family members living with an individual suffering from Alcohol Use Disorder. Kibera (2015) found out that alcohol use disorder can cause psychological distress, which reduces the quality of life and may reduce the quality of life and result in different mental issues.

The negative effects of alcohol consumption are felt across all social relationships by other members of the family other than the drinker. Ediom-Ubong (2015) revealed that social-cultural factors might affect alcohol consumption. While on the other hand, Sudhimanaset, Wigglesworth and Takeuchi (2016) the social environment also determines alcohol consumption. For instance, world men consume more alcohol than women. On the other hand, women in developed countries also consume more alcohol than women in developing countries. The study also found that other predictors contributing to alcohol misuse include the level of education, income, and occupation. They found that people with high income tend to drink more frequently than those with low income. Hence, this study sought to establish the impact of alcohol use disorder on family.

2.0 Theoretical Framework

This study will be guided by the Family Systems Theory by Murray Bowen. The theory states that individuals are inseparable from their network of relationships. This means that every family member influences other family members in predictable and recurring ways. The theory attempts to provide insight into why members of a family behave the way they do in every given situation. For instance, in a family where the father abuses alcohol, his behaviour inevitably affects other members of the family and the family's general well-being (Brandell,

2011). The family is also seen to consist of different sub-systems (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2002). They are the couple, parent-child, and sibling sub-systems (Ross & Deverell, 2004).

The family projection process is where parent's anxiety, relationship difficulty, and emotions concern the child in the emotional triangle. Fisher and Harrison (2013) argue that when a parent is drinking too much, it may become unpredictable and disruptive, hence restricting the family's capacity to plan activities to a familiar routine. The irresponsible drinking of the parent may lead to negative parenting, leading to disorganized behaviour hence putting stress on the family. The parent may also have mood swings and squander family finances, resulting in overly strict behaviour or withdrawal from parental duties. This may cause a psychological and social impact on the family members.

Another closely related sub-system is the sibling sub-system. McCarthy and Galvani (2012) highlight the significance of trust in a child's life. Trust within the family is an important requirement for developing healthy personalities. Children's well-being hinges on trust and love from adults in their lives, especially their parents. They also hope that parents will continue being available to meet their needs in future. For instance, a father's drinking habit may put extra responsibilities on his children and who might fear or despise him. This may contribute to poor performance in schools, resulting in a negative attitude toward the parents. With children taking up the responsibilities of the parents the family subsystem theory, is the parentification process. Hooper et. al. (2012) this is the case of families where the father drinks excessively. Children also suffer family hostility, poor parenting, and insufficient monitoring. This is because the children have no one to protect them directly or indirectly. They cannot develop a healthy self-identity since the parent is distant both physically and emotionally from the family (Huhn & Slabbert, 2017).

2.1 Empirical Review

There are different psychological effects of alcohol abuse which include both long-term and short-term. This may result in other major issues that affect an individual's well-being, such as depression, stress, anxiety, memory loss, impaired judgments, altered perception and emotions, and impaired judgment. A study Bacolod, Cunha and Shen (2017) found that individuals who abused alcohol had major depression and suicidal ideation. The study established that the soldier who had clinical depression was identified through the Periodic Health Assessment questionnaire with nine questions about mood and behaviour. Those who answered to have suffered mood issues for more than half a day and nearly every day were detected to have clinical depression. The questionnaire also helped indicate the soldiers who had suicidal ideation. These affected the soldier's family life, bringing about anxiety to the immediate family members, the spouse, and the children.

In a study by Rhodes (2015) on alcohol use disorder and sibling relationships a phenomenological inquiry found that anxiety and mood disorders are comorbidity of people abusing alcohol because alcohol acts as self-medication when these individuals are looking for relief from negative affective states. The study found that the siblings were unable to deal with their conflicts and stress, resulting in traumatic and abusive maladaptive coping behaviours. The individual responses to stress response dampening are considered a reinforcing property of alcohol.

Khan, Young, Caniglia, Fiellin, Maisto; Marshall et. al. (2020) on the association of alcohol screening scores with adverse mental health conditions and substance use among US adults found that alcohol screening informed decisions on further screening and diagnostic assessment for depression, anxiety and other drug use outcomes. The study employed the AUDIT tool and

found that majority of the clients had depressive symptoms and a high likelihood of anxiety symptoms. The study found that family members suffered from depression and anxiety as a result of an alcohol disorder from one of its members.

Gavurova, Ivankova and Rigelsky (2020) on the relationship between perceived stress, depression, and alcohol use disorder in university students during Covid19 pandemic a socio-economic dimension found that there was an increased level of perceived stress in females hence rising level of alcohol use disorder than male students. Stress and depression are serious disorders that affect individuals who abuse alcohol. The study further found that the students had alarming stress and depressive symptoms that lead them to substance abuse disorder. The students were also found to have suicidal ideation and other risky behaviours. The study also found that the students were found to be stressed due to burnout. Alcohol disorder also contributed to the student's depression. This resulted in other family members within students' families getting anxious because they were unable to help the students with the issues they were going through. The study recommended that efforts should be made to reduce stress and depressive disorder to curb excessive use of alcohol consumption.

Shortt (2018) on alcohol consumption, depression, anxiety, and stress levels among university students, found that male students consumed more alcohol than their female counterparts. The depression, stress, and anxiety level were significant in all the categories. Younger students were found to have high levels of depression. This shows that alcohol affects people differently and can have devastating effects on the human brain, especially on young adults. Alcohol consumption causes more harm to self and others. This is a critical role in stress, psychosomatic diseases among the spouse, and poor mental health (Dostanic, Djikanovic, Jovanovic, Stamenkovic & Deric, 2021). The study also established that women whose partners abuse drugs have depression and anxiety. Depression occurs three times more often and anxiety occurs two times more often in comparison with women whose husbands do not abuse alcohol. The study also indicated that these women were heavily burdened with stress due to partners' excessive drinking and inability to stop, spousal quarrels, unreliability, and failure to provide for the family. This was a result of misplaced priorities. The study established that women who live in such a stressful domestic environment can weaken their capacity to achieve well-being and optimal mental health.

A study carried out in Ghana by Amu, Osei, and Kofie (2021) found that family members had an increased risk of developing anxiety when their kin had alcohol use disorder. This was a result that the individual could be the breadwinner hence the family will face financial and social challenges such as rejection and stigmatization which in consequence makes them anxious. The study also found that people who live with chronic non-communicable diseases like hypertension which is known to exert grievous strains on the mental health of the family members. The study established that female family members were also highly susceptible to stress than their male counterparts. Therefore, this study seeks to establish the psychological effects of alcohol on the family.

3.0 Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive research design. A descriptive research design gives a summary of the outcomes while the analytical study in cross-section tries to answer the how and why of certain outcomes (Leavy, 2017). This design is ideal in that it described the characteristics of problem in the study and the outcome it has on the family. The design also allows several methods of data collection such as observation, questionnaires, interviewing, and examination of records with their merits and limitations to the purpose of the study. The

cross-sectional data can only be used at the regional levels and restricts the variable to the original researcher's decision. This is because a cross-sectional study allows comparison of data within specific groups on the impact of alcohol abuse among families. This study was carried out in Ndumberi Town among PCEA Ndumberi Town churchgoers in Kiambu County. This study targeted Christians worshipping in PCEA Ndumberi Church. There are 1200 worshippers in PCEA Church in Ndumberi. This study targeted 1200 worshippers in Ndumberi Church as per the Table 1.

Table 1: Target Population by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	350	29.2
Female	850	70.8
Total	1200	100

This study employed a non-probability sampling method. Kothari (2011) notes that in non-probability sampling, not everyone has an equal chance of being selected. Purposive sampling is a convenience sampling method. This method is useful when the researcher makes inferences about the population.

4.0 Results and Discussion

The study sought to establish the psychological impact of alcohol abuse disorder in families in Ndumberi Town, Kiambu County. There were different psychological effects of alcohol abuse in a family. The study identified three types of psychological impact that affect the family as follows: stress, depression, and anxiety. The results are shown in Table 2

Table 2: Psychological effects on the Family

		Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Stress	Normal	6	6
	Mild	28	28
	Moderate	60	60
	Severe	6	6
	Total	100	100
Depression	Moderate	61	61
	Severe	35	35
	Extremely Severe	4	4
	Total	100	100
Anxiety	Mild	2	2
	Moderate	11	11
	Severe	42	42
	Extremely Severe	45	45
	Total	100	100

Results in Table 2 indicate that majority (60%) of the respondents reported moderate stress, 28% reported mild stress, and 6% reported normal and severe stress respectively. This implied that the majority of the respondents were moderately stressed. The researcher observed that families of alcoholics regularly get moderately or severe stress as a result of what they are going through with their kin who abuse alcohol. The results agreed with those of Githae (2019) who found that there was psychological distress among family members of alcoholics. The members of the family were found to develop stress, anxiety, and depression. This was because the family environment was characterized with high emotion expression which is a stress reaction of the family members to the person abusing alcohol.

The findings also indicated that majority (61%) of the respondents reported moderate depression, 35% reported severe depression, and 4% reported extremely severe depression. This implied that majority of the respondents were moderately stressed, with a high number of them going through a severe depression. This implied that the respondents suffered from depression as a result of one family member who had alcohol-related issues. The results agree with those of WHO (2019) findings that there was a relationship between alcoholism and depression within the family. The study also found that families of people with alcohol use disorder had complaints of psychosomatic diseases and poor mental health. The results also agreed with Dostanic, Djikanovic, Jovanovic Stamenkovic and Deric (2020) who found that depression and anxiety were common psychiatric disorders among women whose husbands abused alcohol. The study noted that depression occurred three times and anxiety occurred two times often in comparison with women whose husbands did not use alcohol.

Further, results showed that 45% of the respondents reported extremely severe anxiety with 42% of them having severe anxiety, 11% reported moderate anxiety, and 2% reported mild anxiety. This implied that anxiety was a serious problem among families in Ndumberi Town. The results concur with those of Dostanic, Djikanovic, Jovanovic, Stamenkovic and Deric (2022) who found that alcohol consumption caused anxiety among family members. Anxiety often affects interpersonal relationships. The anxiety could have been a result of physical illness, and impairment lowering the quality of life of such family members, and also as a result of reduced income and increased domestic violence.

Cross-tabulation between stress and family

Crosstabulation was conducted to determine the association between stress and family and the results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Cross-tabulation between stress and family

		Ideal Family			Chi-square (p-value)
		Strong	Weak	Total	
Stress	Normal	5	1	6	5.728 (0.126>0.05)
	Mild	25	3	28	
	Moderate	43	17	60	
	Severe	3	3	6	
	Total	76	24	100	

The findings in Table 3 indicate that the association between stress and family was statistically insignificant. This was indicated by chi-square of 5.728 and a p-value of 0.126>0.05. This suggested that stress as an indicator of psychological impact of alcohol use disorder did not significantly influence families in Ndumberi Town, Kiambu County.

Cross-tabulation between depression and family

Cross-tabulation was conducted to determine the association between depression and family and results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Cross-tabulation between depression and family

		Ideal family			Chi-square (p-value)
		Strong	Weak	Total	
Depression	Moderate	51	10	61	5.448 (0.066>0.05)
	Severe	23	12	35	
	Extremely Severe	2	2	4	
	Total	76	24	100	

The findings in Table 4 indicate that the association between depression and family was statistically insignificant. This was indicated by chi-square of 5.448 and a p-value of 0.066>0.05. This suggested that depression as an indicator of psychological impact of alcohol use disorder did not significantly influence families in Ndumberi Town, Kiambu County.

Cross-tabulation between anxiety and family

Cross-tabulation was conducted to determine the association between anxiety and family and the results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Cross-tabulation between anxiety and family

		Ideal family			Chi-square (p-value)
		Strong	Weak	Total	
Anxiety	Mild	2	0	2	8.888 (0.031<0.05)
	Moderate	9	2	11	
	Severe	37	5	42	
	Extremely Severe	28	17	45	
	Total	76	24	100	

Table 5 shows a significant relationship between anxiety and family. This was supported by chi-square of 8.888 and p-value of 0.031<0.05. This suggested that anxiety as an indicator of psychological impact of alcohol use disorder significantly influences families in Ndumberi Town, Kiambu County.

4.1 Discussion

The objective of the study was to establish the psychological impact of alcohol abuse disorder on families in Ndumberi Town, Kiambu County. The study established that there were three major psychological impacts of alcohol on the family which include stress, depressed, and anxiety. The study established that 61% of the respondents had moderate depression. It also established that 60% of the respondents had moderate stress and 45% had extreme anxiety, while 42% had severe anxiety. Further, the study established that the association between anxiety and family was statistically significant (p= 0.031<0.05). This suggested that anxiety as an indicator of psychological impact of alcohol use disorder significantly influences families in Ndumberi Town, Kiambu County.

5.0 Conclusion

The study concluded that psychological impact of alcohol use disorder significantly influences families in Ndumberi Town, Kiambu County. There were different psychological effects of alcohol use disorder on the family with majority of the respondents reporting moderate depression, moderate stress, and extreme anxiety. The implication is that psychological impact of alcohol use disorder has a significant influence on families

6.0 Recommendation

There is a need for families to be educated on the different psychological impacts of alcohol abuse disorder. In particular, family members should be enlightened on how to deal with stress, depression, and anxiety.

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