

Coping among Spouse of Alcoholics: A Cross-Sectional Study

Sujan H.L¹, L. Ponnuchamy², A.U. Shreedevi³

¹Project Coordinator, Department of Epidemiology, ²Assistant Professor, Department of Psychiatric Social Work,

³Assistant Professor, Department of Psychiatric Social Work, National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS), Bengaluru, Karnataka State

Abstract

Alcoholism is one of the major health and social problems all over the world. Often the family members of alcoholics suffer intense psychological, physical and social trauma due to the core drinking problem of the family member. The aim of the study was to assess the coping pattern among spouse of alcoholics. This study design was a cross sectional survey. The sample size was 100 persons with alcohol problems. The present study adopted purposive sampling technique and appropriate tools were used to collect the data. The result showed that majority (29.0%) of the respondents were between the age of 36 - 40 years, 39.0% of the respondents were belonging to 6 -10 standard level of education, 39.0% of the respondents were home maker in their occupational status, and 53.0% of the respondents were in rural domicile background. About 87.0% of the respondents were belonging to family type of nuclear family, 28.0% of the respondent were reported that duration of consume alcohol between 11 to 15 years, 22.0% of the respondent were in 21 to 25 year of living with spouses. Overall results of the coping scale reveal that majority of the (84.0%) respondents were able to cope effectively in positive reappraisal domain. The details of the results have been presented in this article below.

Keywords: Alcoholism, Spouse of Alcoholics, Problems of Spouse of Alcoholics, Coping among Spouse of Alcoholics.

Introduction

Worldwide there are 3.3 million deaths occurred in every year and 5.9% people are lose their life due to alcohol problems. The addiction of alcohol is a causal issue in more than 200 diseases and it damages the health conditions. The global burden measures that entire 5.1% disease and injury is attributable to alcohol and it as determinate in disability adjustment life years. The risky use of alcohol effects on huge disease and

also on social and economic burden in societies. The dangerous use of alcohol can also result in detriment to other people, such as family members, friends, colleagues, stranger and also significant health, social and economic burden on society at large ⁽¹⁾. India has second largest population in the world and 30% of its population taking alcohol regularly ⁽²⁾.

Alcohol addiction has been one of the major portions to family problem. It emphasizes that facts of the excessive consumption affect not just the drinker but others in the family and it is problem of the family functioning and relationship between family members ⁽³⁾. Global plan has specified that special consideration to be given to additional concern as drinkers such as husband or spouse, child, relatives, friend, neighbor, co-worker, person living in the same household as they may possibly be use of the dangerous drinking it can be affected ⁽⁴⁾. There are growing body of literature that there are detrimental effects of alcohol misuse not only

Corresponding Author:

Dr. L. Ponnuchamy

Assistant Professor, Department of Psychiatric Social Work, National Institute of Mental Health And Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS), (Institute of National Importance, Govt of India), Hosur Road, Bengaluru – 560 029, Karnataka State, India.

Email: ponnupsw@gmail.com,

Mobile No: 7358466735

for the drinkers themselves, but also for the families ⁽⁵⁾.

The families of alcoholics suffer mainly in psychological, physical and social trauma because of the main drinking problem of the family member, it deeply affected are the wives of alcoholics. The problems faced by spouses of alcoholics are physical, psychological and social ⁽⁶⁾. Many women worry about their partner's or husband's drinking. The negative effects of alcohol are harmful to themselves as well as to other family members. It puts excessive stress on the partner or wife of an alcohol dependent person. Psychological stress is one of the utmost effects of alcoholism on family. It is more common among family members particularly among spouse of drinkers. Self-blame, irritability, anger outburst, shameful, hopelessness and helplessness are all comprehensible emotional replies manipulated by somebody involved with a drinker. This type of emotional stress can lead to medical depression. Partner or spouse of a drinker come to be a kind of smaller help for the alcohol follower and they ignoring the whole thing when he is in drinking for that their own emotional and physical needs. It may lead to further abuses which include vocal, emotional, economic abuses encountered by spouse of drinkers in day to day life ⁽⁷⁾.

Coping is the conscious effort to reduce stress. Psychological coping mechanisms are commonly termed as coping skills or coping strategies. Coping skills develop from infancy and are learnt by watching others. Perceived control is an important resource in coping with stressful situations. It develops from prior mastery of stressful situations and within social relationships. Affiliation with others is a basic human response for managing stress. The effectiveness of coping strategies in reducing distress is dependent on the strategies used and the self-belief that one can cope, also known as coping self-efficacy. Functional magnetic resonance imaging has shown that emotion regulation paradigms can be conceptualized into four dimensions: affect intensity and reactivity, affect modulation, cognitive modulation, and behavioral control ⁽⁸⁾.

Methodology

Spouses of alcohol dependent patients have high levels of perceived stress. The divorce rates are high among wives of alcoholics and the most frequently identified cause is domestic strife in the form of

harassment, torture and beating from the husband or in-laws. Avoidance, discord, fearfulness, and sexual withdrawal were the most common coping components used by wives of persons with alcohol dependence ⁽⁹⁾. The spouses of alcohol dependent are not affected to the same degree. Study suggests that adaptive copings such as positive reappraisal, seeking social support and problem solving were used in comparison to escape avoidance ⁽¹⁰⁾.

The aim of the present study was to assess the coping among spouse of alcoholics. The objectives were to find out the socio-demographic details of the spouse of alcoholics and to assess the coping among spouse of alcoholics. This study design was a cross sectional survey. The study population was the spouses of patients who gave informed consent from the in-patient and out-patient departments of department of psychiatry in srm medical college hospital and research centre, kanttankulathur, kanchipuram district, Tamilnadu. The sample was drawn by the researcher between November 2017 and January 2018 from the spouses of patients with alcohol use disorders attending general hospital psychiatric unit at srm hospital. The sample size was 100 spouses of alcoholics. The present study was adopted purposive sampling technique for collecting data from the respondents. The inclusion criteria were spouse of alcohol dependent patients; person consumes alcohol more than 2 years, spouse age range of 20 – 45 years and person diagnosed as alcohol dependent syndrome by the treating psychiatrist according to ICD – 10. The exclusion criterias were alcoholics associated with psychiatric illness and mental retardation.

The tools used in this study were socio-demographic data sheet and ways of coping scale. The Ways of Coping Scale was developed by Folkman and Lazarus in 1988 ⁽¹¹⁾. It has eight domains namely confronting coping, distancing, self-controlling, seeking social support, accepting responsibility, escape avoidance, plan-full problem solving and positive appraisal respectively. This questionnaire consists of 66 items. There are four alternative answers from which the participant had to choose one alternate. To what extent you used it in the coping situation. The total score ranges from 0-198, there were four alternative responses mainly "Not used", "Used somewhat", "Used quite a bit", and "Used a great deal". The 66 items are positively worded hence scored

as 0, 1, 2 and 3. The ways of coping mechanism scores were arbitrarily categorized into 3 categories based on the score viz Not able to cope (0-66), Able to cope to some extent (67-132), Able to cope effectively (133-198). This scale has been used widely in India.

After getting approval from the institutional ethical committee of the srm medical college hospital and research centre, the patients with alcohol use disorders who fulfilled the inclusion and exclusion criteria were taken up for the study. A brief introduction and

verbal explanation about the purpose and objectives of the research study was given to the respondents individually along with written information, and then written consent was taken from the respondents. The statistical package for social science (SPSS) 23 versions was used for statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics calculated for continuous variable and non-parametric was used for categorical variables. Analysis was done for the collected data and frequency distribution used for socio-demographic sheet and ways of coping scale.

Results

Table – 1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Spouse of Alcoholics:

Sl. No	Socio-demographic characters	Frequency (N=100)	Percentage (100%)
1	Age		
	20 – 25	11	1.0
	26 – 30	20	20.0
	31 – 35	22	22.0
	36 – 40	29	29.0
	41 – 45	28	28.0
2	Education		
	Illiterate	11	11.0
	1 – 5	12	12.0
	6 – 10	39	39.0
	11 -12	18	18.0
	Diploma UG and PG	7 13	7.0 13.0
3	Occupation status		
	House wife	39	39.0
	Daily wages Self- employ	20 7	20.0 7.0
	Private employ	27	27.0
	Government employ	6	6.0
	Other	1	1.0

Table -1 reveals that majority (29.0%) of the respondents were age group was 36 to 40 years, majority (39.0%) of the respondents were studied 6th standard to 10th standard of education level, and occupation status shows that majority (39.0%) of the responds were housewives.

Table – 2 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Spouse of Alcoholics:

Sl. No	Social-demographic characters	Frequency (N=100)	Percentage (100%)
4	Income		
	5000 – 10000	14	14.0
	11000 – 15000	35	35.0
	16000 – 20000	24	24.0
	21000 – 25000	11	11.0
	26000 – 30000	6	6.0
	31000 – 35000	4	4.0
36000 & above	6	6.0	
5	Religion		
	Hindu	80	80.0
	Muslim	4	4.0
	Christian	16	16.0
6	Domicile background		
	Rural	53	53.0
	Urban	47	47.0

Table - 2 shows that majority (35%) of the respondents were belonging to family income between 11000 and 15000, then majority (80.0%) of the respondents were belong to hindu religions, and 53.0% of respondents were in rural domicile background.

Table – 3 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Spouse of Alcoholics:

S. No	Social-demographic characters	Frequency (N=100)	Percentage (100%)
7	Family types		
	Nuclear Family Joint	87	87.0
	family Extended	7	7.0
	family	6	6.0
8	Duration of consuming alcohol of patients		
	0 – 5	5	5.0
	6 – 10	22	22.0
	11 – 15	28	28.0
	16 – 20	24	24.0
	21 – 25	15	15.0
	26 – 30	2	2.0
31 & above	4	4.0	
9	Year of living with husband		
	0 -5	7	7.0
	6 - 10	22	22.0
	11 – 15	21	21.0
	16 – 20	17	17.0
	21 – 25	24	24.0
	26 – 30	9	9.0

Table - 3 reveals that majority (87.0%) of the respondents were belonging to nuclear type of family, then majority (28.0%) of the patients consumed alcohol between 11 and 15 years of duration, and majority (24.0%) of the respondents were in 21 years to 25 years of living experience with husband.

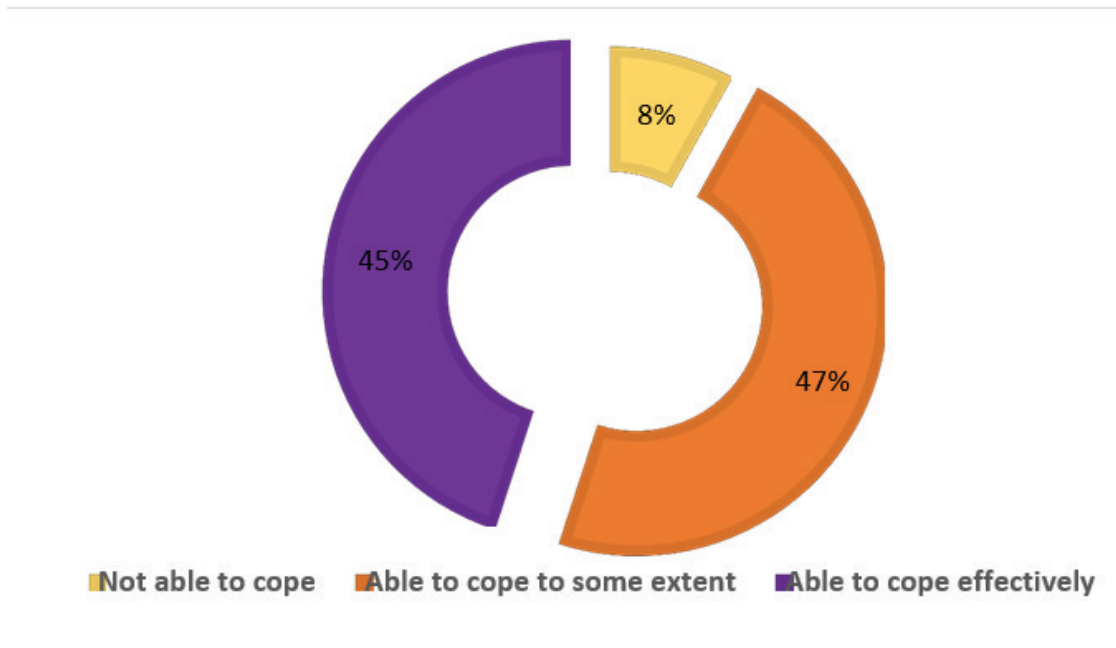


Figure – 1: Ways of Coping Scale - (Distancing of Spouse of alcoholics):

Figure – 1 reveals that majority (47%) of the respondents were reported in distancing domain that able to cope to some extent, followed by able to cope effectively (45%) and not able to cope (8%).

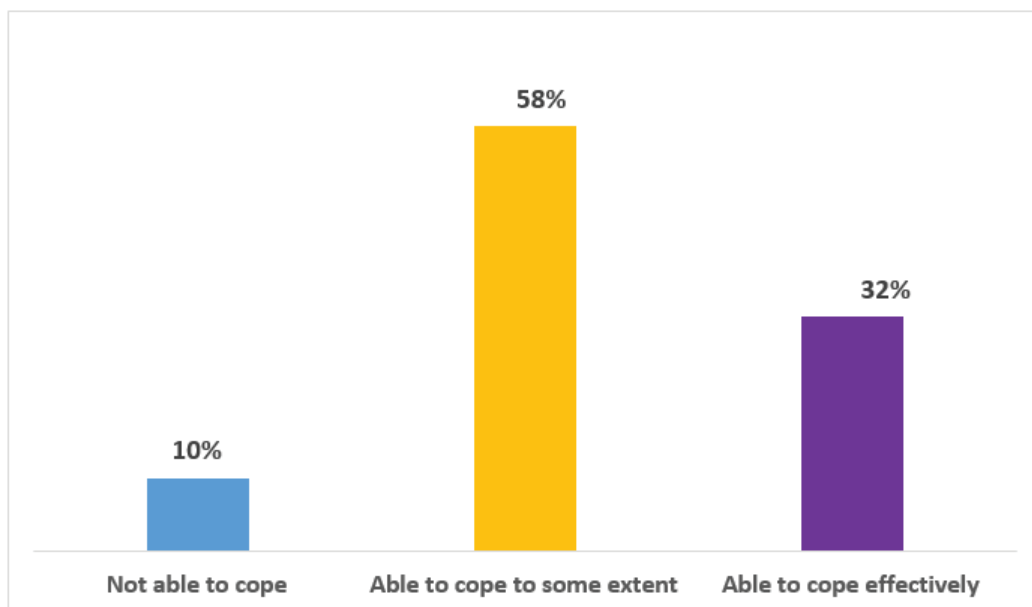


Figure – 2: Ways of Coping Scale – (Escape-Avoidance of Spouse of alcoholics):

Figure – 2 shows that majority (47%) of the respondents were reported in escape- avoidance domain that able to cope to some extent, followed by able to cope effectively (32%) and not able to cope (10%).

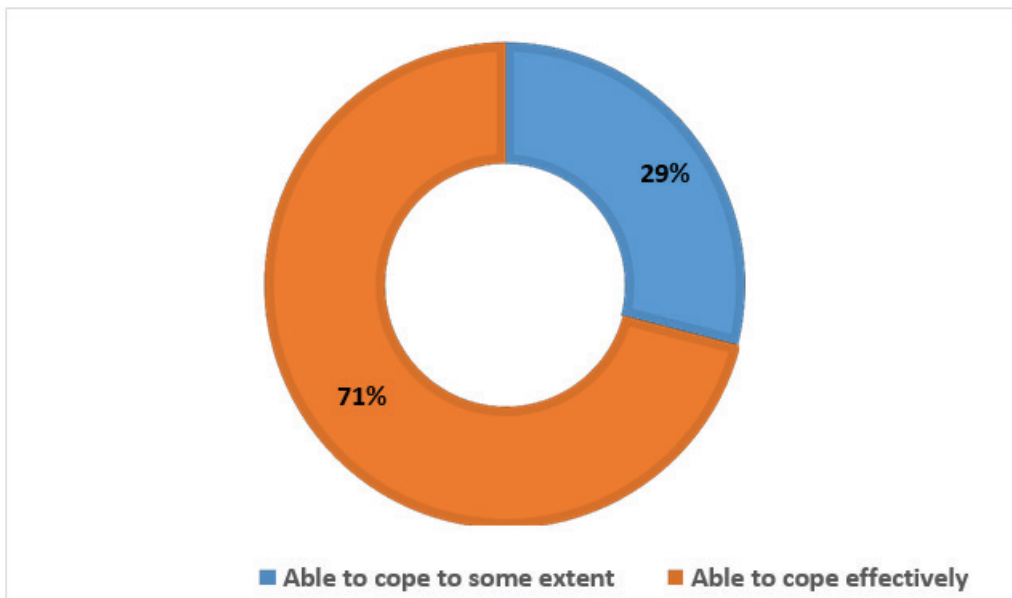


Figure – 3: Ways of Coping Scale – (Planful Problem Solving of Spouse of alcoholics):

Figure – 3 reveals that majority (71%) of the respondents were reported in planful problem solving domain that able to cope effectively and followed by able to cope to some extent (29%).

Discussion

The aim of the study was to assess the coping among spouse of alcoholics. The findings of the present study were discussed in detail. The results of the socio-demographic details revealed that the majority of the respondents age ranges from 36 to 40 years, 39% of the respondents studied between 6 and 10 standard, and regarding occupation status of the respondents 39% of spouses of alcoholics were homemaker. Family income of spouse of alcoholics were Rs.11,000/- to Rs.15,000/- per month, 80% of the respondents were hindus in origin, majority (53%) of the respondents were living in rural area and 87% respondents had nuclear family of family types. The duration of patient’s dinking was from 11 to 15 years and living with spouses from 21 years to 25 years.

The overall results of present study on coping of wives of alcoholics were similar to the findings reported by ⁽¹²⁾ and these results were associated previous studies

^(6&9). The positive reappraisals of spouse of alcoholics such as threatening, starting a row with her spouse whenever is drinking and trying to alter his behaviours. Good outcome for these types of behaviours since they do suggest a degree of engagement or environment between wife and husband. On the other hand, the authors predicted poor outcome of drinking for behaviours as those of avoiding, refusing to talk, refusing to sleep together, and feeling frightened and sexual withdrawal ⁽¹³⁾. In the present study the second highest frequency reported coping was planful problem solving.

Wives were found to have positive reappraisal as one of the coping mechanisms ⁽¹⁴⁾ and the present study results also agreed with the previous results. Seeking medical help was high in this group. The sample was from a deaddiction center where they had taken treatment competitive coping such as getting drunk themselves, making him jealous were reported low and it may be become of cultural standards. One of the consequences of partner drinking had been co-dependence of the spouse also. Current study sample doesn’t contain any respond being or becoming dependent on alcohol. Other significant finding is the low score of 2 % distancing and self-controlling of spouses of alcoholics.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY:

- ✓ Sample size of the present study was small for the descriptive research and results of the findings may not be generalized.
- ✓ Present study focused on spouses only.
- ✓ The present study was a cross sectional survey study and hence the extraneous variable couldn't be controlled.

Conclusion

The present study was designed to assess the coping among spouse of alcoholics. The impact of persons with alcohol dependence syndrome is not only on individual, but it also on the family and society at large. The impact especially on spouses is immense. Few studies only focused on perceived coping among spouse of alcoholics. The result of the present study shows that majority of spouses had positive reappraisal as one of the important coping mechanisms. Most of them have interpersonal relationship issues and financial burdens, physical and psychological issues due to husband's alcohol drinking behaviors. The findings of the present study will be useful to plan awareness programme and to develop preventive measures for persons with alcohol dependence syndrome in the community. This study findings also are helpful to plan effective social work intervention strategies for alcohol patients.

Conflict of Interest – Nil

Financial Assistant – Nil

References

1. World Health Organization. Media center, <http://www.who.int/mediacenter/fatsheet/fs349/en>. (Internet), 2015. WHO, Geneva.
2. World Health Organization. Global status report on alcohol and health, 2014. Avenue Appia 20, 1211, WHO, Geneva.
3. Hurcom C, Copello A, Orford J. The family and alcohol: Effects of excessive drinking and conceptualizations of spouses over recent decades. *Substance Use and Misuse J*, 2000. 35, 473- 502.
4. World Health Organization. Global strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol. 2010. Avenue Appia 20, 1211, WHO, Geneva.
5. Rotunda R, Doman K. Partner enabling of alcoholic: Critical review and future directions. *American Journal of Family Therapy*. 2001. 29(4), 257 -270.
6. Nagesh VA. Stress and Coping among the Wives of Alcoholics admitted in Selected De-Addiction Centers. *Asian J of Nursing Edu and Research*. 2015. 5(3), 373-380.
7. Divyabala S, Srinivasan P. Effectiveness of guided imagery on Stress among Spouse of Alcoholics. *International Journal of Applied Research*. 2015. 12(8), 565-567.
8. Nitasha S, Sunitha S, Ghai S, Basu D, Kumari D, Singh D, Kaur G. Living with an alcoholic partner: Problems faced and Coping strategies used by Wives of Alcoholic Clients. *Indian J of Psychiatry*. 2016. 25(1), 65-71.
9. Nanjundaswamy MPA, Sreedevi HM, Gangadharaiah B, Viswanath V, Benegal. (2016). A study to assess the stress, coping strategies and domestic violence in wives of alcohol dependent individuals, NIMHANS, Bangalore, India. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0924-9338\(13\)77350-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0924-9338(13)77350-4). (Internet). 2016. (13)77350-4.
10. Indrajeetbanerjee, Debasree B, Sonia P Deuri. Coping strategies and perceived social support in wives of persons with alcohol dependent syndrome. *Indian J of Psychiatric So Work*. 2017. 8(1), 28- 32.
11. Folkman S, Lazarus RS. Ways of Coping Questionnaire. Consulting Psychologists Press, 1988.
12. Christopher WK, Barbara SM, Elizabeth EE. Coping Behaviour among of Dependent Men. *J of Substance Abuse Treatment*. 2003. 29(3), 314–324.
13. Orford J, Oppenheimer E, Egert S, Hensman C, Guthrie S. The Cohesive of alcoholism complicated marriages and its influence on treatment outcome. *British J of Psychiatry*. 1976. 128, 318-339
14. Chandrasekarasekar R, Chithraleka. Conducted study patterns and determinants of Coping behaviour of Wives of Alcoholic. *Indian J of Psychiatry*. 1980.40 (1), 30 – 34.