

Victimization in Schizophrenia: A Cross-Sectional Prospective Study

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Abstract : Objectives: In this research, we studied the extent of exposure to physical violence and committing violence in patients diagnosed with schizophrenia in comparison to a control group consisting of patients with psychiatric diseases other than psychotic and mood disorders. Method: Between August 2019 and October 2019, a total of 100 hospitalized patients diagnosed with schizophrenia (clinically in remission, Brief Psychiatric Rate Scale < 30) were sequentially studied while undergoing inpatient treatment at Erenkoy Mental Health Training and Research Hospital. From the outpatient clinic, 50 patients with psychiatric disorders other than psychotic disorders or mood disorders were consecutively included as a control group. All participants were evaluated by the sociodemographic data that also questions the history of violence, physical examination, bilateral comparative hand, and forearm anterior-posterior and lateral radiography. Results: While 59% of patients with schizophrenia and 28% of the control group stated that they were exposed to physical violence at least once in a lifetime ($p < 0,001$); a defensive wound or fracture was detected in 29% of patients with schizophrenia and 2% of the control group ($p < 0,001$). On the other hand, 61% of patients diagnosed with schizophrenia, and 32% of the control group expressed that they committed physical violence at least once in a lifetime ($p: 0,001$). A self-destructive wound or fracture was detected in 53% of the patients with schizophrenia and 24% of the control group ($p: 0,001$). In the schizophrenia group, the rate of committing physical violence is higher in those with substance use compared to those without substance use ($p:0,049$). Also, wounds and bone fractures (boxer's fracture) resulting from self-injury are more common in schizophrenia patients with substance use ($p:0,002$). In the schizophrenia group, defensive wounds and parry fractures (which are located in the hand, forearm, and arm usually occur as a result of a trial to shield the face against an aggressive attack and are known to be the indicators of interpersonal violence) are higher in those with substance use compared to those who do not ($p:0,007$). Conclusion: This study shows that exposure to physical violence and the rate of violence is higher in patients with schizophrenia compared to the control group. It is observed that schizophrenia patients who are stigmatized as being aggressive are more exposed to violence. Substance use in schizophrenia patients increases both exposure to physical violence and the use of physical violence. Physical examination and anamnesis that question violence are important tools to reveal the exposure to violence in patients. Furthermore, some specific bone fractures and wounds could be used to detect victimization even after plenty of time passes.

Keywords : fracture, physical violence, schizophrenia, substance use

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