

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Problem Alcohol Use in Women: Systematic Analysis

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Abstract : Study Aims: The current study aimed to systematically analyse various research done in the area of female post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and alcohol abuse, and to critically review these results on the basis of theoretical models as well as answer following questions: (I) What is the reciprocal relationship between PTSD and problem alcohol use among females; (II) What are the moderating/mediating factors of this relationship? Methods: The computer bibliographic databases Ebsco, Scopus, Springer, Web of Science, Medline, Science Direct were used to search for scientific articles. Systematic analyses sample consisted of peer-reviewed, English written articles addressing mixed gender and female PTSD and alcohol abuse issues from Jan 2012 to May 2017. Results: Total of 1011 articles were found in scientific databases related to searched keywords of which 29 met the selection criteria and were analysed. The results of longitudinal studies indicate that (I) various trauma, especially interpersonal trauma exposure in childhood is linked with increased risk of revictimization in later life and problem alcohol use; (II) revictimization in adolescence or adulthood, rather than victimization in childhood has a greater impact on the onset and progression of problematic alcohol use in adulthood. Cross-sectional and epidemiological studies also support significant relationships between female PTSD and problem alcohol use. Regards to the negative impact of alcohol use on PTSD symptoms results are yet controversial; some evidence suggests that alcohol does not exacerbate symptoms of PTSD over time, while others argue that problem alcohol use worsens PTSD symptoms and is linked to chronicity of both disorders, especially among women with previous alcohol use problems. Analysis of moderating/mediating factors of PTSD and problem alcohol use revealed, that higher motives/expectancies, specifically distress coping motives for alcohol use significantly moderates the relationship between PTSD and problematic alcohol use. Whereas negative affective states mediate relationship between symptoms of PTSD and alcohol use, but only among woman with alcohol use problems already developed. Conclusions: Interpersonal trauma experience, especially in childhood and its reappearance in lifetime is linked with PTSD symptoms and problem drinking among women. Moreover, problem alcohol use can be both a cause and a consequence of trauma and PTSD, and if used for coping it, increases the likelihood of chronicity of both disorders. In order to effectively treat both disorders, it's worthwhile taking into account this dynamic interplay of women's PTSD symptoms and problem drinking.

Keywords : female, trauma, post-traumatic stress disorder, problem alcohol use, systemic analysis

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