Patients with a History of Foster Care are at Higher Risk for Drug Overdose
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Background
- History of foster care (HoFC) is associated with poorer mental health and increased substance use and overdose ¹²
- Little is known about this in individuals with co-occurring mental health and substance use conditions (concurrent disorder; CD)
- Individuals with CD have the highest rate of overdoses compared to any other drug-using group
- Imperative for development of overdose prevention strategies to examine indicators of overdose risk

Aim: Investigate substance use and overdose history in CD inpatients with and without a history of foster care

Methods
- 131 male and female inpatients with concurrent disorders
- Drug use assessed using the Maudsley Addiction Profile
- Overdose history assessed using self-reported drug overdoses
- Demographics and psychiatric diagnoses were retrieved through patient medical charts
- Data were compared between individuals with and without HoFC.

Demographic Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>HoFC (N = 21)</th>
<th>No HoFC (N = 109)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex (%female) *</td>
<td>21 (43%)</td>
<td>109 (34%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>39 ± 11</td>
<td>29 ± 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Nations or Aboriginal</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White/Black/Asian/Other</td>
<td>14/0/1/2</td>
<td>70/3/9/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overdoses</td>
<td>1.45 ± 1.4</td>
<td>1.17 ± 1.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Data reflect frequency or means and standard deviation, unless otherwise specified

Results

1. Substance Use Before Treatment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Odd Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foster Care History</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Independent of polysubstance use, fentanyl use, heroin use, and age, history of foster care predicts a greater likelihood of overdose.

2. Foster Care History Predicts Greater Likelihood of Having Overdosed

Figure 1. Frequency of substance use within the past 30 days as characterized by independent substances for individuals with and without a HoFC. ***p < .001 (corrected with Bonferroni Correction)

3. Number of Substance Types Used (Polysubstance Use)

Figure 3. The total number of substances used within 30 days (polysubstance use) for individuals with and without a HoFC and overdose. *p < .05

4. Substance-Specific Overdoses

Figure 4. The percentage of individuals who indicated using the substance when they last overdosed, in those with and without a HoFC.

Summary

Patients with HoFC:
- Greater likelihood of overdose
- Greater likelihood of fentanyl, heroin, and polysubstance use
- No differential frequency of opioid-specific (fentanyl, heroin) overdoses or with any other substances

Conclusion

- Findings suggest concurrent disorder patients with a HoFC are at higher risk for overdose, fentanyl, and heroin use
- The etiology of increased drug overdoses among individuals with a HoFC cannot be ascertained, given the cross-sectional nature of this study.
- Longitudinal studies investigating the potential problems contributing to stimulant use and other drugs linked to foster care are warranted.

Reference / Bibliography

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