

5th International Conference and Exhibition on

Addiction Research & Therapy

October 03-05, 2016 Atlanta, USA

Female alcoholism: The need for a specific approach from a spanish perspective

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In recent decades, female alcoholism (FA) has become a growing phenomenon in Spain. Changes in the traditional family structure and the assumption of typically male roles by women have contributed to the current situation. However, the features and meaning of female alcoholism are different from males. Jellinek (1960) described different profiles for alcoholism, but we have to consider the specific nature of alcoholism when women are considered. First, FA is underconsidered because it remains hidden much more time. As a result, the time needed to access treatment is longer than for men, and the associated damage is greater. It is important to highlight that women suffer a greater social stigma than men. Most of the time, women are expected to fulfill their responsibilities despite their addiction disease, but the same is not expected of men.

Etiological factors are also different when you look at FA. 50% of alcoholic women were victims of family violence in childhood and married an alcoholic husband.

One of the most important factors that point to the need for a specific approach to FA is that special treatment programs aimed at alcoholic women achieve better results than programs without a gender perspective.

As with men, different profiles can be identified when FA is considered. Based on our own experience, we suspected the existence of two other profiles for FA that would show the complexity of this phenomenon. On the one hand, we observed a profile mainly associated with a particular stage of the family life cycle, featuring a middle-aged woman whose alcohol problems get worse when children leave the family home. On the other hand, we suspected another profile particularly associated with a broken home, characterized by a woman that develops an early problematic consumption of alcohol, together with a higher rate of psychopathological comorbidity.

Biography

Francisco Jos Montero Bancalero, from Spain, studied psychology at Seville University and obtained his doctorate at Huelva University. He is currently a professor at Osuna University His professional career started in the field of addictions working as a therapist in an outpatient treatment center, and then he began to participate in different investigation projects. He has long been interested in female alcoholism, working on it both as a researcher and therapist. He received funding from the Andalusian government to carry out an investigation comparing alcoholism by gender. In a therapeutic context he has managed group therapy for alcoholic women. He has become a member of the National Hispanic Science Network on Drug Abuse and has presented his research at different international conferences.

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