

**OP 16: Knowledge, attitudes, and prevalence of alcohol dependence and alcohol withdrawal among male patients who use harmful amounts of alcohol in the medical and surgical wards at NHSL**

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**Introduction:** Alcohol dependence and subsequent burden related to morbidity and mortality have a significant impact on the healthcare and socio-economic status of the country.

**Objectives:** To assess the knowledge, attitudes, prevalence, and associated socio-demographic factors of alcohol dependence and withdrawal among male harmful users of alcohol in an inpatient setting at NHSL.

**Methods:** A hospital based cross-sectional study was carried out. In a sample of 120 harmful users of alcohol who were selected by administering AUDIT (who scored >8). Interviewer administered questionnaires that included socio-demographic details, knowledge about alcohol dependence and withdrawal, attitudes about dependence were used. Knowledge was graded as adequate and inadequate. Attitudes were classified as positive and negative. Prevalence was found from the scores in AUDIT. Chi square tests were applied to assess association of prevalence with demographic factors.

**Results:** Most were middle aged males (54.2%, n=65) and from Colombo district (61.7%, n=74). They had a moderate level of knowledge regarding dependence and withdrawal (66.7%, n=80). Most had a mean revealing positive attitudes (60%, n=3) towards alcohol dependence and a negative attitude (71.43%, n=5) towards other alcohol dependent populations. From the AUDIT scores, prevalence of alcohol dependence (score of >15) was 39.2% (n=47). A significant association ( $p < 0.05$ ) between low education and alcohol dependence was established.

**Conclusions:** Participants had moderate levels of knowledge on alcohol dependence and withdrawal, non-favoring attitudes towards alcohol dependence, negative attitudes towards alcohol dependents, and a higher prevalence of dependence. Study also revealed a significant correlation between alcohol dependence and lower educational status.

**Keywords:** Alcohol, dependence, withdrawal, harmful use, males