

Alcohol Addiction, Lifestyle Medicine, and the Role of Family Medicine: A Case Management Approach During COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

Alcohol addiction is a significant public health issue worldwide, leading to various physical, psychological, and social problems. This manuscript explores the role of family physicians within the discipline of family medicine in managing alcohol addiction, emphasizing the importance of a comprehensive approach that incorporates lifestyle medicine principles. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought additional challenges to the healthcare system, including shifting priorities and increased demand for mental health services. In extraordinary situations like pandemics, the role and significance of family medicine in meeting the changing priorities and addressing the needs in areas such as mental health are crucial. This manuscript highlights the importance of a holistic approach, person-centeredness, and the involvement of family physicians in the management of alcohol addiction. The integration of evidence-based interventions, lifestyle modifications, destigmatization efforts, and collaborative care can contribute to improved outcomes and better quality of life for individuals with alcohol addiction. Family physicians need to be equipped with the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to provide comprehensive care for patients with alcohol addiction, particularly in the context of evolving healthcare landscapes and extraordinary circumstances like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: COVID-19, alcohol consumption, lifestyle medicine, primary care, family medicine

INTRODUCTION

Alcohol addiction, characterized by uncontrolled alcohol consumption, poses significant challenges to individuals and society at large.^{1,2} Family physicians practicing within the discipline of family medicine play a crucial role in addressing the complex needs of patients with alcohol addiction.³ Family medicine emphasizes a comprehensive and holistic approach to healthcare, considering individuals' physical, psychological, and social aspects within the context of their families and communities.⁴ Integrating lifestyle medicine principles, which focus on promoting healthy behaviors and addressing modifiable risk factors, can enhance the management of alcohol addiction within the family medicine setting.^{5,6}

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CASE DESCRIPTION AND MANAGEMENT

During the COVID-19 pandemic, family physicians have faced evolving roles and changing healthcare priorities⁷ In this case, a 25-year-old male patient with alcohol addiction was identified through the monitoring system established for COVID-19 patients. The family physician, utilizing a person-centered approach, engaged in regular communication with the patient and his family, addressing acute complaints, exploring additional concerns, and providing support. The management plan included addressing withdrawal symptoms, coordinating COVID-19 treatment, and facilitating referral to the Substance Addiction Treatment and Training Center (AMATEM) for ongoing care.⁸

DISCUSSION

Stigmatization of individuals with alcohol addiction remains a significant barrier to seeking help and receiving appropriate care.⁹ Within society, negative attitudes, stereotypes, and misconceptions surrounding alcohol addiction persist, hindering access to treatment.^{10, 11} As primary care providers, family physicians have a crucial role in combating stigma and promoting a person-centered and holistic approach to care.¹² Incorporating lifestyle medicine principles, such as promoting healthy behaviors, addressing underlying determinants of health, and fostering patient engagement, can contribute to comprehensive alcohol addiction management.^{13, 14} Collaborative care, involving multidisciplinary teams and community resources, is essential for addressing the complex needs of individuals with alcohol addiction.¹⁵

CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of family medicine in meeting evolving healthcare priorities, including the management of alcohol addiction and mental health needs. Family physicians, equipped with a comprehensive understanding of alcohol addiction, lifestyle medicine principles, and person-centered care, can play a vital role in addressing the complex needs of individuals with alcohol addiction. By integrating evidence-based interventions, promoting lifestyle modifications,

combating stigma, and collaborating with other healthcare professionals, family physicians can contribute to improved outcomes and better quality of life for individuals with alcohol addiction.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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Ethical Statement

Informed consent was obtained from the patient to publish this case report.

Authors' Contribution

HSK, OG, and OA conceived and designed the study, conducted research, provided research materials and collected and organized data. HSK, OG, and OA wrote the initial and final draft of the article and provided logistic support. All authors have critically reviewed and approved the final draft and are responsible for the content and similarity index of the manuscript.

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