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PREVALENCE OF THE METABOLIC SYNDROME IN PATIENTS WITH ALCOHOL DEPENDENCE

A CROSS SECTIONAL STUDY

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Introduction: There is a long debate about putative cardioprotective effects of alcohol. However, prevalence of metabolic syndrome (MetS) in men and women that use alcohol has been inconsistent in the literature.

Objectives/ aims: The aim of this study was to compare the prevalence of MetS in patients with a diagnosis of alcohol dependence, who are currently abstinent in a controlled environment, and in control subjects followed in primary care from a similar region in Northern Germany.

Methods: One-hundred ninety seven men and women with alcohol dependence during behavioural treatment in a controlled environment were compared to 1158 subjects from primary care from a similar region in northern Germany. We used the AHA/NHBLI criteria to determine the rate of MetS and each single criterion of MetS in both groups.

Results: The prevalence of MetS was almost twice as high in men and women with alcohol dependence compared to control subjects (30.6% vs. 17.0%). With respect to the single criteria, elevations were found for fasting glucose and blood pressure in both genders and for triglycerides in women only. HDL-cholesterol was higher in men and women with alcohol dependence.

Conclusions: Our results demonstrate an increased rate of the MetS, increased blood pressure and dysregulation of glucose and lipid metabolism in alcohol dependent patients. Whether high HDL-cholesterol in this context has cardioprotective effects remain doubtful.