

Substance use in Tourette's syndrome

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The purpose

of the study was to examine the connection between substance use and Tourette's Syndrome (TS) along with its common comorbidities, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Methods

Severity of tics and presence of comorbidity was assessed with validated diagnostic instruments in 314 patients and 81 healthy controls (T1) and 227 patients and 53 healthy controls were reexamined (T2) after 5.6 years. At T2, their alcohol, cigarette, cannabis and hard drug consumption was assessed.

Results

Controls consumed more alcohol than TS patients. A higher percentage of patients consumed hard drugs and cannabis compared to controls.

Higher overall ADHD severity was related to increased consumption of all substances. Higher OCD and tic severity was related to consumption of hard drugs and cannabis.

ADHD and OCD severity both showed predictive power. ADHD severity at T1 correlated with increased consumption of all substances, while OCD severity at T1 was correlated to cannabis use.

Among individuals with higher tic, OCD and ADHD severity, more experienced relieve of symptoms due to substance consumption.

CONCLUSION

Presence and increased severity of TS and its comorbidities seem to be correlated with cannabis and hard drug consumption. This might be due to self-medication.

