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MENTAL DISORDERS FOLLOWING DELIRIUM TREMENS: PRELIMINARY DATA

Y. Sivolap¹, I. Damulin², S. Mendelevich²

¹Psychiatry, ²Moscow Medical Academy, Moscow, Russia

Symptoms of states following delirium tremens have not been adequately studied until now. We observed 24 alcoholic males aged from 29 to 62 years old (mean age 44 ± 11 years) in early period after delirium tremens. Post-psychotic period in nineteen cases was characterized by severe brain organic symptoms, including emotional disorders, cognitive dysfunction and alcoholic anosognosia. Emotional disorders included the prevalence of euphoric affect with light-heartedness in evaluation of their own health. Cognitive dysfunction included deceleration of thought, decrease of abstraction ability and logic thinking, difficulties in counting. Eleven patients had disturbances of short memory, which in 8 cases reach degree of fixative amnesia. Alcoholic anosognosia was closely related to emotional and cognitive disorders, including the loss of light-minded attitude to their disease and to the consequences of the psychosis. The severity of post-delirious disorders positively correlated with age of patients and the duration of alcohol abuse. Brain organic symptoms were more severe in patients with repeated psychosis. Post-delirious disorders gradually reduced in 11-28 (mean 18 ± 4) days after complete reduction of psychosis. Our findings suggest that these disturbances can be a benign equivalent of acute transient forms of Korsakoff disease. Development of post-psychotic brain organic symptoms, including euphoria, loss of critics and anosognosia, suggests adverse influence of delirium tremens on the clinical course and prognosis of the disease, but this assumption requires corroboration during further studies.