Alcohol-related acute pancreatitis during COVID-19 lockdown: A retrospective case series

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Purpose

Victoria introduced social distancing measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in mid-March 2020 including isolation at home with strict restrictions. While this has an important role in controlling the pandemic, the health effects of longer-term isolation are unclear. The drinking pattern due to stress, boredom, anxiety and the physical isolation is unknown. The poll performed by the Foundation of Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) has shown increased number of people buying and consuming more alcohol during the lockdown period.

To assess the incidence of alcohol related acute pancreatitis in a single institution during Victorian lockdown

Method

All admissions for acute pancreatitis at Peninsula Health over a five month period in 2019 and 2020 were identified using the Victorian ICD coding committee database. Causes and severity of the disease identified and compared.

Results

There were 118 and 112 cases of acute pancreatitis in 2019 and 2020 respectively. There was a higher proportion of severe pancreatitis (1/118 (0.8%) in 2019 and 7/112 (6.2%) in 2020; p=0.03) in 2020. Alcohol was more commonly attributed as the cause (20/118 (17%) in 2019 and 34/112 (30%) in 2020; p=0.046). Of those severe pancreatitis in 2020, 5/7 (71%) were caused by alcohol.

Conclusion

Higher incidence of alcohol related acute pancreatitis was seen during the period of lockdown with more severe cases. This strengthens the public health messages related to the harms of alcohol and the need for support from alcohol liaison services.

Biography

Dr Yegi Sandy Kim (lead author) is a surgical registrar at Peninsula Health in Melbourne, VIC, Australia. She attained MD degree at University of Melbourne and Bachelor of Medical Science at the Australian National University. Dr Damir Ljuhar is a surgical trainee for paediatric surgery who attained MBBS(Hons) BBioMed MPHTM GradDipSurgAnat in Australia. Dr Hasanga Jayasekera, MBBS FRACS, is a general surgeon who has completed his fellowship in Bendio Health in Victoria, Asutralia. Dr Peter Evans, MBBS, FRACS GradCertCRM, MPH, is the Director of Surgery at Peninsula Health and Head of the Upper GI & HPB Surgical Unit. He has completed his fellowship in HPB surgery at the Cleveland Clinic, Ohio, USA. Dr Charles Pilgrim, MBBS (Hons) FRACS, FACS, PhD, is an Upper GI and HPB surgeon who has completed his fellowship in Upper GI at the Alfred Health in Melbourne, Australia and in Surgical Oncology HPB at the Medical College of Wisconsin, USA.

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