

ABSTRACT

Introduction- Physical health of long term psychiatric patients is commonly overlooked. Metabolic syndrome (MS) which has already affected nearly one fourth of the general population is increasingly being recognized among patients with schizophrenia and schizoaffective disorders(SSD). This is associated with increased prevalence of cardiovascular disease and diabetes among SSD patients. There is dearth of data on the prevalence of MS among psychiatric patients in Australia. This descriptive study aimed to find out the prevalence of MS among SSD patients and to explore the incidence of MS among patients on clozapine.

Methods - All the consented patients from Northern Area Mental Health Services were included for the prevalence study while the patients recently commenced on clozapine were followed up to decide the incidence. An interviewer administered questionnaire was used to collect demographic data while biophysical and biochemical data were collected using relevant instruments and laboratory investigations.

Result- Among the 74 patients participated, 62.5% had MS which is approximately three times compared to general population. Clozapine treatment significantly increased fasting blood glucose ($p=0.04$) and insulin resistance ($p=0.03$) even with small sample size ($n=16$) and short term follow up (3months).

Conclusion- The prevalence of MS is significantly higher among SSD patients and patients receiving clozapine are at significantly higher risk of developing MS. Psychiatrists and other health care providers should consider performing physical health monitoring to prevent adverse consequences.