

Substance use and psychiatric comorbidities in adult FASD patients

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Background

Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD) are a group of developmental disabilities related to maternal alcohol consumption during pregnancy. FASD is a life-long lasting condition with various neurocognitive impairments and deficits in daily-life functioning. Research also indicates that FASD patients have an increased prevalence for substance use, substance related disorders and other psychiatric disorders [1,2]. In Germany, data on adult FASD patients and their mental health are rare. The study aims to describe substance use patterns and psychiatric comorbidities in adult FASD patients.

Methods and measures

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- medical history, patient and third party (adoptive/foster parents, other caregivers)
- previous diagnostic findings
- structured interview FASD "Life History Scale" [3]
- structured clinical interview for mental disorders ("Mini DIPS OA") [4]
- shortened and adapted to simplified language version of *EUROP-ASI-R* [5] for substance use and substance related disorders
- various neuropsychological tests (e.g. *WAIS*, *Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale*)

Results

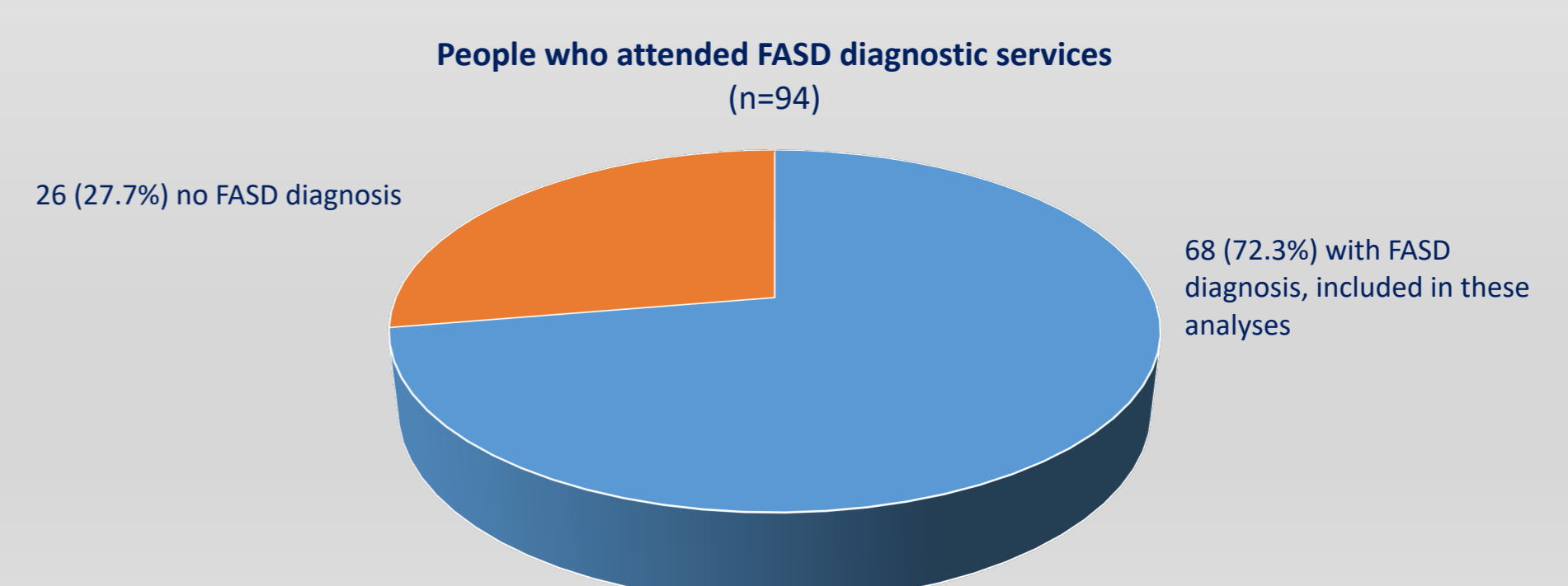
Sociodemographics	N	%
Gender		
male	41	60.3
female	27	39.7
Diagnosis FASD		
FAS	32	47.1
partial FAS	31	45.5
Alcohol related neurodevelopmental disorder (ARND)	5	7.4
Graduation		
Secondary graduation	43	63.2
No graduation	24	31.3
University entrance diploma	3	4.5
Occupation		
Unskilled	32	48.5
Never employed	11	16.7
Sheltered workshop	3	4.5
Trained employee	9	13.6
Other	11	16.7
Accommodation		
Own flat	22	32.8
With foster/adoptive parents	20	29.9
Assisted living	14	20.9
With partner	10	14.9
Other	1	1.5

Sociodemographics	Mdn	Min	Max	SD
Age	23y	18y	53y	8.1
WAIS IQ	73	48	124	14.78
WAIS verbal comprehension	74	53	132	14.76
WAIS perceptual reasoning	79	51	127	17.10
WAIS working memory	71	29	114	13.58
WAIS processing speed	80	53	114	13.72

Current comorbid disorders (ICD 10)	N	%
Mild mental retardation (F70.0)	28	41.2
Moderate mental retardation (F71.0)	2	2.9
Depressive disorders	14	20.6
Substance use disorders	8	11.8
Post-traumatic stress disorders (F43.1)	4	5.9
Social anxiety disorder (F40.1)	3	4.4
Obsessive compulsive disorder (F42.2)	2	2.9
Emotionally unstable personality disorder (F60.3)	2	2.9
Gambling disorder (F63.0)	1	1.5
Stuttering (F98.5)	1	1.5
Chronic motor or vocal tic disorder (F95.2)	1	1.5
Asperger syndrome	1	1.5
Any comorbid diagnosis (excl. F70.0/F71.0)	27	41.2
At least one suicide attempt	21	30.9

Substance use	Lifetime	Age range first use	Lifetime regular* use	Current regular* use	12 month	30 days
Alcohol	58 (85.3%)	4-25y	22 (32.3%)	9 (13.2%)	43 (63.2%)	36 (52.9%)
Cannabis	38 (55.9%)	12-30y	22 (32.3%)	7 (10.3%)	19 (27.9%)	12 (17.6%)
Cocaine	15 (22.1%)	14-30y	4 (5.9%)	0	3 (4.4%)	2 (2.9%)
Amphetamines	19 (27.9%)	14-31y	15 (12.9%)	3 (4.4%)	7 (10.3%)	4 (5.9%)
Psychedelic substances	11 (16.2%)	16-33y	3 (4.4%)	0	7 (10.3%)	4 (5.9%)
Benzodiazepines	4 (5.9%)	20-27y	1 (1.5%)	0	2 (2.9%)	1 (1.5%)
Opioid analgesics	4 (5.9%)	19-38y	0	0	2 (2.9%)	1 (1.5%)
Ketamine	4 (5.9%)	17-22y	1 (1.5%)	0	0	0
Methamphetamines	3 (4.4%)	16-21y	1 (1.5%)	0	0	0
Heroin	2 (2.9%)	19-38y	2 (2.9%)	0	2 (2.9%)	1 (1.5%)
Volatile solvents	1 (1.5%)	-	0	0	1 (1.5%)	0
Other stimulants	1 (1.5%)	16y	0	0	1 (1.5%)	0

*regular = more than three times per week



Discussion

- presented results are preliminary, data collection is still in progress
- high number of suicide attempts, indicating a high level of mental distress
- comorbid mental disorders are common, adults living with FASD are a vulnerable group for mental health problems
- 11% substance use disorders, mostly cannabis and alcohol
- 12 month and 30 day alcohol and cannabis use comparable to the general population in the same age range [6]



The authors declare no conflict of interest.
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