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HOMOSEXUAL WOMEN AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER - A CASE REPORT

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Objectives: Homosexual women are frequently described as particularly exposed to alcohol and drug abuse, depression and suicide attempts. Despite the modern trends of a complete social inclusion of homosexual population, it is important to deal with peculiar features in the process of social adaptation of these people. Psychosocial variables may account for substance use patterns.

Methods: The authors are presenting the case report on a twenty eight year female drug addict (according to criteria of ICD-X), who was observed for three times at the Department for women addicts. During the early adolescence period, she periodically consumed marijuana. She became aware of her sexual orientation at the age of 15 and experienced first homosexual activity at the age of 17. She disclosed her homosexuality to her parents 5 years ago, and their reaction was very negative. At that period, she started to consume heroin and became a heroin addict. Following two treatments at our Institute, she refrained from using heroin until the pressures at home became unbearable. Drug use patterns became the only means for her to cope with the pressures from her family and peers and the only way to ease the pain of loneliness and overcome isolation and depression.

Results: Although homosexuality is neither a mental illness nor predisposition to mental illness, the psychosocial ramifications may create serious secondary emotional problems.

Conclusions: Homosexual women experience specific health problems. Communication between medical staff and homosexual women must be improved so as to better address the latter's specific health care needs.