

# Substance use amongst adult patients admitted to an Irish acute mental health unit

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## Introduction

It has been well established that co-morbid substance misuse in mental illness, presents a significant challenge to mental health services. Such co-morbidity may lead to higher rates of relapse, increased in-patient treatment and poorer treatment outcomes. It is estimated that up to 47% of those admitted to Irish adult acute mental health units may experience co-morbid substance misuse. However, despite the recommendations of the Irish government's 'Vision for Change' (2006), access to specialised services for this population remains variable.

## Study Approach

### Mix of urban and rural areas

- Fermoy
- Mallow
- Kanturk

### Specialties

- General adult
- Old age
- Rehabilitation

Chart Review

- All who presented to Acute Mental Health Unit between Jan 2019 to Jan 2020
- **Captured:**
  - Demographics
  - Clinical information
  - Services accessed

n = 267 patients

## Objectives

- To establish the prevalence of substance misuse amongst inpatients at an Irish adult acute mental health unit.
- To evaluate the quality and detail of the substance misuse history, recorded on admission.
- To evaluate historical and current access to specialised services for patients experiencing substance misuse.

## Methods

A retrospective chart review of all patients admitted to an Irish adult acute mental health unit from January 2019 to January 2020 was carried out. A range of information was recorded including: demographic details, mental illness diagnosis, substance use history, and access to substance misuse services pre and post hospital admission. Ethical approval granted by the Clinical Research Ethics Committee (CREC) of the Cork Teaching Hospitals. Permission given by Clinical Director, St. Stephen's Hospital. Data input and analysis was conducted using Microsoft Excel.

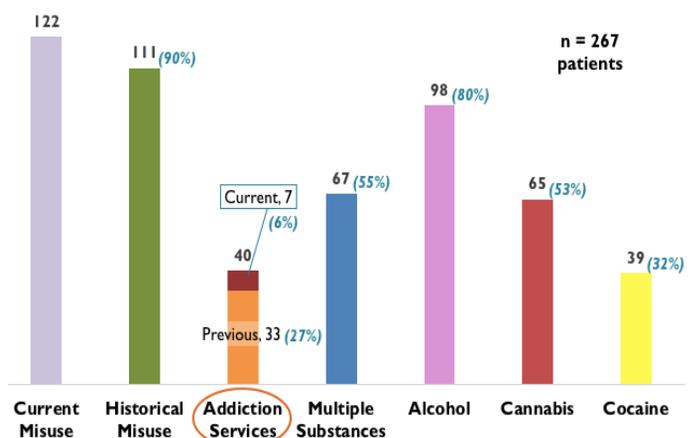
## Sample demographics

Gender/ Ethnicity/Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Male (56%)</li><li>- Irish (89%)</li><li>- Majority aged 36-45</li></ul>
Diagnosis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- BPAD 21%</li><li>- Depression / Low mood 18%</li></ul>
Substance Misuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Primary diagnosis 6%</li><li>- Secondary diagnosis 67%</li><li>- Current use 46%</li><li>- Depression / Low mood most frequent dual-diagnosis</li></ul>
Precision of records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Frequency of substance use not documented 35%</li><li>- Quantity of substance use not documented 52%</li></ul>

## Results

A total of 267 patients were admitted from January 2019 to January 2020. Substance misuse was the primary diagnosis of 6% and the secondary diagnosis of 67% of those admitted. 46% of patients reported current substance misuse and 52% reported historical substance misuse. Alcohol was the most commonly misused substance (54%) followed by marijuana (34%). 55% of patients reported poly-substance misuse. Frequency of use was documented in 65% of cases, with quantity of substance used reported in 48% of cases. Of those with a history of substance misuse, 4% were in current contact with addiction services, with 18% reporting previous contact.

### Substance misuse amongst inpatients



Note: All percentages are shown in relation to the 122 patients who currently reported substance misuse

## Conclusions

Although 46% of patients reported substance misuse, only 4% were in contact with specialised addiction services. This highlights a significant unmet need. There was variability in the quality of the recorded substance misuse history. In order to fully understand comorbid substance misuse, this needs to be addressed. The addition of a more formatted substance misuse section, to admission proformas, may help to alleviate this issue.