

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTACHMENT STYLE AND AGGRESSION AND ADDICTION SEVERITY IN PEOPLE WITH SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS

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BACKGROUND AND AIM: Evidence for a relationship between substance use disorder (SUD), insecure attachment, and aggression has been presented. Recent studies have examined factors that may predict aggression in individuals with SUD. In this study, we aimed to investigate the relationship between addiction severity and attachment style, aggression, and inflammatory markers in SUD.

METHODS: Ethical approval for the study was obtained from Kutahya Health Sciences University Non-Interventional Clinical Research Ethics Committee (17.05.2024, 2024/07-22). The study included 86 male and 12 female patients aged 18-65 years with a diagnosis of SUD who agreed to participate. Sociodemographic Information Form, Addiction Profile Index, Experiences in Close Relationships Scale-Revised, and Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ) were administered to the participants. In addition, the patients' test results were evaluated for systemic inflammation.

RESULTS: As a result of statistical analyses, patients with SUD were classified into three groups as low, moderate, and high severity according to total BPAQ scores. When the groups

were compared in terms of total BPAQ scores, a significant difference was found between the three groups ($p=0.001$). It was concluded that there was no significant difference between the groups in terms of anxious and avoidant attachment dimensions ($p>0.05$). Correlational analysis revealed that there was a positive relationship between attachment severity and physical aggression, anger, and total aggression scores ($p=0.008$, $p=0.006$, $p=0.031$). There was also a positive relationship between the anxious attachment dimension and scores on the physical aggression, anger, hostility, and total aggression scales ($p=0.043$, $p=0.003$, $p<0.001$, $p=0.002$). No difference was found between the groups with regard to inflammatory parameters ($p>0.05$).

CONCLUSIONS: Anger and aggression may increase with the severity of addiction in individuals with SUD. Insecure attachment, particularly anxious attachment, may play a role in increasing anger and aggression. Addressing both attachment styles and anger control may play a positive role in the treatment process.

Keywords: Aggression, attachment style, substance abuse, systemic inflammation