Drug abuse is a serious public health problem. Moreover, co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders are common among drug users. This paper examines psychiatric disorders of young cocaine and heroin users using the World Mental Health Composite International Diagnostic Interview (WMH-CIDI). A cohort of 1266 young (18-30 years) current regular cocaine (705) and heroin (561) users were recruited outside the health services in Barcelona, Madrid and Seville, Spain. The WMH-CIDI was used to evaluate mental disorders; the Severity of Dependence Scale (SDS) measured the degree of dependence; and the Duke-UNC Functional Social Support Questionnaire (FSSQ) assessed social support, in a cross-sectional study design. About 43% was diagnosed with a lifetime mental disorder. The most common diagnoses were depression (37.5%) and specific phobia (6.8%). During the last 12 months, prevalence rates were also slightly higher in heroin group (26.4%) than in cocaine cohort (21.7%). Every day cocaine consumption, having unstable living conditions and low social support were variables highly associated with psychiatric morbidity in cocaine cohort. In heroin cohort, earning money through illegal activities was associated with psychiatric morbidity, while the moderate use of alcohol acted as a protective factor for mental pathology. Morbidity was associated to having received psychiatric/psychological treatment during the last 12 months in both cohorts. This study has shown a relatively high prevalence of psychiatric morbidity in cocaine and heroin users recruited in non-clinical settings. Future studies examining differences between cocaine and heroin patterns of consumption associated with mental diseases are necessary.

Abstract

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Keywords

Cocaine, heroin, CIDI, psychiatric morbidity, young population.