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**Title:**

Characterisation of presentations to a community based specialist AOD neuropsychology assessment service.

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**Introduction and Aims:**

Cognitive impairment is commonly associated with sustained substance use and is often complicated by comorbid mental health and psychosocial factors. The aim of this study was to characterise the frequency of these complex presentations in clients referred to a specialised alcohol and/or other drug (AOD) neuropsychology assessment service.

**Design and Methods:**

This study was a retrospective audit of clients referred for assessment to the Turning Point Neuropsychology Service in Melbourne between 2014 and 2017. Assessment reports were de-identified and information extracted including: demographics; medical, mental health, substance use and forensic histories.

**Results:**

Preliminary analyses of 122 clients aged between 20-64 (M=39.35, SD=10.13) showed 72.1% were male, 66.1% had an education level of Grade 10 or less, and 83.7% were unemployed/on welfare. A history of offending was documented in 68.9% of clients. Alcohol was the primary drug of choice, followed by Amphetamine-Type Stimulants. The average number of substances used was 3.54 (SD=1.72), and the average age of onset of use was 14.75 (SD=3.17) years. Over one third had a history of psychological trauma and over a half presented with comorbid mental health diagnoses.

**Discussions and Conclusions:**

The results highlight that individuals referred for neuropsychological assessment at Turning Point are a complex group, with a high frequency of psychosocial difficulties and comorbid factors in addition to extensive substance use histories.

**Implications for Practice:**

Health professionals need to be aware of the complex histories of clients with extensive substance use. Psychosocial difficulties, comorbidities and cognitive impairment may have significant implications for treatment and therapy. Neuropsychology has a role in adapting treatment to clients' cognitive strengths and weaknesses.

**Implications for Translational Research:**

Studies on the negative effects of substances need to account for the characteristics of real-world substance using populations as these groups are likely to be vulnerable to adverse outcomes.

**Disclosure of Interest Statement:**

The authors declare no conflicts of interest. No funding was received to complete the current study.