

## TREATMENT OF YOUTH SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS WITH CO-OCCURRING DEPRESSION

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**Introduction:** The majority of youth with Alcohol and other substance use disorders (AOSUD) enter treatment with co-occurring psychiatric disorders, including depression. AOSUD with depression has been associated with worse outcomes, high rates of additional psychiatric problems, and higher risk and shorter time for relapse after treatment. AOSUD and depression are risk factors for each other and for suicidal behaviour. Despite the high prevalence of, and serious functional impairment associated with comorbid AOSUD and depression in youth, research on treatment options has been limited. Traditionally, these disorders have been treated separately in either the mental health or substance abuse treatment systems. Presently there is no standard, evidence-based intervention or a clear policy on addressing both disorders simultaneously.

**Method:** This presentation will review the etiology and nature of the association between the disorders. Then, it will address clinical research challenges and findings of treatment including an ongoing and a planned study by the presenter. Finally, it will explore potential future treatment directions.

**Key Findings:** Approximately one third of participants show a significant early response of depressive symptoms to treatment for AOSUD only. Results also indicate that depression has a mixed relationship with treatment retention and outcomes associated with variability in hypotheses and research methods.

**Discussion and Conclusion:** The field needs to develop more standardised methods to allow for a clearer understanding of the treatment of co-occurring disorders. Furthermore, continuity of care and adaptive treatment should be investigated in order to address poor response and maintenance of treatment gains. Finally, health care policies for the provision of treatment services for dually diagnosed youth need to be developed, tested and implemented.

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### References:

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