

PFCA

Wellness Update

PRINCETON FAMILY CARE ASSOCIATES, LLC

WINTER 2023



Message from Dr. Fernandez

Seaon's Greetings as we bring you the latest issue of our newsletter. Read on to find how just *moderate* drinking of alcohol can have a significant impact on your health.

I have also included a few observations on new clinical matters that might pertain to your psychiatric disorder and your treatment.

We have administrative issues that continue to arise as pharmacy consolidation, manufacturers' limited

supplies and insurance coverage affect your access to perscription medicines more and more.

Lastly, as we have remained open during the COVID years, and many practices have not, we now care for about 400-450 patients. To maintain the quality of care that we are known for, at this point we have decided to not take on any new patients for treatment.

Dr. Fernandez

Watch your Alcohol Intake, even if you Do Not have a Problem with Alcohol

By Marisa Fernandez, Psych Tech

Isabelle Soerjomataram, PhD, with the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), spoke at the European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) Annual Meeting 2023, regarding the urgent need to raise global awareness about *the direct link between alcohol consumption and cancer risk*.

Soerjomataram began the session by highlighting the global statistics on alcohol use. IARC data show, for instance, that nearly half (46%) of the world's population consumes alcohol, with rates higher in men (54%) than women (38%). Globally, on average, the amount comes to about six liters of pure ethanol per

year per drinker, or about one wine bottle per week.

Soerjomataram then went on to stress the link that the research shows between alcohol consumption and cancer. According to IARC data, heavy drinking, defined as more than 60 g/day or about six daily drinks, accounts for 47% of the alcohol-attributable cancers. Risky drinking, between 20 and 60 g/day, accounts for 29%, she explained, while moderate drinking, less than 20 g/day or about two daily drinks, accounts for about 14% of cases of alcohol-attributable cancers. Overall, alcohol intake accounted for 4% of

Continued on page 2

Some things to Consider...

By Dr. Fernandez

Are you on Lithium and urinating a lot? We call this Polyuria and it can be an early marker of renal problems as a side effect to chronic Lithium maintenance. Let your clinician know and there are tests that will determine whether Lithium can remain a safe choice in your treatment.

Have you been tested for Iron deficiency? Iron Deficiency has been associated not only with anemia for which it is well known for, but also worsening of your psychiatric symptoms. Iron is an important elemental factor in many of the pathways that convert Amino Acids into neurotransmitters. Although Iron Deficiency will not be the sole cause of your psychiatric symptoms, it could be a component of an incomplete recovery. A simple blood test can determine if this is a factor for you. For more information talk to your clinician.

Are you caring for someone who has Dementia and is agitated? There is a new FDA indication for agitation in cases of Dementia. The medicine approved is called Rexulti (Brexpiprazole).

Do you or someone you know are abusing opioids? Beware that there is a new substance, *Xylazine*, being added to street purchased opioids, including Fentanyl and Heroin. This additive is highly sedating, *Continued on page 2*

From the Front Desk...

Getting Your Medications Efficiently & On-Time

Many patients are experiencing issues with pharmacies processing medication orders. Electronic medication orders are preferred, but this technology is not fool proof and errors do occur on both ends. We aim to do our best to properly send medication orders.

To facilitate you receiving your medications timely and efficient we suggest the following:

■ **Patient Refill Request is preferred**, either by phone (message) or email. Pharmacy refill requests are often inaccurate. We try to send refills in a timely manner but request a three day window to insure we have a clinician available to authorize and the pharmacy has the medication in stock.

■ **Always check what medication you are picking up** before paying to ensure you are getting what you need.

■ **If a medication is not available, ask the pharmacist why.** It may be too soon to be filled by the insurance or the

medication may be out of stock. If out of stock, ask when they expect delivery. Patients may need to call other pharmacies if your pharmacy cannot guarantee a timely delivery.

■ **ADHD medications are sent to the pharmacy as a 2-month Split Order**, which means that the first month is available for pick up within 30 days from the date it is sent. The second month is available 28 days after the first month is filled. Unfortunately, the second month supply is listed in the pharmacy system under the original date it is sent regardless that the fill date is specified. To access your second month's supply, you may need to speak to the pharmacy directly and ask them to look in their system for the second month supply.

■ **Pharmacy APPS** Do Not reflect real time orders or post some medications such as ADHD orders. Contact the pharmacy directly to inquire about these medication orders.

Staff Changes

We regretfully announce that **Amy Derrick, APN** has decided to take a full-time opportunity at a mental health clinic closer to her home. We are grateful to have had her on staff. Her last day will be January 4, 2024. She will be missed. We wish her well in her new adventure.

As one door closes another door opens. **Raquel Rahim, APN** will now be working on Wednesdays from 12:00

noon to 7:00pm, as well as Thursdays from 10:00am to 1:00pm. **Adria Tra-pani-Barnacz, APN**, our clinical coordinator will continue her schedule Mondays, Tuesdays, Fridays 8:30am to 4:30pm, Wednesdays 3:00 to 7:00pm and Thursdays 1:30 to 4:30pm. **Dr. Fernandez** will also continue his schedule on Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:00 am to 4:00pm for clinical visits and Wednesdays for supervision and administrative purposes only.

SOMETHINGS TO CONSIDER... continued from page 1

can causes more problems with withdrawal and severe skin reactions. Xylazine, an animal tranquilizer, is in high use in Philadelphia so be careful if you or someone you know is abusing opioids.

Do you suffer from Social Anxiety and/or OCD? Although we have medicines which have proven to be very effective for these disorders, due to the early

onset and chronicity of these two conditions, which create habituation of symptoms, medications alone will likely not cause your symptoms to remit completely. That is why we strongly advocate adjunct psychotherapy for these conditions. If you are not seeing a psychotherapist, we can refer you to one of our referring psychotherapists for ongoing assistance with your psychiatric condition.

NEED A MEDICATION REFILLED?

Please contact the office **before 3:00pm** on regular business days. Refill requests received after 3:00pm will be completed the next business day since they require clinician review then administrative time to complete. Refill requests should be made during weekdays and NOT ON WEEKENDS. Thank you for being mindful of your medication supply!

ALCOHOL INTAKE

continued from page 1

all cancers diagnosed globally in 2020, according to a 2021 analysis by IARC.

In the UK alone, "alcohol drinking caused nearly 17,000 cases of cancer in 2020," Soerjomataram said, *and breast cancer made up almost one in four of those new cases.* In addition to breast cancer, six other cancer types, oral cavity, pharyngeal, laryngeal, esophageal, colorectal, and liver cancer, can be attributed to alcohol consumption, and emerging evidence suggests stomach and pancreatic cancer may be as well.

Soerjomataram, and session chair, Gilberto Morgan, MD, medical oncologist, agree that healthcare professionals have an important role in increasing awareness, which will hopefully lead to reduced alcohol consumption. Morgan noted that healthcare professionals tend to downplay their influence over patients' drinking habits and often don't address these behaviors and that this needs to change.

In summary, even if you drink *moderately*, you are increasing the risk of alcohol-attributable cancers by 14% so consider drinking less.

If you have concerns about how your alcohol consumption, bring this up with your clinician.

Brooks, M. (2023, Oct 24). The Sobering Facts About Alcohol and Cancer. Medscape. Retrieved from: <https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/997665#:~:text=Globally%2C%20a%20lcohol%20intake%20accounted%20for,four%20of%20those%20new%20cases>