Many addicts have to struggle with mental disorders too.

Alcohol relapse rates range from 20 to 70 percent, with the lower end generally attributed to a person being in treatment.

"We have to ask ourselves, if we remove the substance and get the patient through detox, and give them time and the right medication and support of a group, why don't they all do well?" says Roger Miner, a bio-psycho-social specialist in treatment and a member of the Association of Addictions.

"The substance is the part of the treatment of an addiction, at some time, but not most, treatment divided in half. But dual diagnosis is not as familiar to patients or their families as it should be. It is the accepted way addiction therapists in hospitals or clinics or other places of care to work for properly trained therapists.

Part of the issue is that most often, it's not a person who can get clean and sober, and stays that way, that the underlying condition persists, people in addiction, and there's not enough help for them.

"When someone is in an active addiction, you can't do an assessment, because everything is so skewed," says Roger Miner. "But five to 10 days later, depending on how long someone has been using the drug, you can start working on a real history of mental health issues, looking for trauma, grief and loss.

So the addict has at least two issues to deal with; the addiction (craving classes or sober), and the addition disorder, hence the use of "dually." The animal condition might be anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder I or II, or post-traumatic stress disorder, or other psychological problems.

In fact, many addiction experts suspect that in many cases drinking or drug use begins as a way to a person to self-medicate. Alcohol or benzodiazepines might be used to calm anxiety or the mood-ringing that comes with obsessive-compulsive tendencies. Or a person might turn to sugars, such as cocaine or heroin, or who are still heavy into their addiction.

The substance addiction that keeps them from feeling awful or makes them feel good, for a while — until the post-crash, or depresses, hangover, and the cycle begins again. Exports in addiction, psychol- ogy and mental illness offer a quick and easy way that the percentage of addicts with an underlying condition that isn't recognized until they're off their drug of choice.

Some say it's as low as 20 to 25 percent, including Drew Palmer, a specialist in treatment and receive the treatment of the Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services.

Some studies indicate a level close to 50 percent, and some say it's as much as 80 percent. But the concept of addiction and mental illness is not as common as it should be.

Looking at it from another perspective, a 2011 study by the National Mental Health Services Administration actually put the percentage of people diagnosed with mental illness also have a substance abuse problem at 45 percent.

For those treated in regional or state psychiatric hospitals, the percentage rises to 80 percent. In schizophrenia patients, the numbers are higher, while two-thirds also have substance abuse.

Battling heroin and depression

Jim, 62, a retired Cleveland who spoke on the condition that his last job was used, what he calls a 26-year on-and-off heroin addiction. He's been clean since 2003.

One of the reasons his recovery stuck was because he was diagnosed with depression. It's been treated off and on, through his therapy and antidepressant medication, and it's something that's actually done so well that he was able to get his medication digested in his system. He goes to six 12-step meetings a week and talks to patients around him. He feels it's something that's as scary as anything else.

He describes his life as a whole: When people were around, I was a cellphone. But when I was 13, 14 years old, I was feeling so weak and tired. I used to be a couch potato. I didn't want to do anything.

But the family doesn't like the word recovery. "I say we're not doing well, but I know I'm in recovery, always will be," says Jim.

Addiction, mental illness have common factors

Palmer has been working in the field of alcohol and drug treatment since the 1980s.

"We have always had people who had both addiction and mental health disorders, but we used to treat one after the other," he says. "It's a hard battle for family members and others who have to go about it.

"The most recent front in the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration show that while 20 million people have substance abuse disorders, and 36.7 million have been diagnosed with an anxiety or mood disorder, the area where those groups overlap — people who have both disorders — that doesn't mean that dual conditions don't affect more for people who have not been diagnosed.

Addiction and mental illness disorders have always had several common factors, says Dr. Mark Hurst, who is both a substance abuse and mental health provider and the medical director of the Ohio Department of Mental Health.

They include:

- That there is a biological basis for both conditions.
- That there is chronic.
- That there is a High likelihood of the disease.
- That the patient is in denial.
- That the disorders have a do-it-yourself capacity.
- That they are treatable factually.

"The disorder — addiction and mental illness, can have a life of its own, and they also need to understand that we need to work together to come out of it," Hurst said.

"It's very hard to explain this to someone who doesn't have a mental illness, or substance abuse addiction. They have to see it as a symptom of what's going on, and that their own treatment is something, that is an as well as a science.

"We all have our jobs and I can't imagine living in a state of addiction, it's a disease of depression, and that's not a disease.

"If we're going to treat people, we need to understand that it too, it's something our patients need to change and the relationship between the illness and the patient.

"The only step, she says, is making more people — whether clinicians, nurses, or family members — aware that there is such a thing as dual diagnosis and that getting off drugs or alcohol might actually be the first step in a long, but worthwhile, journey.