

# **COVID 19: Managing boredom and feelings of emptiness through addictive behaviors.**

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The objective of our study is to describe the state of psychological health of the general population during the first confinement and to analyze behaviors at risk of addiction (addictive risk behaviors) and their link with stress, boredom, and the feeling of emptiness. This is a prospective descriptive univariate study carried out using an anonymous online questionnaire distributed via social networks. This questionnaire was sent on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April and the feedback responses were gathered until the 31<sup>st</sup> of Mai 2020.

**Results:** 1193 participants, predominantly females, under 55 years old. Our analysis shows significant rates of feelings of sadness, anxiety, sleep disorders and sedentary lifestyle as well as increased use of tobacco and alcohol (13%), the Internet (73%), smartphones (88%).

Craving for food is reported by 26% of participants and for tobacco by 19% of smokers. Boredom and feeling of emptiness were significantly associated with the time spent on the internet, social network, television series and eating ( $p < 0.001$ ). These addictive behaviors were significantly more common than drug abuse and time spent playing videogames

Craving for smoking was significantly increased by all the addictive behaviors reported above ( $p < 0.0005$ ) while it was decreased by physical activity ( $p < 0.005$ ).

The study also underlines that craving for tobacco decreases when food craving increases. Eating when facing a feeling of emptiness increases craving for tobacco, as drinking alcohol when facing stress. (1) (2)

**Conclusion:** Covid-19 lock-down generated boredom and feeling of emptiness in the general population were managed with common addictive behaviors while physical activity showed a protective effect.

These emotions experienced during the pandemic are therefore at risk of developing addictive behaviors in the general population and probability of aggravating pre-existing addictions

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**All authors declare they have no conflict of interest**