

Impact of disturbances related to COVID-19 crisis on: alcohol consumption, alcohol craving, and relapse of alcohol dependent patients.

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Background: The mental health impact of COVID-19 pandemic is significant. Psychosocial distress is challenging for patients with alcohol use disorders (AUD), since quarantine increases loneliness and stress. It has led to more alcohol consumption and more relapses. Craving is a predictor of relapse. Stressors caused by the pandemic contribute to increased craving. This study had for main objective to assess the impact of the crisis on patients with AUD ; and to observe its effects on alcohol craving, alcohol consumption and relapse at one month.

Methods: All subjects (n=80) presented with AUD (DSM-V) and were recruited from two addictologic outpatient treatment centers: CSAPA of Saint-Malo and Dinan; and from the addictologic day hospital of Saint-Malo. They completed: AUQ, VAS and OCDS for alcohol craving; the HADS, the SF-36, and four scales of impact of the crisis on life domains. Each patient was called at 14 days and at one-month to state if he had relapsed.

Results: At one-month, 43.8% of patients had relapsed. 43.8 % of patients reported a high or severe impact of COVID-19 on their AUD. We searched determinants of relapse by doing logistics regressions analysis. In univariate analysis, there was a relation between psychological vulnerability indicators (anxiety symptoms (1.18 [1.06-1.31]), depressive symptoms (1.24 [1.05-1.45]), impact of COVID-19 on AUD (1.68 [1.25-2.25])) and risk of relapse; and between AUQ's scores (1.87 [1.48-2.35]) and risk of relapse. In multivariate analysis, there was only a relation between AUQ's scores (1.90 [1.55-2.32]) and relapse.

Conclusion: Disturbances related to COVID-19 (anxiety and depressive symptoms, and impact of COVID-19 on AUD) increased alcohol craving, which increased the risk of relapse. There was a mediating effect. Thus, craving is a relevant factor to prevent relapses and could be a help to intervene early and help patients during similar future pandemics.

Liens d'intérêt : Le travail présenté n'a aucun lien avec l'industrie pharmaceutique, du tabac, de l'alcool, de la cigarette électronique et avec les compagnies de jeux.
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