Craving persistence over 3 months: an early and predictive marker of addiction?

E. Baillet*[1,2,3]; C. Romao[1,2,3]; S. Moriceau[1,2,3]; F. Serre[1,2,3]; M. Auriacombe[1,2,3]

[1]University of Bordeaux, F-33076 Bordeaux, France
[2]CNRS, SANPSY, UMR 6033, F-33076 Bordeaux, France
[3]Pôle Interétablissement d'Addictologie, CH Ch. Perrens and CHU de Bordeaux, F-33076 Bordeaux, France

Main author: Emmanuelle Baillet, Université de Bordeaux, Bordeaux, France

Topic: Prevention & addictions

Background. Craving is a diagnostic criterion for SUD in DSM-5 and its daily variations were prospectively associated with use. Among the 11 DSM-5 diagnostic criteria, Item Response Theory analysis showed that craving was the most frequent and discriminant criterion and Network Analysis showed that craving was the more central criterion. These characteristics give to craving a prognostic and potential etiologic value in addictive disorders. The aim was to explore, among general population substance users, whether craving was predictive of more SUD criteria.

Methods. SUD criteria were explored by regular follow-ups during one year in a sample of substance users from the general population. According to presence of craving criteria at baseline and 3 months follow-up, 3 groups were proposed: always (at T0 and 3M) (C_{pos}), never (C_{neg}), sometimes (either T0 or 3M) (C_{unst}). Number of endorsed criteria and quantities of substance used were compared between groups.

Results. 85 participants, 49% male and mean age 46 years. At inclusion, 23% (n=16) of alcohol users reported craving, and 64% (n=9) among tobacco users. Retention at 3M was 85%. The number of criteria endorsed (p<.0001), days used (p=.0347) and quantity used (p=.0428) was significantly different between groups and higher in C_{pos} group then C_{unst} then C_{neg} among all alcohol users. Among all tobacco users, the number of criteria was significantly different between groups and higher for C_{pos} (p=.0012), but not for days (p=.6621) and quantity used although higher for C_{pos} (p=.0519). Post-hoc analysis shows significant differences between C_{neg} vs. C_{unst} groups (p<.0001) and C_{neg} vs. C_{pos} groups (p<.0001) among alcohol users and significant differences between C_{neg} vs. C_{pos} groups (p=.0092) and C_{unst} vs. C_{pos} groups (p=.0047) among tobacco users.

Conclusion. Craving could be a predictor of SUD and its early assessment may contribute to prevention.