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1-1-2004

Pre-treatment measures of impulsivity, aggression and sensation seeking are associated with treatment outcome for African-American cocaine-dependent patients.

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Recommended Citation

Patkar, Ashwin A.; Murray, Heather W.; Mannelli, Paolo; Gottheil, Edward; Weinstein, Stephen P.; and Vergare, Michael J., "Pre-treatment measures of impulsivity, aggression and sensation seeking are associated with treatment outcome for African-American cocaine-dependent patients." (2004).

Department of Psychiatry and Human Behavior Faculty Papers. Paper 44.

<https://jdc.jefferson.edu/phbfp/44>

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Pre—Treatment Measures of Impulsivity, Aggression and Sensation Seeking Are Associated with Treatment Outcome for African—American Cocaine—Dependent Patients

We investigated whether measures of impulsivity, aggression and sensation seeking differed between cocaine-dependent subjects and controls, and whether these measures were related to treatment—outcome for cocaine patients. Pretreatment assessments of impulsivity (Barratt Impulsivity Scale [BIS]), aggression (Buss-Durkee Hostility Inventory [BDHI]) and sensation seeking (Zuckerman Sensation Seeking Scale [SSS]) were obtained for 141 African—American cocaine-dependent patients entering a 12-week, intensive outpatient treatment program and 60 controls. The outcome measures were number of negative urine drug screens, days in treatment, dropout rates and number of treatment sessions. Cocaine patients reported significantly higher scores on the SSS, the BIS and the BDHI than controls. Furthermore, the SSS scores showed a significantly negative correlation with days in treatment and negative urines, and a significant positive correlation with the drop—out rate. The BIS and the BDHI scores were significantly associated with days in treatment and dropout rates respectively. A combination of the three variables contributed significantly toward predicting retention and abstinence. Higher levels of pretreatment impulsivity and aggression and sensation seeking seem to be associated with poor treatment outcome for cocaine dependent patients receiving intensive outpatient treatment. Combining these behavioral measures with other clinical predictors may help in early identification of 'poor responders' who may benefit from additional or alternative treatment approaches.