

EMCDDA DOCUMENTATION CENTRE INFORMATION BULLETIN

CORONAVIRUS, 2 April 2021

JOURNAL ARTICLES

Addressing an HIV outbreak among people who inject drugs in the midst of COVID-19

Taylor JL, Ruiz-Mercado G, Sperring H, Bazzi AR.
Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment, 2021, 124, 108280

Nonmedical use of prescription drugs

Cremers, S; Wright, D F B
British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology
22 March 2021
DOI: 10.1111/bcp.14797

Reevaluating chronic opioid monitoring during and after the COVID-19 pandemic

Rao, P N; Mehta, N
Pain Management
10, 6, p.353-358, 2020

Exercise and use of enhancement drugs at the time of the COVID-19 pandemic: a multicultural study on coping strategies during self-isolation and related risks

Dores, A R, Carvalho, I P, Burkauskas, J, et al
Frontiers in Psychiatry, 2021, 12, 648501

Introduction:

Little is known about the impact of restrictive measures during the COVID-19 pandemic on self-image and engagement in exercise and other coping strategies alongside the use of image and performance-enhancing drugs (IPEDs) to boost performance and appearance.

Objectives:

To assess the role of anxiety about appearance and self-compassion on the practice of physical exercise and use of IPEDs during lockdown.

Methods:

An international online questionnaire was carried out using the Exercise Addiction Inventory (EAI), the Appearance Anxiety Inventory (AAI), and the Self-Compassion Scale (SCS) in addition to questions on the use of IPEDs.

Results:

The sample consisted of 3,161 (65% female) adults from Italy (41.1%), Spain (15.7%), the United Kingdom (UK) (12.0%), Lithuania (11.6%), Portugal (10.5%), Japan (5.5%), and Hungary (3.5%). The mean age was 35.05 years (SD = 12.10). Overall, 4.3% of the participants were found to engage in excessive or problematic exercise with peaks registered in the UK (11.0%) and Spain (5.4%). The sample reported the use of a wide range of drugs and medicines to boost image and performance (28%) and maintained use during the lockdown, mostly in Hungary (56.6%), Japan (46.8%), and the UK (33.8%), with 6.4% who started to use a new drug. Significant appearance anxiety levels were found across the sample, with 18.1% in Italy, 16.9% in Japan, and 16.7% in Portugal. Logistic regression models revealed a strong association between physical exercise and IPED use. Anxiety about appearance also significantly increased the probability of using IPEDs. However, self-compassion did not significantly predict such behavior. Anxiety about appearance and self-compassion were non-significant predictors associated with engaging in physical exercise.

Discussion and Conclusion:

This study identified risks of problematic exercising and appearance anxiety among the general population during the COVID-19 lockdown period across all the participating countries with significant gender differences. Such behaviors were positively associated with the unsupervised use of IPEDs, although no interaction between physical exercise and appearance anxiety was observed. Further considerations are needed to explore the impact of socially restrictive measures among vulnerable groups, and the implementation of more targeted responses.

A glass half empty or a glass half full? Addressing the opioid crisis through the lens of COVID-19

Strathdee, S A
Drug and Alcohol Dependence, 2021, 108680

The early impact of social distancing measures on drug use

Christie, N C, Vojvodic, V, Monterosso, J R
Substance Use and Misuse
30 March 2021
DOI: 10.1080/10826084.2021.1901934

Background:

Social distancing policies have been widely adopted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. High levels of social connection are positively associated with beneficial health outcomes, while social isolation is associated with poor long-term health outcomes including reduced life expectancy. The present study evaluates the impact of social distancing measures during the early period of COVID-19 on substance use behaviors among those in the United States.

Methods:

We used an internet-based survey with participants (n = 157; 86 male) reporting a history of problems related to drug use. We relied on ANOVA and logistic regression techniques to assess the associations between social connection and substance use.

Results:

People with more severe drug use problems reported feeling more socially isolated during social distancing. Those who primarily use alcohol reported higher global feelings of social connection than those who primarily use opioids. During social distancing, participants reported an increase in alcohol and cigarette consumption, and a decrease in cocaine use. Lastly, those who reported using drugs for social reasons were less likely to have decreased substance use during social distancing.

Conclusions:

The current study provides evidence that social distancing guidelines have impacted both substance use behaviors and feelings of social and physical connection. Further, there are differential impacts based on drug of choice. These results advance delineation of the connection between sociality and drug use.

Chemsex, la adicción que es un problema de salud pública: "Con la pandemia de Covid hay más casos"

https://www.consalud.es/pacientes/la-pandemia-covid-19-impacto-directo-incremento-chemsex_94595_102.html

Spaniards cut back on drink, took more sedatives during pandemic – study

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-spain-addiction/spaniards-cut-back-on-drink-took-more-sedatives-during-pandemic-study-idUSKBN2BI2D6>

Sciensano: Pandemic had little effect on use of leisure drugs

<https://www.brusselstimes.com/news/belgium-all-news/162169/sciensano-pandemic-had-little-effect-on-use-of-leisure-drugs/>

Baltimore to stop prosecuting people for drug possession, prostitution and other less serious offenses after experiment amid pandemic to stop spread of virus behind bars saw crime rate plummet

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9411457/Baltimore-stop-prosecuting-people-drug-possession-offenses.html>

The ‘scourge’ of fentanyl is rising in Washington, and experts say the pandemic is likely to blame

<https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2021/mar/28/the-scourge-of-fentanyl-is-rising-in-washington-an/>

Drug overdoses an unintended consequence of COVID stimulus payments, experts say

<https://www.foxnews.com/us/drug-overdoses-stimulus-checks>

Canada’s hidden crisis: How COVID-19 overshadowed the worst year on record for overdose deaths

Opioid toxicity deaths were falling across the country prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. But when provinces entered lockdown in March 2020, progress was lost almost instantly. April to June 2020 marked Canada’s deadliest quarter to date, with 1,628 fatalities

<https://calgaryherald.com/news/postpandemic/canadas-hidden-crisis-how-covid-19-overshadowed-the-worst-year-on-record-for-overdose-deaths>

CDC: Drug addiction can increase risk of severe illness, death from COVID-19

<https://13wham.com/news/coronavirus/cdc-drug-addiction-can-increase-risk-of-severe-illness-death-from-covid-19>

Substance use disorders added to CDC list of health conditions that raise COVID risks

<https://www.tri-cityherald.com/news/coronavirus/article250295925.html>

Former NBA player speaks out on addiction surge during COVID-19

<https://boxscorenews.com/former-nba-player-speaks-out-on-addiction-surge-during-covid-p159374-332.htm>