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Abstract booklet

Alcohol use, and its association with impulsivity, negative emotionality and emotional regulation, during the COVID-19 related lockdown in Argentina

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Introduction: Alcohol use depends on access to the social contexts in which the drug is consumed; and is modulated by psychological distress. The lockdown instantiated to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in Argentina -lasting from March to July 2020 -- affected these variables. This study assessed occurrence and frequency of alcohol use, and their association with impulsivity traits, psychological distress symptoms and emotional regulation abilities, in Argentinean citizens.

Methods: An online survey conducted on July 2020 asked participants (n = 1578, aged 18 to 70 years) on frequency and occurrence of alcohol use on each day of a typical drinking week of the last two months, anxiety, stress and depression symptoms (DASS-21), impulsivity-like traits (B- UPPS-P) and emotional regulation (ERQ). Descriptive and regression analyses were conducted.

Results: Prevalence of alcohol use was 80.1%, and 20.1% reported drinking on 30 or more of the last 60 days (9.3% reported circa daily drinking). Almost 20% reported severe/extreme depression, which was associated at the bivariate level with weekday drinking. Sex, age, depression scores, negative urgency and lack of premeditation jointly explained 13% of the volume of alcohol ingested; whereas sex, age, lack of premeditation and lower levels of emotional regulation were associated with greater frequency of alcohol use.

Conclusions: The instauration of a nation-wide lockdown in Argentina was associated with high levels of psychological distress. Those with high levels of depression, greater impulsivity-like traits or lower emotional regulation abilities seemed to be at greater risk of incurring in alcohol drinking during this period.

Broad themes: Covid-19

Approaches: Methodological research: quantitative; Prevalence and trends

Keywords: depression, Covid-19, impulsivity

Conflict of interest: Conflict of interest: none reported