



In-lab exposure to alcohol advertisement causes physiological cue-reactivity and craving in alcohol dependent patients. However, the level of exposure to alcohol adverts in patients' daily lives can not be demonstrated to affect the course of alcohol dependence

craving
advertisement
alcohol
dependence

The present study investigated the nature of physiological cue-reactivity and craving in response to alcohol advertisement among alcohol dependent patients (N=80) who were enrolled in detoxification treatment. We assessed the predictive value with regard to future drinking of both the magnitude of the physiological and craving response to alcohol advertisement while in treatment and the degree of alcohol cue exposure in patients' natural environment. Physiological reactivity and craving in response to experimental exposure to alcohol and soft-drink advertisements were measured during detoxification treatment using heart rate variability and subjective rating of craving. Following discharge, patients monitored exposure to alcohol advertisement for five consecutive weeks with a diary and were followed up with an assessment of relapse at 5 weeks and 3 months post discharge. The results indicated that the presence of alcohol cues such as the portrayal of an alcoholic beverage and drinking behaviour induced physiological cue reactivity and craving when exposed to alcohol advertisement. The magnitude of cue-reactivity and the craving response to alcohol cues at baseline and degree of exposure to alcohol advertisement in patients' natural environment did not predict relapse. It is concluded that the presence of alcohol cues such as portrayal of alcoholic beverages and drinking behaviour induces cue-reactivity and craving in alcohol dependence through a conditioned appetitive response.

A recommendation from this work is that removing alcohol cues from alcohol advertisement could reduce (adverse) physiological cue-reactivity and craving in alcohol dependent patients. Reducing the volume of alcohol advertisement all together would be expected to have a similar effect.

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Witteman, J., Post, H., Tervainen, M., De Bruijn, A., de Sousa Fernandes Perna, E.B., Ramaekers, J. G., & Wiers, R. (2014): *Cue-reactivity and its relation to craving and relapse in alcohol dependence: A combined laboratory and field study*. *Addiction and Lifestyles in Contemporary Europe: Reframing Addictions Project (ALICE RAP)*: [Deliverable 11.3](#) (part II, study 2)