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IMPULSIVITY AND DECISION MAKING MEASURED IN COCAINE ADDICTS IN FRANCE

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Introduction: Impulsivity and decision making are impaired in cocaine addicts. However, most studies were performed in the USA.

Objectives: To assess impulsivity and decision making in a sample of French cocaine addicts.

Methods:

Subjects: 40 current cocaine addicts and 21 control subjects with no history of drug abuse were compared using the Barratt Impulsiveness Scale (BIS) and Iowa Gambling Task (IGT).

Subjects from the cocaine addicted group were evaluated for cocaine craving with the Obsessive Compulsive Cocaine Scale (OCCS), and for their pattern of use.

Statistical analysis: The mean scores of impulsivity and decision making were compared in the two groups (Mann-Whitney U test). In the group of 40 cocaine addicts, clinical factors that could be associated with high impulsivity and poor decision making scores were tested (Spearman' s rho, Chi-square and Mann-Whitney U tests).

Result: Compared to controls, cocaine addicts had a higher impulsivity score (BIS: 72±11 vs 57±8, U=138, p< .001) and had more disadvantageous choices on the decision making test (IGT) (advantageous minus disadvantageous choices -4 ±19 vs 24 ± 35, U=234, p=.005).

There was a significant correlation between high impulsivity scores on the BIS and high cocaine craving as well as heavy cocaine use (more than 4 times a week). No correlation was found between poor decision making and high craving or frequent cocaine use.

Discussion: The discrepancy between impulsivity and poor decision making in cocaine addicts is discussed.