



119 DIA-CRA (Craving Diagnosis): Preliminary Report on a Multidimensional Craving Measuring Scale

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The objective of this preliminary study is to demonstrate a multidimensional methodology for evaluating substance craving.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by providing an in-depth perspective of the study and knowledge of the complex phenomenon of craving, with its multiple aspects and factors, including behavioral and physical individual responses. Therefore, this tool could help to gather more useful data in order to specifically and individually address further implications on relapse prevention and therapy.

This presentation will begin with an accurate analysis of the theoretical basis of craving, including a specific literature review on this subject. This presentation will describe the creation of a multidimensional scale, aimed at evaluating the multiple aspects of craving experimentation in individuals attending a public health clinic for substance abuse.

The scale was structured with the goal of reaching an in-depth analysis of the complex factors which determine the subjective responses to craving. Therefore, this study included evaluation subscales measuring objective physical and behavioral parameters (besides oniric activity) before and after exposure to various visual stimuli evocative of craving.

Specifically, the scale includes a questionnaire about the subjective perceptions of craving, a list of subscales of objective physical and behavioral parameters, and a sequence of visual stimuli. With regard to the latter stimuli, a team of psychologists was assigned to select different pictures representing images and/or situations thought to trigger craving impulses in the examined subjects.

Since it is widely recognized that craving induces physical and behavioral modifications, a recording of these objective parameters was included, before and after the visual exposure to the described stimuli.

The subjects who were administered this scale were chosen independently from the substance as well as the type of addiction. In other words, although the specific focus was on alcohol and other drugs, multiple types of addiction were included in the administration and evaluation of this scale, and the final findings were kept separated for study and research purposes.

On the basis of these assumptions, the preliminary results will be presented and discussed, with emphasis on the fact that this was an experimental phase aimed to gain information for the purposes of validating a recently-created scale. With this perspective, each factor that emerged was considered in order to further calibrate the scale, with particular attention to the effectiveness of this experimental diagnostic tool and its subsequent implications on relapse prevention and therapy.

Craving, Evaluation, Scale