

‘Alcohol use disorder relapse factors revisited’

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Summary

Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) is a highly prevalent psychiatric disorder, which leads to substantial morbidity, economic damage and even mortality. Although many patients do recover (not seldom without any formal treatment), on the other hand a relapsing-remitting course is very common in patients with an AUD.

Chapter 1 gives an overview of 101 different relapse definitions that were used in last 2 decades of AUD relapse literature. Moreover, almost a quarter of included papers dealing with AUD relapse did not provide a definition of AUD relapse. Despite decades of research and discussion, there is still no widely accepted definition of AUD relapse. We propose to shift the focus from dichotomous AUD relapse terminology towards continuous outcome and quality of life related criteria. We suggest a future research panel to make a consensus decision on how to use the term ‘AUD relapse’, the possible use of an alternative term, or even abandoning the term.

Chapter 2 describes the findings of a systematic review of AUD relapse literature (2000-2019). The search yielded 4613 papers, from which 321 paper were eventually included. Thirty-seven subgroups of relapse determinants were identified, and ordered according to biopsychosocial and spiritual categories. An exploratory narrative review consequently provides a timely overview of the latest research on this topic.

In Chapter 3, we focus on one specific and seemingly relevant relapse determinant, namely ‘impulsivity’. In this systematic review on impulsivity and AUD relapse, it surprisingly turned out that research on this subject is still relatively scarce. We identified two main impulsivity categories, namely ‘behavioral’ and ‘trait’ impulsivity, which both seemed to be associated with AUD relapse.

Chapter 4 describes the results of a small observational prospective cohort study, in which the factors dependence, craving and meaning in life were investigated in relation to AUD relapse. Contrary to our hypotheses and expectations, no protective effect of meaning in life in regard to AUD relapse was found, but the relapsed groups generally did have higher mean dependence and craving scores.

In Chapter 5 the findings are summarized and we provide a synthesis of the results. We discuss the main conclusions and add some extra discussion and suggestions for further research. We critically review some of our findings as well.

List of thesis related publications

2019:

Sliedrecht W, de Waart R, Witkiewitz K, Roozen HG. Alcohol use disorder relapse factors: A systematic review. *Psychiatry Res.* 2019 Aug; 278:97-115. doi:10.1016/j.psychres.2019.05.038. PMID: 31174033.

2021:

Sliedrecht W, Roozen HG, Witkiewitz K, de Waart R, Dom G. The Association Between Impulsivity and Relapse in Patients With Alcohol Use Disorder: A Literature Review. *Alcohol Alcohol.* 2021 Oct 29;56(6):637-650. doi:10.1093/alcalc/agaa132. PMID: 33382416.

2022:

Sliedrecht W, Roozen H, de Waart R, Dom G, Witkiewitz K. Variety in Alcohol Use Disorder Relapse Definitions: Should the Term "Relapse" Be Abandoned? *J Stud Alcohol Drugs.* 2022 Mar;83(2):248-259. doi:10.15288/jsad.2022.83.248. PMID: 35254248.

Sliedrecht W, Seesink HJ, Vrijmoeth C, de Waart R, Wiers RW, Ostafin B, Schaap-Jonker H, Roozen HG, Witkiewitz K, Dom G. Alcohol use disorder relapse factors: an exploratory investigation of craving, alcohol dependence severity, and meaning in life. *Addiction Research & Theory.* 2022;30:5, 351-359, doi:10.1080/16066359.2022.2040488

Sliedrecht W, Roozen HG, Dom G, Witkiewitz K. Alcohol use disorder 'relapse' definitions revisited: With no standard definition in the literature, is it time to abandon the term? *JSAD FastTakes.* 2022;no. 10. doi:10.15288/jsad-FT.07.26.2022-10