

Evaluation of the factors associated with emotional regulation incidents admitted in a rehabilitation centre for substance and behavioural addictions.

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Abstract

Background: Decreased levels of emotion regulation have been linked to an increased risk of hazardous behaviours in young people and minors, including substance use, gambling disorders, gaming disorders, and disorders related to the Internet. However, adolescent behaviours vary depending on gender. For instance, teenage boys are more prone than teenage girls to use drugs. Although other research have found a similar pattern of behaviour across the sexes, epidemiological studies have shown that men consume more illegal drugs while women take more legally prescribed ones

Aim: This study's primary objective was to examine how attachment and emotion control relate to both substance abuse and other types of addiction in clients admitted in a rehabilitation centre for substance and behavioural addictions.

Methods and materials: Using convenience sampling, 270 individuals were chosen from a facility for treating behavioural and drug addictions. This study made use of the Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale The 28 items on the DERS use 5-point Likert scales, ranging from "nearly never/0%-10% of the time" to "almost always/90%-100% of the time," to measure the barriers to good emotion regulation. In terms of item distribution, the scale's original authors discovered six latent components.

Results: After doing a descriptive analysis of the variables, Pearson's r was used to conduct a correlational analysis to ascertain the connections between attachment, problematic Internet use, gambling disorder, video game addiction, and alcohol and drug misuse (Table 1). The findings revealed statistically significant positive associations between the addictive behaviours (such as gambling disorder, problematic Internet use, video game addiction, and alcohol and drug

misuse). Similar results were found for the relationship between emotion control and problematic Internet usage, video game addiction, gambling disorder, peer attachment, and father attachment. It is significant to highlight that worse issues with emotion regulation were associated with greater DERS scores.

Conclusion: This study showed that while poor attachment is a predictor of non-substance addictions in adolescents, difficulties with emotion regulation are a predictor of both substance and non-substance related addictions. Additionally, gender differences account for disparities in peer attachment and maternal attachment as well as non-substance addictions. This study offers fresh data for future investigations into the protective and risk factors for both drug and behavioural addictions.

Keywords: Emotional regulation, substance and behavioural addictions.

Introduction

Alcohol and drug dependence prevalence rates are often high during adolescence and the transition to adulthood, leading to a range of related issues. For instance, substance abuse can occasionally result in the onset of psychotic illnesses and other mood disorders. In this context, the WHO has underlined that the longer substance use continues, the more detrimental effects it has on long-term health. Family dynamic is one of the determinants of risky behaviour in adolescence. One study on behavioural addictions indicated that, compared to young people without issue Internet usage, those with internet addiction had higher levels of family disapproval and considered their parents as being less warm and supportive.^{1,2}

In addition, several research contend that emotional dependence and hazardous smartphone and internet phone use are related. These results are consistent with the literature on substance-related addiction, where characteristics related to attachment have been identified as mediating factors for teenage drug use. Numerous studies have observed a connection between adolescent drug usage and a lack of parental connectedness. Likewise, other research have shown that teenagers who foster more secure parental relationships tend to exhibit fewer dangerous behaviours, such as drug use. In a similar vein, it has been suggested that having a positive relationship with one's parents can help prevent drug use. In general, it is believed that families have a crucial role in influencing how well people are able to learn coping mechanisms.^{3,4} Through their interactions with attachment figures, minors develop coping mechanisms for uncomfortable feelings and anxiety in stressful and dangerous situations. Such education strengthens the ability of people to control the emotions they experience and express, as well as the timing and manner in which they do so. Mikulincer, Shaver, and Pereg showed that emotional self-regulation results from the accessibility and responsiveness of parental attachment figures by drawing on research by Ainsworth and Bell on 1-year-olds' conduct in unusual situations. Therefore, it has been demonstrated that attachment resulting from a child's early experiences with their caregiver affects the growth of (a) equal friendships with peers, (b) emotional maturity, and (c) other mental wellbeing elements during adolescence.^{5,6}

Decreased levels of emotion regulation have been linked to an increased risk of hazardous behaviours in young people and minors, including substance use, gambling disorders, gaming disorders, and disorders related to the Internet. However, adolescent behaviours vary depending on gender. For instance, teenage boys are more prone than teenage girls to use drugs. Although other research have found a similar pattern of behaviour across the sexes, epidemiological studies have shown that men consume more illegal drugs while women take more legally prescribed ones.. While hazardous mobile phone utilisation and social networking are more common among women, gambling and gaming addictions are more common in men.^{7,8}

This study's primary objective was to examine how attachment and emotion control relate to both substance abuse and other types of addiction in clients admitted in a rehabilitation centre for substance and behavioural addictions. The second objective was to research the mediating function of emotion control in the onset of attachment-based drug addictions and non-drug addictions in clients admitted in a rehabilitation centre for substance and behavioural addictions. Examining the gender variations in emotional control, attachment, and behavioural addictions was the third target in clients admitted in a rehabilitation centre for substance and behavioural addictions.

Methods and Materials

Using convenience sampling, 270 individuals were chosen from a facility for treating behavioural and drug addictions. The research team first contacted various addiction prevention specialists from the various regional councils to let them know about the study. After that, the experts in addiction prevention got in touch with various facilities that treated people of specified ages for drug and behavioural addictions. To set up and conduct the study, there were also talks with the administrators of each rehabilitation facility for chemical and behavioural addictions. The final sample included nine centres for the treatment of behavioural and drug addictions. General information regarding the study's primary objectives was given in the questionnaire. Additionally, it was clearly explained that there weren't no right or incorrect answers and that anyone who wanted more information on the study should mail the research team.

Participants were required to provide informed consent in order to participate. Relatives or tutors were obligated to sign written consent for students who were minors. Participants in the rehabilitation centres were given the survey individually, but it was given to them in groups. All participants were guaranteed privacy, confidentiality, and voluntary involvement. The research team's contact information was also given.

Emotional regulation

This study made use of the Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS; Gratz & Roemer, 2004). The 28 items on the DERS use 5-point Likert scales, ranging from "nearly never/0%-10%

of the time" to "almost always/90%-100% of the time," to measure the barriers to good emotion regulation. In terms of item distribution, the scale's original authors discovered six latent components,

A lack of emotional awareness: these items represent a tendency to pay attention to and acknowledge emotions; (b) a tendency to have unfavourable secondary emotional reactions to unfavourable emotions or unfavourable reactions to one's sorrow (non-acceptance); (c) Lack of emotional clarity: These items reflect how well people understand and are clear about the emotions they are feeling; (d) Difficulties engaging in goal-directed behaviour: These items represent difficulties focusing and completing tasks when experiencing negative emotions; and (e) Lack of emotional control: These items represent two factors from the original scale that were combined into a single factor. The resulting factor indicates difficulty maintaining control of conduct when experiencing negative emotions as well as the idea that once an individual is unhappy; there isn't much that can be done to effectively regulate emotions.

Subscales of Difficulties in emotional regulation (DERS):

1. Nonacceptance of emotional responses (Nonaccept)
2. Difficulties in engaging in goal directed activities (Goals)
3. Impulse control difficulties (Impulse)
4. Lack of emotional awareness (Awareness)
5. Limited access to emotion regulation strategies (Strategies)
6. Lack of emotional clarity (Clarity)

Attachment

This study made use of the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA; Armsden & Greenberg, 1987). A three-part self-report questionnaire called the IPPA is used to evaluate adolescent attachment to peers, parents, and other peers. A 16-item subscale on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = never to 5 = often) is used to evaluate each person's attachment to a particular person (such as their mother and father). The overall strength of the attachment is shown by the total attachment score for each particular person (such as the mother and father). High scores show a strong attachment to a quality, whilst low numbers show the reverse. Armsden and Greenberg (1987) reported strong scale dependability for each unique participant and the final score evaluation in terms of reliability and validity.

Substance addiction

It was done using the Multicage CAD-4 (Pedrero et al., 2007). The measure consists of 32 dichotomous items ("yes" or "no" responses) pertaining to eight addictive behaviours: alcoholism, drug abuse, eating disorders, gambling problem, compulsive spending, and hypersexuality. Only alcohol and drug abuse were included in this investigation. Each action is assessed using four questions that mirror the CAGE schema (Hayfield, McLeod, and Hall, 1974) and include signs of

withdrawal and poor impulse control as well as one's own perspective of the issue. This is how scores are interpreted: 0-1 (no addiction issue), 2 (at-risk of addiction), 3 (extremely likely to have an addiction), and 4 (addiction problem) (diagnosed as having an addiction).

Results

After doing a descriptive analysis of the variables, Pearson's r was used to conduct a correlational analysis to ascertain the connections between attachment, problematic Internet use, gambling disorder, video game addiction, and alcohol and drug misuse (Table 1). The findings revealed statistically significant positive associations between the addictive behaviours (such as gambling disorder, problematic Internet use, video game addiction, and alcohol and drug misuse). Similar results were found for the relationship between emotion control and problematic Internet usage, video game addiction, gambling disorder, peer attachment, and father attachment. It is significant to highlight that worse issues with emotion regulation were associated with greater DERS scores.

Table1: DERS score related to attachment to peers and drug or alcohol use

Domains in DERS Scale	Attachment Mean score (SD)	Drug or alcohol use Mean Score (SD)	't' statistic	p value
Non Acceptance Score	18.06(4.9)	16.94(3.47)	1.171	0.259
Goals Score	14.76(3.7)	12.59(2.39)	3.143	0.006
Impulse Score	17.35(6.9)	14.29(4.5)	2.852	0.012
Awareness Score	14.41(4.9)	13.82(4.8)	0.510	0.617
Strategies Score	19.82(4.6)	17.24(4.45)	3.048	0.008
Clarity Score	11.94(3.36)	10.59(2.9)	1.55	0.139
Total Score	96.94(21.37)	84.88(13.4)	3.136	0.006

In order to ascertain the predictive value of attachment and emotion control in addictive behaviours, a block wise regression analysis was done (Table 2). With attachment and emotion control as predictor variables, five models were looked at. The predictor was examined in each model in relation to the following outcome variables: problem gambling, problematic Internet use, video game addiction, drug abuse, and alcohol abuse. Given that the values of the variance inflation factor (VIF) ranged from 1 to 10, it was verified that there was no multicollinearity. The findings showed that all five outcome factors were significantly predicted by emotion regulation. Inability to manage one's emotions was a predictor of drug use, video game addiction, and gambling. Video game addiction was predicted by a lack of emotional clarity. Alcohol abuse was

predicted with difficulties in goal-directed conduct. Drug usage was predicted by a lack of emotion-based awareness and a refusal to accept emotional responses in online behaviour.

Table 2: Blockwise regression of emotion–regulation difficulties and attachment in relation to alcohol and drug abuse, problematic Internet use, video game addiction, and gambling disorder

	<i>B</i>	β	<i>T</i>
<i>Alcohol abuse</i>			
<i>(R = .24, R² = .04; R² adjusted = .04; p < .05)</i>			
DERS_Goals	0.06	0.24	3.53*
<i>Drug abuse</i>			
<i>(R = .21, R² = .05; R² adjusted = .04; p < .05)</i>			
DERS_Control	0.01	0.16	2.29**
DERS_Awareness	−0.03	−0.14	−2.02**
<i>Problematic Internet use</i>			
<i>(R = .40, R² = .16; R² adjusted = .15; p < .05)</i>			
Mother attachment	−0.03	−0.14	−2.08**
DERS_Non-acceptance	0.31	0.35	5.32*
<i>Video game addiction</i>			
<i>(R = .43, R² = .19; R² adjusted = .18; p < .01)</i>			
Peer attachment	−0.16	−0.32	−4.93*
DERS_Clarity	0.34	0.16	2.13**
DERS_Control	0.15	0.15	1.99**
<i>Gambling disorder</i>			
<i>(R = .24, R² = .06; R² adjusted = .05; p < .05)</i>			
Peer attachment	−0.02	−0.18	−2.39**
DERS_Control	0.02	0.15	1.91**

Note. DERS: Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale.

p* < .01. *p* < .05.

Discussion

This study's primary objective was to examine how attachment and emotion control relate to both substance abuse and other types of addiction in clients admitted in a rehabilitation centre for

substance and behavioural addictions. The second objective was to research the mediating function of emotion control in the onset of attachment-based drug addictions and non-drug addictions in clients admitted in a rehabilitation centre for substance and behavioural addictions. Examining the gender variations in emotional control, attachment, and behavioural addictions was the third target in clients admitted in a rehabilitation centre for substance and behavioural addictions.

The findings showed that all five outcome factors were significantly predicted by emotion regulation. Inability to manage one's emotions was a predictor of drug use, video game addiction, and gambling. Video game addiction was predicted by a lack of emotional clarity. Alcohol abuse was predicted with difficulties in goal-directed conduct. Drug usage was predicted by a lack of emotion-based awareness and a refusal to accept emotional responses in online behaviour.

The findings of this study revealed statistically significant positive associations between the addictive behaviours (such as gambling disorder, problematic Internet use, video game addiction, and alcohol and drug misuse). Similar results were found for the relationship between emotion control and problematic Internet usage, video game addiction, gambling disorder, peer attachment, and father attachment. It is significant to highlight that worse issues with emotion regulation were associated with greater DERS scores.

Numerous studies have previously discovered links between substance use and gambling in this area. Additionally, a study conducted among a sample of minors (mean age: 12.5 years) discovered that a significant portion of those who scored higher on problem gambling were smokers and drinkers of alcohol, a conclusion that has been documented in other studies. These studies are complemented by this one, which also adds to the evidence about the connections between substance abuse and other, less-researched habits, like problematic Internet use and video game addiction.⁷⁻⁹

Internet use and video gaming are two activities that may suit this description. Research on substance abusers' propensity for sensation-seeking behaviour indicates this. It should be highlighted that, in especially among adolescents, when one issue behaviour worsens, the risk that other problem behaviours will follow also worsens. Minors learn coping skills for uncomfortable emotions and anxiety in challenging and risky settings through their interactions with attachment figures. Such instruction improves people's capacity to manage their emotions, including their ability to control when and how they express them. It was demonstrated in previous study that emotional self-regulation emerges from the availability and responsiveness of parental attachment figures. The development of (a) equal friendships with peers, (b) emotional maturity, and (c) other mental health characteristics during adolescence have all been shown to be influenced by attachment coming from a child's early interactions with their caregiver.¹⁰⁻¹⁶ The risk of hazardous behaviours in children and teenagers, such as substance abuse, gambling disorders, gaming disorders, and Internet-related disorders, has been associated to lower levels of emotion control. However, adolescent gender-specific behaviours exist. Adolescent guys, for

example, are more likely to use drugs than teenage girls are. Epidemiological studies have revealed that while both sexes exhibit a similar pattern of behaviour, men use more illegal drugs while women use more legally prescribed ones. While women are more likely to use social media and mobile devices in dangerous ways, men are more likely to develop gambling and gaming addictions.¹⁷⁻²⁰

This study also showed that controlling emotions was associated with addictive behaviours in a favourable way (i.e., gambling disorder, problematic Internet use, video game addiction, alcohol abuse, and drug abuse). This is consistent with findings from other studies linking emotion regulation to impulsive control, addictive behaviours, substance use, and gambling disorder. When emotion regulation is difficult, it might be difficult to suppress negative sensations when they arise, respond in a goal-directed manner, and remember effective emotion-management techniques. According to several studies, people who have trouble controlling their emotions resort to addictive behaviours to suppress or control their unpleasant emotions. Additionally, it seems conceivable that people might act in ways that maintain or increase happy emotional states if they struggle to control their emotions or have no other options.²⁰⁻²⁵

Conclusion

This study showed that while poor attachment is a predictor of non-substance addictions in adolescents, difficulties with emotion regulation are a predictor of both substance and non-substance related addictions. Additionally, gender differences account for disparities in peer attachment and maternal attachment as well as non-substance addictions. This study offers fresh data for future investigations into the protective and risk factors for both drug and behavioural addictions.

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