

What is the real effectiveness of addiction treatment and how to measure it better accounting for drop-outs?

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Background: The outcomes of addictions treatment remain unsatisfactory due to the high rate of relapses. According to research (Maneywals, 2014) 40 to 85% subjects effectively passing through the various treatment programs, relapse and fall back into the addiction within 2 years after the treatment.

Method: We conducted literature review and meta-analysis is to consider three important aspects of the addiction treatment: 1) methods of addiction treatment efficiency measurement 2) rate of dropouts and 3) ways of accounting for dropouts in treatment efficiency reports. Studies were included if they met following criteria: a) clients were addicted to at least one of the psychoactive substances and/or they had a problem with pathological gambling, Internet use disorder, Internet gaming disorder or compulsive sexual behavior, b) clients received at minimum one therapeutic intervention for substance- or non-substance related addiction, c) there was an objective or subjective measure of effectiveness of the intervention, d) there was at least 3 months follow-up. We conducted analyses for following factors: dropout rates, control group, types of indicators of efficiency and effectiveness of therapy.

Results: From total 131 articles found in our literature review, almost all had described response rate in follow-up measurement, but only 18 from this kind of studies take into consideration dropout rates in effectiveness analysis. In the last step of ours analysis, we created the mathematical pattern to calculate the new value of the efficacy of studies that did not take into consideration drop-out rates.

Conclusions: There is lack of consistency in the methodology in the literature on addiction treatment e.g. different follow-up time-points and definition of abstinence, discrepancies between subjective

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and objective measures of therapy effectiveness or not including the drop-out rates in calculating treatment efficiency. There is no standard method of behavioral addiction treatment validation.