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A meta-analytical approach to assessing cognitive dysfunction in substance use disorder populations

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Abstract

The cognitive repercussions of substance abuse/dependence are well documented. However, the literature remains somewhat ambiguous with respect to how the duration of abstinence affects cognitive recovery, and what clinical implications this delayed cognitive recovery can have on treatment.

The purpose of this presentation is twofold: (i) to provide information on the current knowledge of the effects of alcohol and illicit drugs on cognitive function; and (ii) to illustrate how a new method of conducting meta-analyses provides novel and more comprehensive insight on the effects that psychoactive substances have on cognition. This study design is based on our recently published meta-analysis on cognition and alcoholism that assessed how abstinence duration influences cognitive recovery-potential. Our team has also recently applied this study design to assess how abstinence duration affects cognitive function in cocaine dependence. Preliminary results will be discussed and compared to the results from the meta-analysis on alcoholism.

Clinical implications include the challenge of treating patients during a period in which their cognitive abilities are not fully functional. Knowing how long a patient must remain abstinent from a substance to achieve cognitive recovery can ultimately influence the type and duration of treatment provided.

Biography

Ms. Katherine Stavro received her master's degree in biomedical sciences, with a specialization in psychiatric research, from the University of Montreal, in Montreal, Canada. She has already published 6 articles in international peer-reviewed journals, and one book chapter for Springer publications. She has been working since 2010 as a scientific consultant at the Clinique Nouveau Départ, a detoxification and rehabilitation centre specialised in the treatment of substance use disorders and comorbid conditions, in Montreal, Canada. She plans on pursuing doctoral studies within the upcoming year.