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Self-regulation and Tobacco Use: Contributions of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the Portuguese Version of the Short Self-Regulation Questionnaire

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Abstract

Self-regulation has been one of most studied developmental skills, given its close relation with health and lifestyle, adjustment and resilience and in the prevention of risk behaviours as substance use. Given the lack of studies about self-regulation and tobacco use in Portuguese context, this paper aims to present the results of the confirmatory factor analysis of the Short Self-Regulation Questionnaire (Carey, Neal & Collins, 2004) in our population, exploring the role of self-regulation in tobacco use. To do that, the SSRQ and a socio-demographic questionnaire was administered to a sample of 390 adolescents, mostly females (n=228, 59.2%), with ages ranging from 15 and 18 years old (M=16.05, SD=.865). Results allow us to find a good fit model with good reliability of the SSRQ. Descriptive statistics and differential studies allow us to find differences in impulse control according gender and a negative correlation with age. Results allow us also to verify a negative correlation between self-regulation and onset age of tobacco use and a negative correlation between control impulse and tobacco use. Data is analysed according to the literature and its implications to prevention and further researches are presented.

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1. Introduction

This paper aims to present a confirmatory factor analysis of the Short Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SSRQ), a measure used to evaluate a process that has been extensively studied in scientific literature related to resilience and well-being (Elliot, Thrash & Murayama, 2011; Gardner, Dishion, & Connell, 2008). This enthusiasm has raised a number of measures and theories whether applied to specific behaviours or processes whether acknowledging self-

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regulation as a skill or ability applied to difference circumstances or behaviours. In our context, self-regulation has been extensively studied in a processes perspective related to learning and school achievement. In health context, there is a gap in terms of measures that compromises further applications. Doing so, this paper presents the results of the confirmatory factor analysis of a measure that has been used to study self-regulation and substance use, applying it to tobacco use.

2. Self-regulation and tobacco use

In recent years, self-regulation theory has been used to understand and explain the behavior of the subjects, due largely to methodological limitations of traditional approaches to the explanation of risk and health behaviors over time (Timms, Rivera, Collins & Piper, 2014). Indeed, self-regulation and self-regulation failure, has been described as a process that allow us to fill the gap between intentions and behavior (de Ridder & de Wit, 2006), thus placing itself at the heart of health promotion research and practice.

In literature review, most of the models were designed in adult population, being then translated to youth, causing some inconsistency or doubts. However, some agreement has been rising in the conceptualization of self-regulation, as a personal ability or skills relatively stable and persistent (Eisenberg, Fabes, Guthrie, & Reiser, 2000; Gestsdottir, Bowers, Eye, Napolitano, & Lerner, 2010; Luszczynska, Diehl, Gutiérrez-Doña, Kuusinen, & Schwarzer, 2004), that allow us to activate, monitor and inhibit behaviour, attention, emotions or cognitive processes when facing internal or external challenges to achieve desired outcomes (Demetriou, 2000; Moilanen, 2007). Learned according educational practices since early years (Karreman, van Tijn, van Aken & Dekovic, 2006; Piotrowski, Lapiere & Linebarger, 2013), these have been related positive outcomes.

Applied to substance use, some studies have found a relationship between self-regulatory skills and substance use. For example, some studies highlight the relationship between lower self-regulation and recurrent drinking (Wills & Dishion, 2004; Wills, Walker, Mendoza & AINETTE, 2006), whether at random use as in the intensive use (Carey, Neal & Collins, 2004; Garcia del Castillo & Dias, 2007; Neal & Carey, 2005). In self-regulation and tobacco use, less research is known, despite some evidence showing its important role in understanding the experience and intensity of tobacco use (Djordjevic, Fan, Ferguson & Hoffmann, 1995; Garcia del Castillo, Dias, Diaz-Perez & Castillo-Lopez, 2012), adaptation and smoking cessation (Browning, Wewers, Ferketich, Otterson & Reynolds, 2009; Oettingen, Mater & Thorpe, 2010; Timms, Rivera, Collins & Piper, 2014).

Thus, this work aims to present the confirmatory studies of the Portuguese version of SSRQ, an instrument for the evaluation of self-regulation, exploring its role in the explanation of onset and intensity of tobacco use by Portuguese adolescents. The SSRQ was based on the Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ), an instrument with 63 items developed by Brown, Miller and Lawendowski (1999) to evaluate seven specific self-regulation processes with good properties (in terms of validity and with reliability of $\alpha = .91$). Adopting a dispositional perspective, Carey, Neal and Collins (2004) proposed a short version with 31 items with only one factor, with good validity, reliability ($\alpha = .92$) and high correlation with the original version ($r = .96$). From this first version, Neal and Carey propose in a follow-up study, a version with two factors - Impulse control and Goal setting -, with a stable structure and internal consistency between .84 to .86 (overall $\alpha = .86$).

This measure has been adapted for some countries (eg. Potgieter, & Botha, 2009; Vahdat, Sharifi & Jafari, 2013), including Portugal. With a sample of Portuguese adolescents, and Exploratory Factor Analysis, Garcia del Castillo and Dias (2009) found a good factor structure, with most of the items with loadings in the original factors, and high reliability, given the total alpha of .89, ranging from .82 Impulse Control subscale and .85 on the subscale Goal setting. This paper we intend to present the results of the confirmatory factor analysis of the SSRQ with Portuguese adolescents, exploring the role of self-regulation in tobacco use.

3. Method

3.1. Sample

In our study participated 390 adolescents, 157 males (40.8%) and 228 females (59.2%), aged between 15 and 18 years old ($M=16.05$, $DP=.865$). At the time, most of the sample was in the 10th school year ($n=326$, 83.6%).

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