

Accepted Manuscript

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PII: S0306-9877(17)31050-2

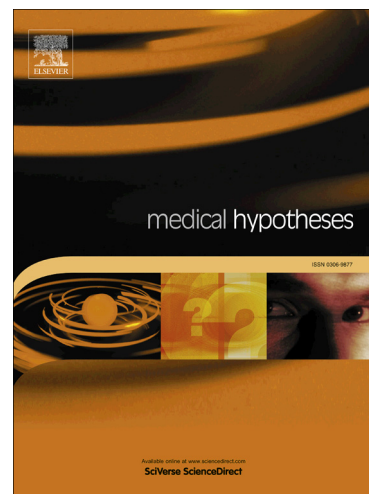
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mehy.2018.01.007>

Reference: YMEHY 8773

To appear in: *Medical Hypotheses*

Received Date: 10 October 2017

Accepted Date: 14 January 2018



Please cite this article as: H.E. Reyes-Huerta, C. dos Santos, K. Martínez, Impulsive Mechanisms Influencing Relapse in Alcohol Drinking, *Medical Hypotheses* (2018), doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mehy.2018.01.007>

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Impulsive Mechanisms Influencing Relapse in Alcohol Drinking

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Abstract

Impulsivity has been related to different features of addictive behaviors. Growing data, generated in separated lines of research, suggest that different processes underlying impulsivity are associated to relapse in alcohol drinking. Considering the evidence, relapse can be understood as an impulsive choice or as an impulsive action. In the first case, the return to drinking behavior is a consequence of insensitive to delayed consequence, that is, to the discounting of delayed rewards. In the second case, relapse is a consequence of failures to inhibit prepotent responses. Nevertheless, conditions that control the action of each mechanism or their interaction to influence relapse still unknown. We hypothesize that both mechanisms interact to produce relapse depending on framing effects, the moments of a drinking episode or context. The implication of the hypothesis is that relapse prevention strategies need to reduce discounting of delayed rewards, but also to increase behavioral inhibition in the presence of cues related to alcohol.

Keywords

Impulsivity, delay discounting, behavioral inhibition, relapse, alcoholism.

Background

Why do patients commit to abstinence from alcohol drinking after treatment, but return to a problematic alcohol use soon after? Maintenance of behavioral change over time

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