Impulsivity in Alcohol-Dependent Patients with and without ADHD: The Role of Atomoxetine

Coppola M, Mondola R.


Abstract

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by symptoms of hyperactivity, inattention, and impulsivity. As shown in the literature, this disorder is frequently associated with alcohol and drug abuse. Patients affected by ADHD show high levels of impulsivity and sensation seeking. These characteristics can significantly increase the risk of alcohol abuse, which is itself a clinical condition associated with high levels of impulsivity. Clinical studies suggest that atomoxetine is effective and safe in patients affected by both ADHD and alcohol dependence; however, information focused specifically on impulsivity is very limited. In an open-label study, we evaluated the difference in impulsivity level between alcohol-dependent patients with and without a diagnosis of ADHD. Furthermore, we hypothesized that, in patients with ADHD, atomoxetine could reduce the impulsivity trait.