Study Examines for Risk Factors Associated with Initiation of Substance Use

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Not all individuals who initiate use of a substance such as nicotine, alcohol, cannabis, and cocaine eventually develop a substance use disorder, indicating that the risk factors for substance use and for substance use disorder (SUD) differ to some extent. A new study has evaluated the overlap in risk factors for substance initiation and SUD, which may be useful for developing interventions to reduce both initiation and SUD. The findings are published in The American Journal on Addictions.

A novel finding of the study was that some risk factors were associated with initiation of all the substances assessed, whereas others were substance-specific. Previous use of another substance, being male, having what’s known as cluster B personality disorder, and family history of SUD predicted initiation across all substances assessed, whereas social anxiety disorder and certain other personality disorders were associated with specific substances.

The study also supported the idea that psychiatric disorders may act as risk factors for both initiation and progression. Identifying and targeting these risk factors may help decrease the burden of substance use disorders.

"Early identification and treatment of psychiatric disorders can potentially prevent many devastating cases of substance use disorders", said co-author Dr. Ludwing Florez-Salamanca.

Additional Information:

About Journal:
The American Journal on Addictions is the official journal of the American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry. The Academy encourages research on the etiology, prevention, identification, and treatment of substance abuse; thus, the journal provides a forum for the dissemination of information in the extensive field of addiction.

Each issue of this publication covers a wide variety of topics ranging from codependence to genetics, epidemiology to dual diagnostics, etiology to neuroscience, and much more. Features of the journal, all written by experts in the field, include special overview articles, clinical or basic research papers, clinical updates, and book reviews within the area of addictions.

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