

Addiction index updated

October 27 2010



The new version of the Addiction Severity Index gives health professionals the opportunity to design an integral and personalized plan of assistance for patients suffering disorders due to substance abuse. Credit: SINC

The new version of the Addiction Severity Index (ASI) gives health professionals the opportunity to design an integral and personalised plan of assistance for patients suffering disorders due to substance abuse.

Developed by the University of Pennsylvania (USA) in the 1980s, the ASI is the most used tool for studying disorders due to [substance abuse](#). After more than 25 years of use, current trends have led ASI creators to update their index and adapt it to the present day reality. The new ASI-6 includes significant structure and content changes in regard to the previous version.

However, as Eva María Díaz-Mesa, a researcher at the Centro de

Investigación Biomédica en Red de Salud Mental (CIBERSAM) and author of the study explained to SINC "any assessment test must involve mathematical procedures that determine whether or not it is a valid indicator of a particular psychological conduct."

This study examines the version of the method translated and adapted into Spanish. The study was carried out at 13 centres in Spain, where a total of 258 patients participated, and compiles four periodic assessments that determine the evolution of patients and the ability of the tool to detect changes.

The results, published recently in the journal *Psicothema*, reveal that the ASI-6 performed well in psychometric terms, that is, "when applied, the tool gives stable measurements (reliability) and actually measures what it intends to (validity)," Díaz Mesa continued. Furthermore, it is worth highlighting the inclusion of smoking and gambling in the assessment, together with caring for children.

The ASI is an interview designed to measure the state of a patient in regard to seven functional domains: alcohol and drug abuse, physical and mental health, employment/resources, family relationships and illegal activity. The scores obtained in the different areas provide information about the severity of the addiction (the higher the score the more severe).

Addiction to Legal and Illegal Substances

Although there is widespread social belief that people who consume illegal substances suffer more negative effects, consumption-related health problems are actually primarily due to legal substances.

The World Health Organization (WHO) expected tobacco to explain 16.8% of mortality in Spain, alcohol 3% and illegal drugs 0.6%. However, in regard to the burden of disease, tobacco accounted for

12.3%, alcohol 7.6% and illegal drugs 3.9%.

More information: Eva M. Díaz Mesa, Paz García-Portilla, Pilar A. Sáiz, Teresa Bobes Bascarán, María José Casares, Eduardo Fonseca, Eduardo Carreño, Gerardo Flórez, Josep Guardia, Enriqueta Ochoa, César Pereiro, Gabriel Rubio, Antonio Terán, José Ramón Fernández Hermida y Julio Bobes. "Rendimiento psicométrico de la sexta versión del Addiction Severity Index en español (ASI-6)". Psicothema Vol. 22, n 3, pp. 513-519, Aug 2010.

Provided by FECYT - Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology

Citation: Addiction index updated (2010, October 27) retrieved 5 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2010-10-addiction-index.html>

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