

Personal cues can have a strong effect on craving in individuals with addiction

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Unique person-specific cues—such as the presence of a specific friend or hearing a specific song—appear to have a robust effect on craving addictive substances, a recent study shows. The study also found that person-specific cues may have a longer effect on craving than more general substance-specific cues, such as the presence of bottles, syringes, or lighters.

The study included 132 outpatients beginning treatment for alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, or opiate addiction. Using mobile technologies, participants were questioned 4 times per day relative to craving, substance use, and exposure to either substance-specific cues or personal cues unique to that individual.

"This work opens the prospect of integrating individual markers predictive of relapse in [treatment programs](#) for better long-term prevention of relapse. We are eager to start a new study to test this," said Dr. Melina Fatseas, first author of the *Addiction* study. "In the meantime, clinicians should really focus their [treatment](#) programs on craving reduction and control of its determinants," said co-author Dr. Marc Auriacombe.

More information: Fatseas, M., Serre, F., Alexandre, J.-M., Debrabant, R., Auriacombe, M., and Swendsen, J. (2015), Craving and substance use among patients with alcohol, tobacco, cannabis or heroin addiction: a comparison of substance- and person-specific cues. *Addiction*, [DOI: 10.1111/add.12882](https://doi.org/10.1111/add.12882)

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