

# 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.

**More information:** Carlos Blanco et al, Predictors of initiation of nicotine, alcohol, cannabis, and cocaine use: Results of the National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions (NESARC), *The American Journal on Addictions* (2018). [DOI: 10.1111/ajad.12764](https://doi.org/10.1111/ajad.12764)

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