

MAKING ASSESSMENT OF COGNITIONS RELEVANT TO TREATMENT OUTCOME MORE ACCESSIBLE: A MEASUREMENT OF DISCOUNTING OF DELAYED REWARDS IN UNDER TWO MINUTES

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Introduction and Aims: The ability to deny immediate gratification of drives and instead to focus on longer term reward is an important aspect of success in substance use treatment. The extent to which the value of long term reward is reduced compared to an immediate reward is assessed using measures such as the Monetary Choice Questionnaire. These delayed discounting measures are associated with treatment outcomes including risk of relapse, and hence may potentially identify people that may benefit from active treatment follow-up. Existing instruments, however, are relatively long and require complex analyses. We aimed to develop a brief, simple and repeatable assessment for delayed discounting for application in drug treatment contexts..

Design and Methods: A brief version of the Monetary Choice Questionnaire was developed using psychometric analyses of the scale from 518 adult participants. Brief scale validity was assessed using: a community sample to confirm scale structure and its ability to discriminate between AUDIT groups; a 7-day test-retest study, comprising both this scale and measures of inhibitory control in healthy adults (aged 20-60); and an acute alcohol dosing study to determine sensitivity to intoxication (BrAC=0.08; n=36).

Results: The brief version of the scale could discriminate between AUDIT groups using simple scoring methods, and demonstrated large magnitude correlations with existing measures of inhibitory control. Results were consistent across repeat assessments.

Conclusions: The brief scale provides a valid assessment of delayed discounting that is also useful for repeat assessments. New simple scoring procedures and reference data under development will also increase its usefulness in clinical contexts.

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