Author’s response to reviews

Title: Relationship between craving and personality in treatment-seeking women with substance-related disorders

Authors:

Dr Monica L Zilberman (monica.zilberman@calgaryhealthregion.ca)
Hermano Tavares (hermano.tavares@calgaryhealthregion.ca)
Nady el-Guebaly (nady.el-guebaly@calgaryhealthregion.ca)

Version: 5 Date: 6 Jan 2003

Dear Dr. Ball,

Thank you very much for your remarks.

We agree with remarks from 1 to 6 and 9 that were therefore fully contemplated.

Remark 7: The authors acknowledge that in trying to privilege conciseness we failed to provide further detailing of the analytic decisions - we apologize for that. We did take into consideration the reviewer's suggestion, but there was a technical problem if the instructions were to be strictly followed. The inclusion of all potential covariates and personality factors altogether would inflate the number of variables up to a point that could compromise the stability of the regression models. The actual sample size (95 subjects) allows regression models containing up to 5 independent variables (Tabachnik and Fidell 2001, p. 117). Therefore, we opted for a stepwise procedure. The stepwise analyses were preceded by a univariate analysis (Pearson's correlations) that defined the factors that significantly related to craving and the preferable order of their inclusion in the regression models. Our strategy was to perform a two-stage regression analysis. The first stage comprised of a stepwise regression procedure limited to the variables other than personality factors in order to investigate the combination that best accounted for craving variability. Then, the variables selected on stage 1 (depression and days of abstinence) were introduced on the subsequent regression models (stage 2) prior to any personality factors, as a block, following the reviewer’s suggestion of verifying if personality factors contribute to craving above and beyond what the other variables predict.

Remark 8: We agree with the reviewer. Indeed, an alternative model was performed with the NEO factors without separating N5 from the Neuroticism total score (N). The outcome was actually the same and the model gained in simplicity.

Remark 10: On our former review of this paper we suppressed by mistake the last two sentences of the Conclusion section instead of the last two sentences of the Discussion section, as previously suggested. We apologize for this mistake. The sentences referring to compulsive features of craving were withdrawn and the last two sentences of the Conclusion section re-introduced.

Remark 11: The BIS means are now described in Table 1.

Remark 12: Aiming at brevity we have eliminated Table 2 and its main content has been transferred to the text, as suggested. The description of the intermediate steps of the regression analysis are beyond
the scope of this paper, but they are available upon request. The parameters of the final models (1, 2 and 3) are described in the text.

We will be happy to provide any further clarification if needed.

Monica Zilberman and colleagues