Author's response to reviews

Title: Concurrent crack and powder cocaine users from Sao Paulo. Do they represent a different group?

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Author's response to reviews: see over
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Re: Concurrent crack and powder cocaine users from Sao Paulo. Do they represent a different group? (MS: 1449006603680345)

Dear Dr Merrill Singer and Dr Stephan Arndt

We wish to thank you for your constructive comments and suggestions. We have edited the text according to the points you have raised.

Please find attached the revised manuscript and our responses and changes in light of the comments summarized on following pages.

Yours truly,

Camila Guindalini
Dr Merrill Singer’s comments:

1. “Shifting drug use patterns might receive greater attention in the conclusion of the paper”

We agree with the reviewer and have included the following sentence in the last paragraph of the Discussion section:

“In summary, we found a high consumption of crack cocaine among the patients, corroborating with a historic change in the preference of cocaine use in Brazil in the past decade, also observed in earlier studies. Furthermore we showed for the first time that interesting differences exist between Powdered, Crack and Dual Cocaine Users, a separate group, usually not considered in previous studies…”

2. “Greater attention to the literature on polydrug use and the ever increasing shift to this pattern is warranted.”

We agree with the reviewer and have included the following text and new references about the subject: (Discussion - Paragraph 3)

“In addition, regarding the history of use of illicit drugs, Dual Users demonstrated a higher proportion of individuals that had ever used cannabis and solvents in their life and cannabis in the last month. Polydrug abuse is a phenomenon reported by cocaine users in several other studies [7,10,22] and represents an important concern to treatment and public health strategies. Polydrug users show complex life histories and are normally associated with poorer treatment outcomes than those using one drug only [22]. The latest data on hospital emergency visits estimates that more than half of the visits related to “drug misuse or abuse” involved more than one drug [23] and recent studies reported that simultaneous use of multiple drugs has been shown to contribute substantially to overdose mortality [24,25]. However, contrasting with the previously mentioned studies and with surveys in Europe where the consumption of opiates by cocaine users was important [26], the recent consumption of heroin was particularly low in our sample, reported by only 4 patients, less than 1% of the sample.”
Dr Stephan Arndt’s comment:

“F-tests have a pair of df values but the text consistently only reports one of the pair. In the Results section, the text only reports one of the two.”

We thank the reviewer for this suggestion and we have included both df values (between groups and within groups) for the F tests in the Results sections.