

Review of: "[Review Article] Drug Use Disorder and Coping Mechanisms Due to COVID-19 Pandemic Measures: A Cross-Sectional Survey"

Mohamad Itani

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Dear colleague;

Thank you for asking me to review the paper title: Drug Use Disorder and Coping Mechanisms Due to COVID-19 Pandemic Measures: A Cross-Sectional Survey.

The title of the paper looks inviting for the reader; however, the paper has several limitations described as follows.

From the title, the reader expects to find a description of the coping mechanism/s for Drug use disorder (DUD) among a community based population during the COVID-19 lockdown period by following a cross-sectional statistical approach. What I found in the study: A retrospective approach on the "coping mechanism/s" followed by a group of patients admitted to a tertiary care psychiatric hospital with the diagnosis of "Substance Use Disorder" during the COVID-19 lockdown/pandemic" which is completely different from the title of the paper. Thus, the title does not fit the contents of the paper.

In the methods:

Being an epidemiological study, authors should mention the timing and the duration of the study.

Based on the above title, the authors should mention their diagnostic criteria for DUD/Substance Use Disorder for their studied population (i.e, was it based on ICD-10 definition +/- duration of the disorder), what were their inclusion and exclusion criteria in that case. In the ICD-10 definition of DUD alcohol addiction is included within the DUD list of diagnoses (the authors did not mention anything about alcohol exclusion in their paper). The authors used a statistical analysis to justify their choice of 61 participants in the study, while to be relevant, they should include in their paper all the patients admitted to the hospital with the diagnosis of DUD.

To study the coping mechanism/s, the authors used multiple-choice questionnaire to inquire about the "extent" of the COVID-19 "effect" and about the participant, "copying" (typing error) mechanism without a clear description of that questionnaire, the targeted effect/s that was looked for and the kind/type of the selected coping mechanism/s that were studied by the questionnaire. The authors also mentioned in the methods "the gathering of interview data" without specifying the objective of that interview. In such a setting and as a descriptive study one would go for a structured interview with the participants where relevant questions that serve the objectives of the study with meaningful conclusions

are addressed.

In the results:

The reader needs more elaboration on what the authors mean by behavioral changes, as the mentioned “infection with COVID-19” is not a behavioral change, while taking an overdose of a drug is a behavioral change, and it is better here to mention the name of that drug, etc...

Table 2 describes "detailed findings on the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on drug use-associated factors among patients" (the statement as such is not clear), and the table does not contain any explanation for what the authors mean by "effect/s". Do they mean the behavioral effects, or do they mean the rate of infection among DUD during the COVID-19 lockdown/pandemic?

Finally,

Due to the above-mentioned limitations, one cannot come to a valid conclusion from this study.

Respectfully yours,

Mohamad H. Itani MSc, Arab Board, IAAP, MRCGP [INT]

Medical Director of Mohamad Khaled Rehabilitation Hospital