

Substance-use addiction: Links with sensory preferences and individuals' awareness of their sensory patterns

Abstract

Introductory Statement

While addiction continues to be a prevalent factor that affects overall function, it also impacts how individuals process sensory input. With literature on the relationship between individuals with substance-use addiction and sensory preferences being scarce, the identified gap indicates a need to further examine said relationship and the importance for those with substance-use addiction to identify these sensory preferences. For occupational therapists to assist in the recovery process of these individuals, it is critical to gather data on this relationship.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to see if a relationship between sensory preferences and addiction exists, while also determining to what extent individuals are aware of their sensory preferences. Compared to other studies, this study not only tackles the topic of substance-use addiction and sensory preferences from an occupational therapy point of view but also addresses the level of the individual's awareness. Therefore, an individual's awareness of their sensory preferences is being considered as it is a vital part of their recovery and overall well-being.

Methods

This is a descriptive quantitative study using a 39-item self-questionnaire survey with a Likert-scale designed to collect information regarding one's sensory processing patterns and their awareness of said patterns. Subjects included in this study must be 18 years and older who are either currently addicted to or have been in recovery for any amount of time for substance-use addiction. Substances considered for this study are as follows: alcohol, opiates, cocaine, methamphetamine, hallucinogens, and/or prescription medication. Subjects will be recruited via convenience sampling and snowball sampling through the use of an electronic survey link and QR code on a flyer shared on various social media platforms and social media groups. The survey for this study will be available through the online platform, Qualtrics.

Findings

Researchers are currently in the data collection process and findings will be reported during a poster presentation.

Contribution to Occupational Therapy

This research will build upon the evidence that supports the importance for those with substance-use addiction to become aware of their sensory preferences to enhance self-regulation and occupational performance. These findings will allow for trained occupational therapists to assist individuals in building healthy habits that satisfy their specific sensory needs.

Professional Writing

Following data collection and analysis, researchers plan to submit for publication.