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# Mental and Behavioural Disorders as a Result of Using Alcohol and Psychoactive Substances

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## Abstract

The use of alcohol and psychoactive substances manifests itself in the rapid destruction of behavioral mechanisms. Dependence on these substances suppresses a person's behavioral and personal traits. The purpose of the academic paper is to determine the specifics of mental and behavioral disorders that may arise and develop as a result of a person's use of alcohol and psychoactive substances, to establish tendencies in studying this issue in scientific circles, and to clarify certain practical aspects of this problem. In the course of the research, an analytical and bibliographic method was used to study the scientific literature on mental and behavioral disorders that occur as a result of using alcohol and psychoactive substances. Induction, deduction, analysis, synthesis of information, system-structural, comparative, logical-linguistic methods, abstraction, and idealization were applied to study and process data. At the same time, a questionnaire in online mode was conducted by the research authors for the practical clarification of particular aspects of mental and behavioral disorders due to using psychoactive substances and alcohol. Based on the research results, the principal and most important theoretical aspects of problems related to mental and behavioral disorders that may arise and develop as a result of a person's use of alcohol and psychoactive substances are identified. Along with this, a standpoint of scientists-teachers of medical specialties of higher educational institutions and narcologists was studied regarding the key practical aspects of the issue outlined.

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*Keywords:* the problem of opioid use and drug addiction, mental disorders, addictive behavior, symptoms of mental disorders, neurocognitive disorders, forms of behavioral disorders

## Introduction

Currently, the problems of alcoholism, opioid use, and drug addiction are extremely acute and cause concern in the public health sector due to the widespread of HIV infection / AIDS, tuberculosis, and viral hepatitis B and C among people consuming these types of substances. In addition, the features of mental and behavioral disorders as a result of consuming alcohol and psychoactive substances allow us to talk about the threat of the proper functioning of persons addicted to using such substances as full-fledged members of society. Consequently, this issue needs a thorough investigation in order to implement the most successful measures to solve it (Engelgardt *et al.*, 2023). The theoretical part of the present research substantiates the relevance, components and main trends of studying issues in the scientific literature related to persons' mental and behavioral disorders as a result of using alcohol and psychoactive substances.

The practical part of the research includes an assessment of the priority of the types of mental and behavioral consequences of consuming alcohol and psychoactive substances, which are given insufficient attention in psychoneurological medical facilities. It also establishes the most characteristic types of mental and behavioral disorders due to consuming alcohol and psychoactive substances, which is evidence of the greatest destruction of personality traits. At the same time, it clarifies the most significant criteria for mental and behavioral disorders caused by using alcohol and psychoactive substances. The questionnaire also made it possible to assess the essential mental characteristics of persons with addictive behavior due to using alcohol and psychoactive substances, which require active scientific and experimental investigation.

Based on the research results, conclusions were made regarding the issues raised. Particularly, it has been revealed that psychoneurological medical facilities should pay more attention to patients with such mental and behavioral disorders as violence, crimes, and poisoning caused by consuming alcohol and psychoactive substances. It was also established that, according to scientists' and practitioners' standpoints, evidence of the greatest destruction of personality traits as a result of using alcohol and psychoactive substances are psychotic, anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorders and neurocognitive disorders, as well as indicators of delirium. At the same time, the most significant criteria for the expressiveness of mental or behavioral disorders that occur after using alcohol and psychoactive substances are the preceding disorder of the facts of severe intoxication or abstinence and clinically significant disorders in social, professional or other

important spheres of activity. The respondents also noted that a person's most important mental characteristics with addictive behavior that occurs as a result of consuming alcohol and psychoactive substances and require thorough scientific and experimental investigation to improve the effectiveness of treating patients are a hidden inferiority complex in combination with external manifestations of perfection, external sociability combined with the fear of long-term emotional contacts, false statements and the desire to blame others.

The purpose of the research is to determine the standpoint of scientists-teachers of medical specialties of higher educational institutions and narcologists regarding the key practical aspects of mental and behavioral disorders that occur as a result of using alcohol and psychoactive substances.

### **Literature review**

The issue of the prevalence of alcoholism and drug addiction among children, adolescents and youth is extremely acute in all countries of the world. According to the WHO data, the average global alcohol consumption in the world is 6,1 liters per person per year, which is extremely high. About 25,0% of deaths from alcohol poisoning every year in the world are related to using clandestine alcoholic beverages; 25,0% - heart attacks from excessive alcohol consumption; 50,0% - due to other diseases and accidents caused by alcohol consumption. There is an immediate connection between the effects of psychoactive substances and alcohol on social stress disorders in society, mortality and mental health of the population, relationships in the family, at work and the emergence of legal problems due to crimes committed in the criminal world (Kolves *et al.*, 2020; Ball *et al.*, 2021).

The constant growth of narcotization and alcoholism of the population in the world indicates the necessity for intensive development and testing of new modern concepts that meet the needs of a changing social environment. In this regard, it is necessary to look for new ways of solving this problem (Han *et al.*, 2021; Heim *et al.*, 2021).

Dependence on using psychoactive substances is an urgent medical and social issue in most developed countries of the world. The problem is complicated with the appearance of numerous chemicals leading to the development of the syndrome of chemical and alcohol dependence. Mass use of psychoactive substances causes an increase in poisonings, injuries, violence and various types of crimes. The issue of consuming psychoactive substances by children and adolescents is extremely acute. At the same time, the use of drugs and alcohol is the most common among young people, significantly affecting the formation of a personality, his interests, social status, etc. (Caluzzi *et al.*, 2022).

There are some general tendencies in the mental and behavioral effects of substances and the mental disorders related to them. In general, tranquilizers

(sedatives, sleeping pills, anxiolytics and alcohol) during intoxication can cause significant depressive and anxiety disorders. In case of stimulants, psychotic disorders are more characteristic during intoxication, and accompanying major depressive disorders are observed during abstinence. Both stimulant and sedative groups of psychoactive substances can cause the development of pronounced but transient sleep disturbances or sexual disorders (Engelgardt *et al.*, 2023).

It can be argued that one of the important criteria for susceptibility to behavioral disorders is the lack of psychological stability in every day relationships and crisis situations. As a rule, people tend to easily (“automatically”) adapt to the demands of everyday life and have a more challenging time surviving a crisis situation (Afonso *et al.*, 2022; Lam *et al.*, 2019).

Treating drug addiction and concomitant diseases requires substantial financial costs, especially since therapeutic remissions are often short-term and unstable. In many ways, this is connected with the imperfection of existing medical and health programs. Thus, all the outlined determines the need to search for fundamentally new approaches to the treatment and prevention of drug and alcohol addiction. The speed of spread and global consequences of drug addiction can be compared to particularly dangerous infections. It is no coincidence that such concepts as “epidemic” and “pandemic” have firmly entered the narcological terminology, giving the clearest idea of the nature and scope of this phenomenon in the modern world (Orri *et al.*, 2020; Moustafa *et al.*, 2018).

## Methodology

**Objective:** The objective of the study was to conduct a practical investigation into the modern tendencies in mental and behavioral disorders that can arise and develop as a result of a person’s use of alcohol and psychoactive substances. The aim was to gather information and insights from experts in the field, specifically scientists-teachers of medical specialties and narcologists, to gain a better understanding of the issue.

**Participants:** To achieve this objective, the researchers conducted interviews with a total of 442 participants. These participants were divided into two groups: scientists-teachers of medical specialties and narcologists.

The first group consisted of 211 scientists-teachers who were affiliated with higher educational institutions in the regions of Khmelnytskyi, Vinnytsia, Cherkasy, and Kyiv in Ukraine. These individuals were experts in medical specialties and likely had a deep understanding of the effects of alcohol and psychoactive substances on mental and behavioral health. They were selected due to their knowledge and expertise in the field. The second group comprised 231 narcologists who were actively involved in practical professional or scientific-teaching training activities.

Narcologists are medical professionals who specialize in the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of substance abuse disorders. They often work in medical facilities and have direct experience dealing with patients who have substance-related mental and behavioral issues.

The selection of participants from the specified regions aimed to ensure a diverse representation of professionals from different areas within Ukraine. By including experts from multiple locations, the researchers could capture a broader perspective on the subject matter.

By conducting interviews with scientists-teachers and narcologists, the study aimed to provide valuable insights into the current trends and developments in mental and behavioral disorders resulting from substance use. The findings from this research could potentially contribute to the understanding and improvement of prevention, intervention, and treatment strategies for such disorders in Ukraine.

**Instruments:** The research was conducted using the eSurvey service, an online platform that allowed for the creation and distribution of surveys. The researchers designed a questionnaire to collect data from the participants. The questionnaire consisted of a combination of multiple-choice questions, Likert scale ratings, and open-ended questions. The multiple-choice questions included queries about the participants' professional background, experience with substance abuse disorders, and their observations regarding the prevalence and patterns of mental and behavioral disorders associated with alcohol and psychoactive substance use.

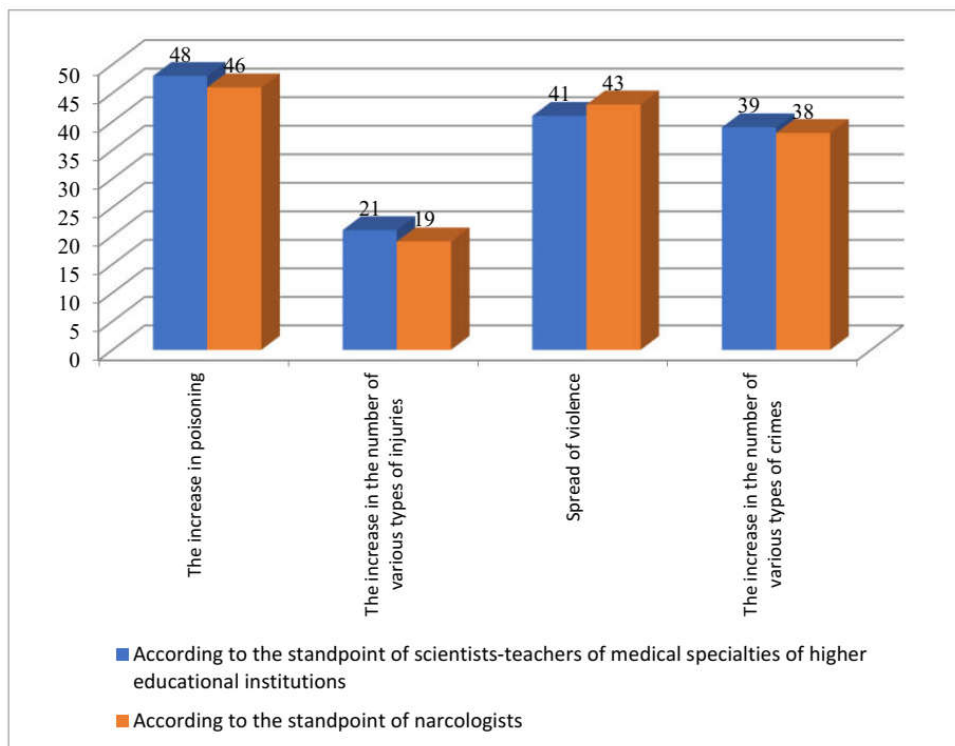
Likert scale ratings were used to measure the participants' agreement or disagreement with statements related to the impact of substance use on mental health, the effectiveness of current prevention and intervention strategies, or the need for further research and resources in the field. In addition to structured questions, the questionnaire included open-ended questions that allowed participants to provide more detailed insights, share personal experiences, or suggest recommendations for addressing the identified tendencies in mental and behavioral disorders.

The eSurvey service facilitated the distribution of the questionnaire to the participants, likely through email invitations or a dedicated survey link. The participants were asked to complete the questionnaire within a specified timeframe, ensuring that the data collection process was efficient and streamlined.

Overall, the use of the eSurvey service and the well-designed questionnaire enabled to gather comprehensive and relevant data from the scientists-teachers of medical specialties and narcologists. This data served as a valuable foundation for analyzing the modern tendencies in mental and behavioral disorders associated with alcohol and psychoactive substance use in the specified regions of Ukraine.

## Results

An important issue clarified during the survey was the determination of the types of mental and behavioral consequences of alcohol and psychoactive substance use, which, according to the respondents' standpoint, are currently given insufficient attention in psychoneurological medical facilities (Figure 1).

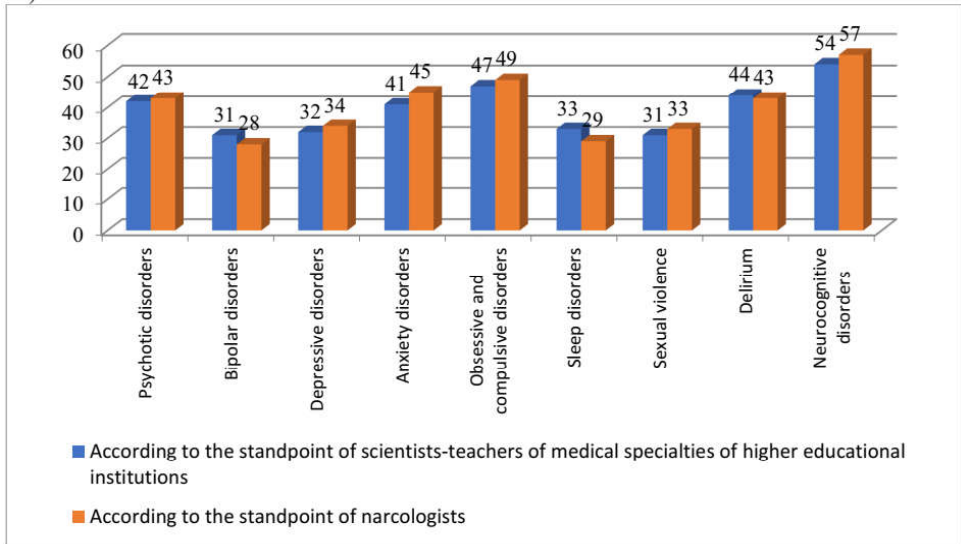


Source: compiled by the authors

Figure 1. Types of mental and behavioral consequences of using alcohol and psychoactive substances, which receive insufficient attention in psychoneurological medical facilities, %

According to the survey respondents' standpoint, as shown in Figure 1, while treating patients in psychoneurological medical facilities, it is necessary to pay particular attention to their mental and behavioral disorders, such as violence, crimes, and poisoning.

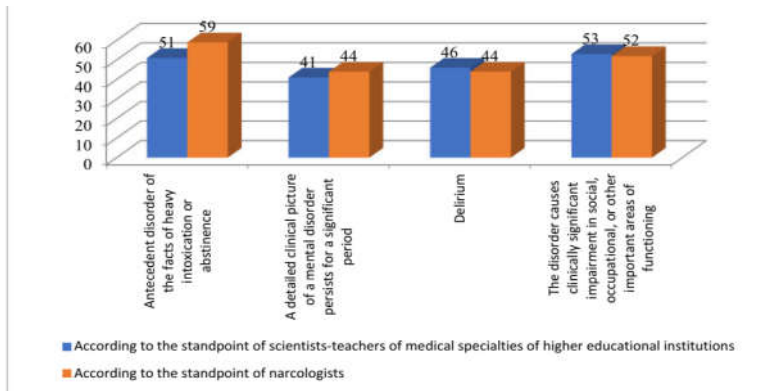
The survey has also revealed the types of mental and behavioral disorders caused by consuming alcohol and psychoactive substances are evidence of the most significant destruction of personality traits (Figure 2).



Source: compiled by the authors

Figure 2. Disturbance of the mental and behavioral character as a result of using alcohol and psychoactive substances, which is evidence of the most significant destruction of personality traits, %

As can be seen from Figure 2, these types of disorders are psychotic, anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorders and neurocognitive disorders, as well as delirium. During the survey, the respondents identified the following most important criteria for the expressiveness of mental or behavioral disorders caused by using alcohol and psychoactive substances (Figure 3).



Source: compiled by the authors

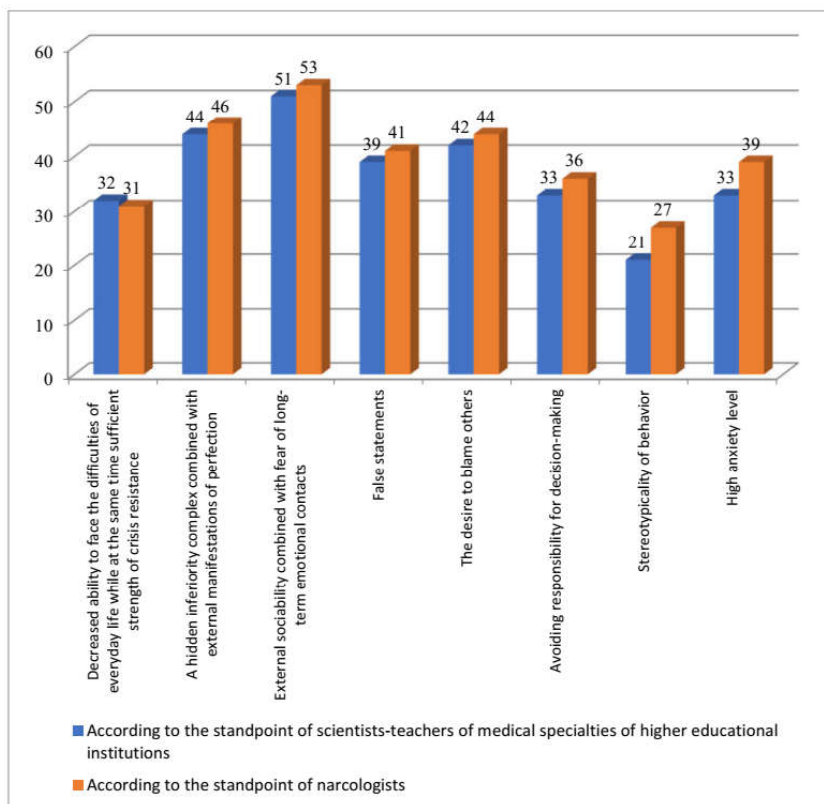
Figure 3. The most important criteria for the expressiveness of mental or behavioral disorders caused by using alcohol and psychoactive substances, %



The respondents believe that the most defining criteria for mental and behavioral disorders revealed in patients as a result of consuming alcohol and psychoactive substances are the antecedent disorder of the facts of heavy intoxication or abstinence and clinically significant disturbances in social, professional or other important spheres of activity.

One of the most vivid mental-behavioral disorders, quite common among people having the consequences of the harmful use of alcohol and psychoactive substances, is their addictive behavior.

In the course of the research, the respondents were asked to determine persons' most important mental characteristics with addictive behavior emerging as a result of using alcohol and psychoactive substances and requiring thorough scientific and experimental investigation in order to improve the effectiveness of treating such patients (Figure 4).



Source: compiled by the authors

Figure 4. The most important mental characteristics with addictive behavior emerging as a result of using alcohol and psychoactive substances and requiring thorough scientific and experimental investigation, %

Several important mental characteristics are closely associated with addictive behavior arising from alcohol and psychoactive substance use, warranting extensive scientific and experimental investigation. One such characteristic is a hidden inferiority complex, which is often accompanied by external displays of perfectionism. Additionally, individuals may exhibit external sociability while harboring a deep-seated fear of establishing long-term emotional connections. Another notable characteristic is the propensity for making false statements, which can be prevalent among those struggling with addiction. Finally, individuals may display a tendency to shift blame onto others as a means of coping with their addictive behaviors. These mental characteristics highlight the complex interplay between psychological factors and substance abuse, underscoring the need for in-depth research in this area.

In conclusion, the study sheds light on several crucial mental characteristics associated with addictive behavior resulting from the use of alcohol and psychoactive substances. These characteristics include a hidden inferiority complex coupled with outward displays of perfectionism, external sociability combined with a fear of forming lasting emotional bonds, a proclivity for making false statements, and a tendency to shift blame onto others. These findings underscore the intricate nature of addiction and emphasize the importance of further scientific and experimental investigations in this field.

Understanding these mental characteristics is essential for developing effective prevention, intervention, and treatment strategies for individuals grappling with substance abuse disorders. By addressing the underlying psychological factors, such as hidden insecurities and fear-driven behavior, healthcare professionals can provide comprehensive care that targets not only the physical aspects of addiction but also the mental and emotional well-being of affected individuals.

Moreover, the findings emphasize the significance of multidisciplinary collaboration between medical professionals, psychologists, and social workers to address the complex interplay between addiction and mental health. A holistic approach that considers these mental characteristics can lead to improved outcomes and better support systems for individuals struggling with substance abuse.

## **Discussion**

It is an undeniable fact that there is a tendency to increase the number of types of people's mental and behavioral disorders with various forms of alcohol and chemical dependence in the modern world nowadays (Boden *et al.*, 2021).

Currently, a life orientation based on the principle of self-affirmation at any cost and by any means is characteristic for many people. In these cases, they are guided not only by the desire to satisfy their needs, but also by the process itself, being involved in the company and for entertainment so as not to be a coward and

a “rare bird” (Chambers *et al.*, 2018). That is, addictive behavior is a widespread phenomenon accompanying the process of growing up and socialization, gaining momentum in adolescence and heralding a possible decline in the second phase (early adulthood). According to the conducted studies, the influence of social living conditions on a person’s psychological characteristics can be manifested in certain forms of behavioral disorders, including addictive ones. From among such disorders, it is worth highlighting age-related addictions connected with personal development during the period of minors, and adults’ addictive behavior, when it contradicts social-cultural norms but does not go beyond the scope of informal interactions; that is, it does not have an antisocial character (Heim *et al.* 2021).

Currently, a significant increase in the consumption of drugs and alcohol is observed in the world, especially among young people and teenagers. The use of psychoactive substances is one of the main factors in deteriorating mental health. Acute and chronic disorders caused by consuming psychoactive substances occupy the first two places in terms of the frequency of mental and behavioral disorders (Fleming *et al.*, 2020; Ball *et al.*, 2019).

The urgency of the issue outlined is significantly increased by the fact that there is no special state body responsible for the formation of state alcohol and drug policy in the vast majority of the world’s countries, as well as a mechanism for implementing state policy in the field of control and distribution of alcohol and drug products. The legislation is aimed only at regulating a relatively small number of issues related mainly to drug and precursor trafficking and law enforcement activities. As a result, there are no alcohol and drug control programs. State bodies, faced with an acute lack of funds, continue to emphasize the most expensive and often outdated forms of anti-alcohol and anti-drug treatment, ignoring modern preventive approaches that are used in many countries of the world and have proven their effectiveness and high economic efficiency (Clark *et al.*, 2020; Looze *et al.*, 2019).

## Conclusion

Therefore, the analysis of the scientific literature on the research topic and the questionnaire results showed that currently there is a steady tendency to increase the incidence of mental and behavioral disorders due to the effects of using alcohol and psychoactive substances. At the same time, the consumption of psychoactive substances is quite common nowadays. Consequently, the issue remains relevant and indicates the expediency of their further analysis and implementation of effective preventive and therapeutic measures. Conducting similar studies makes it possible to develop effective preventive measures in the future aimed at preventing critical situations arising from using alcohol and psychoactive substances. The most reliable method of combating drug addiction and alcoholism is to prevent young people from using drugs and alcohol for the first time.

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