Gender-based Outcomes and Acceptability of a Web-delivered Psychosocial Intervention for Substance Use Disorders

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Digital technologies show great promise for increasing treatment access and improving quality of care, but little is known about gender differences.

Here we report one of the first studies exploring outcomes by gender in a large scale effectiveness trial for substance use disorders conducted in the National Drug Abuse Treatment Clinical Trials Network (CTN). Research questions are: (1) Does gender moderate the association between treatment and outcomes? (2) Do men and women differ in their perceived acceptability? (3) Is acceptability associated with outcomes?

**METHODS**

### Measures

**Abstinence**
- in the last 4 weeks of treatment, evaluated twice weekly: 1) a urine test for 10 substances; and 2) self-reported abstinence from drugs/hyping using the Timeline Follow-back method.

**Retention:** proportion retained in TAU at week 12

### Social Functioning

- Mean score (wk 12) from the Social Adjustment Scale
- Includes six role areas (work, social and leisure, family relationship, marital relationship, parental role, and role within the family unit).

### Data Analysis

- Generalized linear mixed (GLM) effect models with appropriate link functions:
  - for all outcomes (i.e., no significant gender × treatment interactions)

### RESULTS

- Gender was not a moderator of treatment for any of the four outcomes (i.e., no significant gender × treatment interactions)

### Gender as a Moderator of Treatment

- Among women and men, gender did not differ in acceptability of TES
- Among women, but not men, acceptability (week 12) differed as a function of gender and median level of baseline craving
- Those in TES, regardless of gender, reported fewer days of craving; this is consistent with prior research suggesting women with substance use disorders may experience unique vulnerabilities (e.g., partner violence) that influence treatment trajectories
- TES includes specific relapse prevention content that could be helpful in managing and reducing cravings to use alcohol and drugs.

### DISCUSSION

Gender may be an important factor to consider when thinking about using technology-based interventions. Given the potential of these interventions to expand treatment access and improve health outcomes, future research should endeavor to understand ways in which acceptability may differ among men and women and impede effectiveness.

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### REFERENCES


### CONCLUSION

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