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# Relapse prevention, Attachment and Equine-assisted therapeutic intervention.

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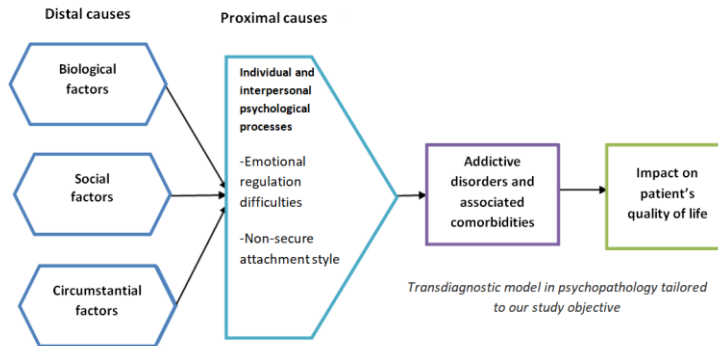
In collaboration with Centre de Soins de Suite et de Réadaptation en Addictologie (CSSRA) « La Fontenelle », Maizeroy.

August-september 2017, EHPS.

**Background:** In post-cure centers, many patients suffer from polyaddiction and psychopathological disorders.

**Problematic:** In Health Psychology, which type of intervention to propose in the field of addictive behavior management, taking into account multifinality and divergent addictive trajectories? In this setting, how to produce an effective intervention enabling a change in behavior?

**Goal:** Based on the transdiagnostic approach in psychopathology (Kinderman & Tai, 2007 ; Nef, Philippot & Verhofstadt, 2012), the aim is to create a therapeutic intervention which targets the psychological processes responsible for maintaining addictive behaviors and associated comorbidities rather than creating therapeutic approaches focused on a particular pathology.



**Hypothesis:** The chronicization of addictive behaviors and associated comorbidities is caused by emotional regulation difficulties associated with non-secure attachment style in adulthood.

## Methodology:

### Description of the population:

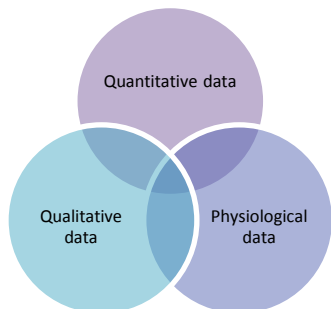
Patients admitted into a post-cure center (*Centre de Soins de Suite et de Réadaptation en Addictologie, CSSRA*) for 5 to 13 weeks.

### Assessment of the intervention:

- **Intervention group:** patients participating in equine-assisted therapy and mindfulness therapy sessions in addition to the center's usual care program.
- **Control group:** patients receiving only usual care at the center.

### Assessment of the effectiveness of the intervention:

Pre- and post-intervention measurements (T1 - T2) by concomitantly collecting quantitative data (questionnaires), qualitative data (clinical interview) and physiological data (cortisol and oxytocin measurements, HVR).



## Description of the therapeutic intervention:

An equine-assisted therapeutic intervention based jointly on attachment therapy, on the Mindfulness Based Relapse Prevention (MBRP) program (Bowen, Chawla & Marlatt, 2010) and on the Sensorimotor approach (Oden, Minton & Pain, 2015).

### Two processes are primarily targeted:

- Evolution-type adult attachment;
- Difficulties in emotional regulation.

### Typical sessions:



#### Mindfulness

- Mindfulness training through meditation



#### Groundwork exercises with horses

Active exercises centered on the body with the horse: course, stroll in the park.

The emotional regulation difficulties are linked to the relational difficulties of the patient. The integration of the attachment theory with a relapse prevention model enables taking into account the psychopathological aspect associated with the addictive disorder.

## Conclusion:

By combining the transdiagnostic model in psychopathology with models of behavioral changes in Health Psychology, the objective of this research is to evaluate the effectiveness of a therapeutic intervention that promotes behavior change, by integrating a psychopathological understanding of addictive disorders while using techniques of mindfulness and equine-assisted therapy.