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Predictors of addiction treatment providers' beliefs in the disease and choice models of addiction

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Abstract

Addiction treatment providers working in the United States ($n = 219$) and the United Kingdom ($n = 372$) were surveyed about their beliefs in the disease and choice models of addiction, as assessed by the 18-item Addiction Belief Scale of J. Schaler (1992). Factor analysis of item scores revealed a three-factor structure, labeled "addiction is a disease," "addiction is a choice," and "addiction is a way of coping with life," and factor scores were analyzed in separate hierarchical multiple regression analyses. Controlling for demographic and addiction history variables, treatment providers working in the United States more strongly believe addiction is a disease, whereas U.K.-based providers more strongly believe that addiction is a choice and a way of coping with life. Beliefs that addiction is a disease were stronger among those who provide for-profit

treatment, have stronger spiritual beliefs, have had a past addiction problem, are older, are members of a group of addiction professionals, and have been treating addiction longer. Conversely, those who viewed addiction as a choice were more likely to provide public/not-for-profit treatment, be younger, not belong to a group of addiction professionals, and have weaker spiritual beliefs. Additionally, treatment providers who have had a personal addiction problem in the past were significantly more likely to believe addiction is a disease the longer they attend a 12-step-based group and if they are presently abstinent.



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Keywords

Addiction; Treatment providers; Beliefs; Disease; Choice

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