Dear Editor,

The excellent paper by Zaami et al\(^1\) reports worrisome correlation between COVID-19 pandemic and substance use disorders (SUDs).

The behavioral and socio-economic factors that characterize a part of SUD patients can also be the cause of viral spread. Therefore, SUD patients are at greater risk of contracting COVID-19 infection and also of having a worse course (intensive care unit/ intubation)\(^2\).


A relevant phenomenon is the significant increase in alcohol consumption (AC)\(^4\). Chronic AC involves all components of immunity (innate and acquired)\(^5\). AC induces systemic inflammation by worsening patients’ response to COVID-19 infection. It also increases the risk of respiratory failure and multi-organ failure\(^6,7\).

In a historical period characterized by a COVID-19 pandemic, doctors and all health professionals must advise the population not to consume alcohol or to limit consumption to no more than one drink/day (low risk consumption).

General practitioners should analyze the most important and frequent voluntary risk factors of infections. Focusing on alcohol, the suggested tool is the alcohol use disorders identification test. The sensitivity and specificity of the test (92% and 93%, respectively) are very high; this fact allows identifying patients affected by hazardous/harmful consumption\(^8\).

These subjects should be identified and subjected to anti COVID-19 vaccination as part of the strategy to address the COVID-19 pandemic\(^9,10\). It is therefore mandatory to include these patients in the category of frail subjects.

Conflict of Interest
The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

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