

# **Cognitive Bias Modification in Alcohol Addiction Treatment (‘BreinDeBaas’): Exploring the moderating effects of drinking motives and the participants’ subjective experiences**

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Summary of B.Sc. Thesis

Research showed that the online Cognitive Bias Modification (CBM) Training can revise implicit approaching drives towards alcohol. However, there are mixed findings of the CBM effectiveness in different settings. The primary aim of this study was to (1) investigate the online CBM Alcohol Avoidance Training effect additional to treatment as usual (TAU) in an outpatient treatment setting. Furthermore, (2) drinking motives were examined as potential moderators, and (3) participants’ subjective experiences were gathered. 139 clients receiving outpatient TAU for their alcohol-related problems, were randomly allocated to the Alcohol Avoidance Training or Placebo condition. The trial started in 2014 and consisted of 8 training sessions, occurring between a pre- and post-assessment, with follow up studies after respectively 3 and 6 months. No significant effect of the Alcohol Avoidance Training as a supplement to TAU could be detected; however, alcohol consumption did drop in both conditions equally. Furthermore, both the coping depression and social drinking motive did not act as significant moderators. According to the experiences of the participants, the most experienced concern was a questioned purpose of the Training. Based on that, participants gave suggestions such as giving more explanations and including more variety of tasks and drinks. In contrast, the most indicated positive aspect was that the participants experienced the Training as helpful. Results were discussed in terms of implications of the Alcohol Avoidance Training. As the Training did not lead to more reduced alcohol consumption than the Placebo version, the CBT based TAU proved to be active on its own. Also, the treatment setting (outpatient versus inpatient) might have played a role in the nonsignificant effect. Concerning the two drinking motives, further influencing aspects, like age and severity of alcohol use disorder (AUD), should be indicated to explain and evaluate the non-moderating effects. Following, future applications of the Training could approach more specific target groups. According to the subjective experiences of the participants, it is suggested to give more in-depth explanations concerning the purpose, to change the procedure into a more varied Training, and to include more personalized drink options.