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EVALUATION OF THE THERAPEUTIC POTENTIAL OF AYAHUASCA IN THE TREATMENT OF ALCOHOL DEPENDENCE IN AN EXPERIMENTAL MODEL

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Background: The problem of alcoholism perpetuates from antiquity, it was from the eighteenth century that for the first time, England identified the excessive consumption of alcohol as a widespread problem of public health. Over the years this theme has been well studied and can be observed the global impact it generates in terms of care and financial. The pharmacological options for the treatment of alcoholism are restricted, and naltrexone, an opioid antagonist, is the most used, especially in the case of severe addiction. However, not all patients respond to treatment, which requires the investigation of new therapeutic options. Ayahuasca is a psychoactive drink used in rituals of indigenous tribes. This drink is prepared by the firing of *Banisteriopsis caapi* stems, which contains β -carbolines that are inhibitors of monoamine oxidase (MAO), an enzyme that degrades the neurotransmitter serotonin (5HT), and leaves of *Psychotria viridis*, which contains the N,N-dimethyltryptamine (DMT) entheogen, a potent 5HT_{2A} receptor agonist.

Objective: The objective of this study evaluates the therapeutic potential of ayahuasca in the treatment of alcohol dependence in Wistar rats.

Methods: For the execution of the experiment, the IA2BC protocol (intermittent access to 2-bottle choice) was used to induce alcoholism in the animals for seven weeks and then received treatments for five days.

Results: The IA2BC protocol was shown to induce a gradual increase in voluntary alcohol intake, leaving the animals addicted. Alcohol consumption by the animals showed that both the naltrexone group and the 1X ayahuasca group had lower alcohol consumption than the placebo H₂O group.

Conclusion: The decrease in alcohol consumption by treated animals shows the efficiency of the drug naltrexone (positive control) and ayahuasca 1X.

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