

9. W/w leki mogą być szczególnie przydatne nie tylko w leczeniu osób uzależnionych od alkoholu, ale i pijących w sposób szkodliwy.

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## Strategies and drugs used for preventing alcohol relapse and reducing alcohol consumption rates

### Summary

The paper presents a critical review of major strategies and drugs used to prevent relapse in alcoholics and to reduce the amount of alcohol consumed. Particular attention was paid to acamprosate and to drugs of differentiated affinity for serotonergic receptors. The following conclusions can be drawn from the overview of the literature and the author's experiences:

The majority of clinical studies have methodological flaws, such as small samples, too short duration of the observation period, non-homogeneous groups of alcohol dependent persons, simultaneous treatment with psychological methods, defining sobriety by too strict criteria, etc. The more correct is the study from the viewpoint of methodological requirements, the less effective is the medication under study. None of the pharmaceuticals studied so far can cure alcohol dependence, but some of them can prolong the abstinence period and reduce the alcohol consumption rate. Generally, the reported improvement is statistically significant, even if changes in the indices studied range from a few to about 50%. Negative findings obtained in some studies should not discourage from continuing the research, since some drugs may be more effective if administered in appropriate doses and to appropriately matched patient groups. Current „anti-craving” drugs are usually of low toxicity and do not produce any dangerous interactions with alcohol. The „anti-craving” drugs seem to be a valuable supplementation to other treatments of alcohol dependence. The drugs in question may be particularly useful not only in the treatment of alcohol dependent persons, but also of those drinking in a harmful way.

**Key words:** alcoholism\ pharmacological relapse prevention\ anti-craving drugs

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