



Social Motives Impact on Alcohol Use

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Alcohol Use Disorder

Alcohol use disorder is categorized as a problematic pattern of alcohol use behavior consisting of overuse and failure to decrease use. As a result, the individual exhibits impairment in daily functioning. When the person tries to cut down the amount of alcohol that they consume they begin to experience withdrawal symptoms such as shakiness, sweating, and nausea (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). A standard drink is (12 oz of beer, 5 oz of wine, or 1.5 oz of 80-proof liquor) contains 14 g of ethanol. A person is at risk of developing an alcohol use disorder when they drink an excessive amount of alcohol per week. For men it is an average of 15 or more standard drinks per week or 5 or more on an occasion. For women it is 8 or more drinks weekly or 4 or more on an occasion for women. It is estimated that almost 16 million people in the United States have alcohol use disorder (AUD). Approximately 6.2 percent or 15.1 million adults in the United States ages 18 and older had AUD in 2015. 9.8 million of these adults were men and 5.3 million were women (Friedmann, 2013). Groups that is was present in the most were women, older adults, racial/ethnic minorities, and the socioeconomically disadvantage (Grant et al., 2017).

Social Motives

Social motives are characterized by an individual trying to achieve a desired goal and it influences how they act around others. For example, someone might drink due to social pressure. They also might drink because they believe that the effects of alcohol will make the party more enjoyable. When the individual achieves the desired goal without any negative consequences, they may continue to do the same act over and over again as a result of receiving positive reinforcement (Cho et al., 2016).



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ABSTRACT

This literature review examines the relationship between social motives and alcohol use. Social motives are characterized by an individual trying to achieve a desired goal and it influences how they act around others. For example, someone might drink due to social pressure. Alcohol use disorder is when a person drinks a significant amount of alcohol consistently and is unable to cut down the amount that they use. As a result, the individual exhibits impairment in daily functioning. There is evidence that suggests young adults may start to drink to become part of social groups. When they become part of social groups, they may learn through positive reinforcement to continue to drink so that they stay connected with them. There is also evidence that suggests that high school students and college students who are socially motivated may drink more heavily than others. Based on the current literature, it may be beneficial to examine the effect of social motives for intervention programs



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Findings

When examining the role of social motives in alcohol use, some researchers hypothesized that individuals in high school and in college may start to drink to become part of social groups. (Corbin, Iwamoto, & Fromme, 2011). Social groups, friends, are more important to a person than more distant ones such as a stranger. A person may drink to socialize and maximize social enjoyment with them (Halim, Hasking, & Allen, 2012). Once they become a part of the social group, the person may learn through positive reinforcement to continue to drink as a way for them to stay connected with their friends (Corbin, Iwamoto, & Fromme, 2011). This can cause them to consume an excessive amount of alcohol in a short amount of time (Cho et al., 2016). 26 participants (69%) referred to interpersonally-based reasons for drinking behavior including drinking in order to socialize. One-third of the participants (34%) reported drinking to raise disinhibition, which would facilitate greater interpersonal risk taking. As they believed drinking would make them to talk to people more easily, look more appealing, and be more outgoing (Dupree, Magill, & Apodaca, 2016). When a person drinks an excessive amount of alcohol all the time it can cause them to have health problems. One health problem that is at risk of increasing is a stroke, specifically hemorrhagic stroke. One study compared individuals who drank heavily to those who did not drink, and they found that individuals who drink heavily have a higher mortality rate compared to those who do not drink (Patra et al., 2010).

Implications

Alcohol use disorder is an issue that is continuing to rise. From 2001–2002 to 2012–2013 there was an increase in alcohol consumption among U.S. adults. It increased from 65.4% in 2001–2002 to 72.7% in 2012–2013 (Dawson, 2015). These numbers will continue to rise unless we do something to prevent it.

One thing that doctors can do is screen patients annually for alcohol use disorder. They can then suggest doing an intervention if individual meets the criteria for being at risk for alcohol use disorder or if they have an alcohol use disorder. The intervention would specially focus on social motives (Van Damme et al., 2013). Another thing that people could do is set up prevention programs. These programs would help people learn that there is other ways to socialize and still achieve their desired goals. The programs would utilize alcohol free social activities (Corbin, Iwamoto, & Fromme, 2011).



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