Abstract

This study assessed the relationship between alcohol use and alcohol related problems as mediated by social support. Social support as well as experiencing negative alcohol related consequences have shown to predict positive drinking outcomes for people with alcohol use disorders. We hypothesized that average number of drinks per week would predict alcohol related problems as measured by the Short Inventory of Problems (SIP+6). Additionally, we predicted the relationship between average number of drinks per week and alcohol related problems would be mediated by perceived social support. Injured patients (n=3481, Average Employment as a mediator Relationship Methodist (Dallas, TX)

Excessive alcohol use and risks to men’s health.

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Davis, Olson

alcohol consumption.

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30 days (2015).

What’s the harm?

Research has found alcohol abuse to be among the top 20 leading causes of premature death and disability in the United States and is considered a public burden. The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism has defined heavy drinking as drinking five or more drinks on the same occasion on each of five or more days in the past 30 days (2015).

How much is too much?

The primary aim of the present study was to investigate if social support is one mechanism that affects alcohol use and alcohol related problems. We conducted a path analysis with the following predictions in mind:

1. Average number of drinks per week will predict alcohol related problems as measured by the Short Inventory of Problems.
2. Relationship between average number of drinks per week and alcohol related problems will be mediated by perceived social support.

Method

Procedure

The analyses for the present study consists of 595 participants that were recruited from three urban level I trauma centers:

1. Baylor University Medical Center (BUMC; Dallas, TX)
2. Methodist (Dallas, TX)
3. University Medical Center Brackenridge (UMCB; Austin, TX).

All participants who were over the age of 18 (M = 34.79 ± 12.39) and were treated for unintentional injuries such as motor vehicle collisions and falls or intentional or violence-related injuries such as gunshot wounds, stab wounds, and other injuries related to assaults were eligible for inclusion in the study and were included in the analysis (Field et al., 2009).

Measures

The measures are as follow:

Social Support: An adapted version of the Important People and Activities Instrument that assesses the person’s involvement in their social network and activities, and the support of the social network and activities of the person’s drinking and abstinence (Clifford & Longbaugh, 1991).

• To what extent is ______ generally supportive of you, by being sensitive to your personal needs, helping you to think about things, solve problems, and by giving you the moral support you need? (adapted version of the Important People and Activities Instrument)

Alcohol Use - The variable of alcohol use was assessed by the Timeline Follow-back Measure (Dawson, Grant, & Li, 2005). Alcohol use was measured by the average number of drinks per week.

Short Inventory of Problems- Measures negative consequences of alcohol use and is composed of six subscales that assess different domains. The constructs that the SIP+6 measures are: physical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, social responsibility, impulsive and injury (Field, Caetano, Harris, Frankowski, Roudsari, 2009; Soderstrom, DiClemente, Dischinger, Hebel, McDuff, Auerman, & Kufera, 2007).

Hypotheses

Results

One hundred and forty participants were female (N=144) and the remaining were male (N=455). The majority of the participants self-identified as White (44 %). The remaining participants self-identified as Latino (26.2 %), Black (27.3 %), 2.6 %, and other (2.5 %).

We conducted a series of path analyses to assess if perceived social support mediated the relationship between average number of drinks per week and alcohol related problems. Additionally, below we provided model fit statistics.

Path 1: Average number of drinks per week as a predictor of alcohol related problems, \( t(594) = 4.32, p = 0.00 \)

Path 2: Social support as a mediator of the relationship between average number of drinks per week and alcohol related problems.

Discussion

Results revealed that average number of drinks per week predicted SIP+6 scores such that more drinks per week consumed led to patients experiencing more alcohol related problems. Additionally, social support was directly related to alcohol related problems. However, social support did not mediate the relationship between alcohol use and alcohol related problems.

In conclusion, patients with higher levels of perceived social support may experience more alcohol related problems due to possible feedback from members of their social support system urging them to reduce their alcohol use. Thus, future studies may want to further investigate different types of social support and how this can be applied to interventions.

References

[References provided in the document]

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