The Relationship between Perceived Stress and Distress Intolerance on Alcohol Consumption

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INTRODUCTION

• Research shows increased consumption of alcohol among adolescents.¹
• Increased consumption of alcohol is related to an increase in other risky behaviors.²
• Need exists to examine predictors of alcohol consumption to identify preventative treatments.
• Studies have examined predictors of a variety of risk-taking behaviors and established the importance of perceived stress.³
• There remains a gap in research regarding not just how one perceives stress but their ability to tolerate that distress, particularly with early emerging risk behaviors such as alcohol consumption.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

• To examine the relationships between distress intolerance and perceived control and how they affect alcohol consumption.
• We hypothesized that greater distress intolerance and higher levels of perceived stress would be associated with higher levels of alcohol consumption.

METHODS

Participants
• 176 community adolescents
• 58.3% male, Mean age = 16 (SD = 1.70)
• 54.6% White, 40.2% Black, 5.2% Other

Measures
• Perceived Stress Scale-Perceived Stress
• Behavioral Indicatory of Resiliency to Distress (BIRD)- Distress Intolerance
• Youth Risk Behavior Questionnaire- Alcohol Consumption

RESULTS

• Table 1 shows means and standard deviations for the outcome variable (alcohol consumption) and predictor variables (perceived stress and distress intolerance).
• Table 2 shows the hierarchical regression analysis calculated to test the hypothesis that lower levels of distress tolerance and higher levels of perceived stress would predict increased alcohol consumption. In summary, the table shows that only increased levels of distress intolerance was a significant predictor of increased alcohol consumption (B = .23, p < .05).

Table 1
Means and Standard Deviations for Predictor and Outcome Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol Consumption</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Stress</td>
<td>15.98</td>
<td>6.32</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distress Intolerance</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2
Hierarchical Regression Predicting Alcohol Consumption

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>R²∆</th>
<th>F</th>
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<tr>
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<td>.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>.036</td>
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<td>.05</td>
<td>3.22*</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distress Intolerance</td>
<td>.23*</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. n = 176, *p < .05.

DISCUSSION

• Results showed that only distress intolerance was related to an increase in alcohol consumption.
• Implies that alcohol consumption has little to do with how one perceives their own stress.
• Future interventions should target distress intolerance in order to prevent increased alcohol consumption.
• One limitation is the cross-sectional design.
• Another limitation was that self-report measures were used to measure perceived stress and alcohol consumption which introduces potential error.
• Future research should explore different measures for perceived stress and distress tolerance.
• Future research should also examine influences of variables longitudinally.

REFERENCES


FURTHER INFORMATION

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