

Positive and Negative Urgency Predict Problematic Alcohol Consumption for Subjects with Positive Family History of Alcohol Dependency

Alyssa M. Lopossa, Allyson L. Dir, and Melissa A. Cyders

Department of Psychology, School of Science, IUPUI, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis

Impulsivity is an established predictor of alcohol use outcomes and thus is an important construct to investigate (Clark, Vanyukov & Cornelius 2002; Dawes, Tarter & Kirisci 1997; Dick et al. 2010). Impulsivity is a multi-faceted trait, which includes multiple dispositions toward rash action including positive and negative urgency (acting rashly in response to extreme positive and negative emotional states, respectively; Cyders & Smith, 2007), which appear to be the impulsivity-related traits most highly associated with problematic alcohol use (Coskunpinar et al., under review). Furthermore, a family history of alcoholism predicts higher alcohol use in offspring of alcoholics, although this relationship is inconsistent (Dick et al. 2010), suggesting a moderator, perhaps PUR/NUR, which might change the effect of family history on problematic alcohol use. 68 undergraduates (33% male, mean age = 25), 34 of which were family history positive for problematic alcohol consumption, completed the UPPS-P Impulsive Behavioral Scale (UPPS-P), the Alcohol Use Disorders Test (AUDIT) and a family history questionnaire. Multiple regression analyses and independent t-tests were used to test study hypotheses: (1) those with a family history of alcoholism (FHP) would have higher levels of NUR and PUR and (2) the relationship between these traits and AUDIT would be moderated by family history. Those with a positive family history of alcoholism (FHP) are significantly higher in PUR than those without a family history of alcoholism (FHN) ($t = 1.523$, $p < .134$), although the groups did not differ on NUR or AUDIT. There was a marginally significant interaction between NUR and family history (Beta = 2.958, $p < .040$), with a positive relationship between NUR and AUDIT only for those who are FHP. There was no significant interaction with PUR. These findings suggest that genetic differences in problematic alcohol use could be driven in part by the urgency traits.

Mentors: Melissa A. Cyders, Department of Psychology, School of Science, IUPUI; Allyson L. Dir, Department of Psychology, School of Science, IUPUI