

Bianca Jones, Psychology

University: Hampton University

Year in School: Senior

Hometown: Amherst, VA

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Denis McCarthy, Psychology

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Family and peer modeling of alcohol use in African American college students

Bianca Jones and Denis McCarthy

Family influences on alcohol consumption have received considerable research attention. However relatively little research has examined this aspect of the alcoholism risk process for African Americans. This study tested whether familial influences on participant drinking differed as a function of socioeconomic status. The study sample consisted of 141 African American college students (mean age = 21.89, SD = 1.24; 41% male). The association between participant report of family drinking (father, mother, sibling), peer drinking and personal drinking levels were tested. Next, tests were ran to determine whether these associations differed by socioeconomic status. Results indicated that mother, sibling, and peer drinking were associated with participant drinking, but father drinking and socioeconomic status were not. There was evidence for moderation, with socioeconomic status having a greater impact on participant drinking for those reporting high maternal drinking. These results highlight the need for more complex models to test the effect of contextual factors, such as family drinking and socioeconomic status on alcohol use.