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Validity of the lifetime drinking history: A comparison of retrospective and prospective quantity-frequency measures

Laura B. Koenig

Theodore Jacob

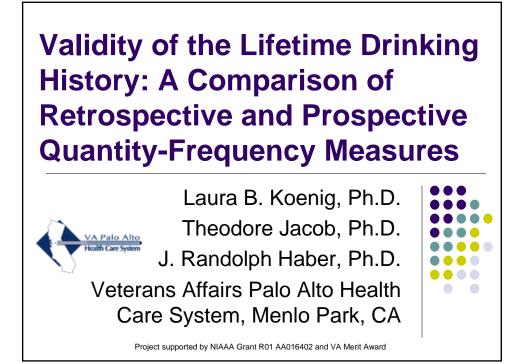
J. Randolph Haber

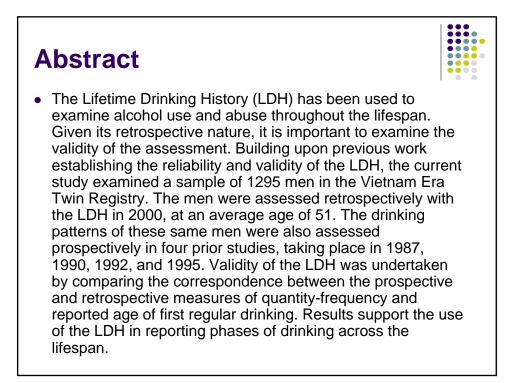
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- The Lifetime Drinking History (LDH; Jacob, 1998; Skinner & Sheu, 1982) is a retrospective interview used to identify patterns of alcohol use, abuse, and dependence beginning with the onset of regular drinking and ending with the individual's current drinking pattern.
 - Patterns of drinking are constructed in terms of drinking phases, where a phases are defined in terms of changes in quantity or frequency of drinking.
- Past research has supported the psychometric properties of the LDH.
 - high test-retest correlations (Chaikelson et al., 1994; Jacobs et al., 2006; Lemmens et al., 1997; Sobell et al., 1988)
 - strong correlations with other measures of alcohol use (Skinner & Schuller, 1982; Skinner & Sheu, 1982)

- No research has been done, however, examining retrospective assessments from the LDH with prospective assessments of alcohol use.
- The current study contrasted reports from four prospective assessments of drinking (in years 1987, 1990, 1992, and 1995) with the retrospective information given by the same individuals for the same years using the LDH in 2000. These comparisons focused on two major drinking domains: age at first regular drinking and quantity-frequency of alcohol consumption.



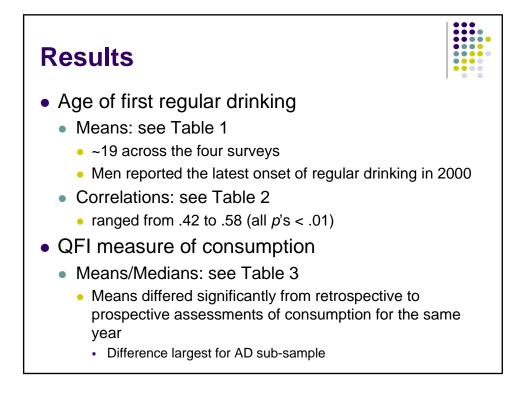


Sample

- Men from the Family Twin Study: a study of twins and their children (Jacob et al., 2003)
 - 1295 twins, 420 of which had a lifetime diagnosis of alcohol dependence
 - Average age in 2000 = 51 years
 - Drawn from the Vietnam Era Twin (VET) Registry (Eisen et al., 1987; Henderson et al., 1990) and associated data collections
- Assessments
 - Age of first regular drinking
 - Asked in 1987, 1992, 1995, and 2000
- Quantity-Frequency Index of consumption • QFI = (number of days drank per month) x (usual number of drinks on days drank) Prospectively assessed in 1987, 1990, 1992, and 1995 Retrospectively assessed in 2000 using the Lifetime Drinking History (LDH) Allows for a retrospective description of alcohol use and abuse across the entire life course Therefore, if an individual was 38 when reporting in 1987, his reported QFI can be compared to the QFI from the LDH which corresponds to age 38 Analyses Age of first regular drinking • Mean differences tested by t-tests after an omnibus ANOVA Correlations between all ages given between all years



- Retrospective-prospective mean differences tested by ttests for 1987, 1990, 1992, and 1995
- Retrospective-prospective median differences tested by Wilcoxon Signed Rank test for each year
- Correlations assessed rank-order stability
 - Because of skewness to data, scores were first transformed (In(QFI+1))



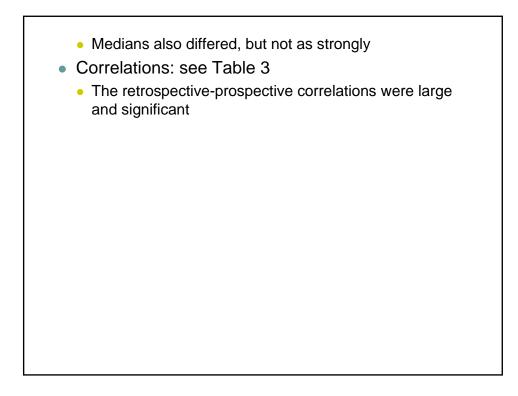


Table 1. Age of First Regular Drinking

	All Regular Drinkers				42	420 Lifetime AD Drinkers				
Assessment	N Mean SD Ra		Range	N	Mean	SD	Range			
1987	1030	19.3ª	3.0	9-37	402	19.0ª	3.1	9-37		
1992	1179	18.2 ^b	2.7	5-38	416	17.6 ^b	2.6	9-35		
1995	772	19.4 ^a	3.3	9-50	329	18.9 ^a	3.0	9-37		
2000	1094	20.1°	4.7	5-53	415	19.2ª	3.4	5-38		

....

Note. Means with the same superscripts are not significantly different from one another at p < .01. The 1995 survey did not ask respondents about age of first regular drinking. Men reporting never having started regular drinking were not included. AD = Alcohol Dependence diagnosis.

Table 2. Correlations between Age of First Regular Drinking Across Four Datasets.

	1987	1992	1995	2000
987		.49 N=401	.52 N=319	.49 N=399
992	.45 N=1009		.58 N=328	.54 N=411
95	.42 N=714	.51 N=765		.55 N=326
000	.42 N=970	.45 N=1065	.52 N=738	

Note. All correlations significant at p < .01. Correlations for the entire sample are below the diagonal, while correlations for the 420 lifetime AD cases are above the diagonal. Men reporting never having started regular drinking were not included.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics andCorrelations for Prospective andRetrospective Assessments of QFI.

	I	Prospectiv	e Report	S	R	Retrospective Reports				
Year	N	Median	Mean	SD	N	Median	Mean	SD	r ^ş	
Entire Sample										
1987*	1222	8.6	31.8	51.3	1290	8.0	37.8	69.5	.58	
1990	1183	6.5	30.2	54.0	1201	8.0	33.5	64.6	.63	
1992*†	1295	4.3	22.3	46.3	1291	6.0	34.0	67.3	.63	
1995*	858	5.0	26.3	50.0	858	6.0	34.0	66.1	.69	
Non-AD Sample										
1987	809	0.0	25.6	43.3	870	4.5	20.9	41.0	.57	
1990†	798	6.5	23.1	41.0	810	4.0	19.5	39.1	.62	

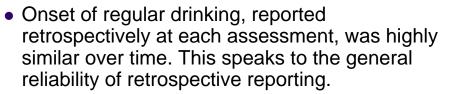
1992*†	875	0.0	15.9	33.0	871	4.0	20.1	41.3	.60	
1995	518	4.0	22.0	41.9	517	6.0	22.0	39.2	.69	
Lifetime AD Sample										
1987*†	413	17.2	43.9	62.5	420	30.0	72.9	97.7	.57	
1990*†	385	12.9	44.9	71.8	391	24.0	62.7	91.8	.63	
1992*†	420	8.6	35.5	63.8	420	16.0	62.9	95.7	.66	
1995*†	340	6.0	32.9	59.8	341	8.0	52.2	90.1	.69	
	0.10	0.0	02.0	0010	÷	0.0			.50	

*p <= .001, when comparing retrospective to prospective mean

 $\dagger p < .01$, when comparing retrospective to prospective median

§ The correlations between retrospective LDH and prospective assessment scores were calculated using natural log-transformed scores. All correlations were significant at p < .01.

Conclusions



 For QFI, there was high rank-order correspondence between the prospective reports and the retrospective LDH reports. The mean differences were significant, especially for problem drinkers, who reported drinking more when being assessed retrospectively.

- While an individual's reports of the amount of alcohol consumed may be biased in the retrospective reports, there is still high consistency in reporting low, medium, or high levels of consumption.
- The current study supports the use of the LDH in identifying individuals with alcohol problems and following increases and decreases in alcohol use over time.

