Associations Between Mindfulness and Problematic Alcohol Use

V. Correa-Fernandez, Ph.D.[1]; A. Broyles, B.A.[1]; L. Strong, Ph.D.[4]; W. Heppner, Ph.D.[3];Y. Castro, Ph.D.[2];

[1]University of Houston, [2]University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, [3]Georgia College & State University, [4]University of Texas Austin

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Background

- Latino individuals show similar rates of alcohol use compared to Non-Latinos, but have a higher likelihood of alcohol-related injuries or fatalities.

- Latino populations have higher rates of alcohol-attributable car crash injuries, emergency room visits, and homicides.

- Understanding psychosocial factors related to alcohol use may help address disparities.

- Trait mindfulness has been identified as a protective factor against alcohol use behaviors in the general population.

- Little research has focused on this association in Latino samples.

1

Present Study

Research Question:
- Is trait mindfulness associated with problematic alcohol use in a sample of Latino adults?

Hypothesis:
- Low levels of trait mindfulness will be associated with high levels of problematic alcohol use

2

Methods

Participants:
- Bilingual Latino residents of the greater Houston area (N=140). Data was obtained from Project REAL.

Measures:
- *Mindfulness-* Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ)
(Five Facets: Observe, Describe, Act with Awareness, Nonjudge, & Nonreact)

- *Alcohol-* Alcohol Use Disorder Identification Test (AUDIT)

3

Analyses

- Linear and logistic regressions

- Analyses adjusted by age, gender, years of education, partner status, and employment status

- Post hoc analyses examining the association of each facet of mindfulness with problematic alcohol use

4

Results

Adjusted Linear Regression Analysis for Mindfulness Predicting Problematic Alcohol Use[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients
	B	Std. Error	Beta
Age	.031	.036	.083
Gender	2.695	.822	0.300*
Years of Education	.183	.170	.101
Partner Status	-.314	.865	-.033
Employment Status	-.299	.815	-.034
FFMQ Total	-.053	.024	-0.207*

a. Notes: R-squared: .131 (*$p < .05$)

Among those who indicated prior alcohol use:

- Low trait mindfulness was significantly associated with high AUDIT scores ($p<0.05$), indicating problematic alcohol use

- Low scores on "Act with Awareness" facet of mindfulness were associated with high AUDIT scores

- Low scores on "Act with Awareness" were also associated with higher odds of meeting criteria for heavy drinking

5

Conclusions

- Findings contribute to literature linking mindfulness and health risk behaviors, specifically alcohol.

- Low trait mindfulness may be an important factor in problematic alcohol use in Latinos.

- Mindfulness-based interventions, which focus on staying mindful and "in the present", may help reduce problematic alcohol use.

- Interventions focused on promoting acting with awareness may be particularly effective in Latino populations.

- Future research should explore the potential efficacy of this type of intervention in a sample of Latinos who indicate problematic levels of alcohol use.

6

References

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7

Acknowledgements

Project REAL

8

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