

ADULT ATTACHMENT DYNAMICS AS A PREDICTOR OF DAILY ALCOHOL USE AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP FUNCTIONING

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ABSTRACT

Alcohol use in romantic relationships can have positive and negative effects. Previous research suggests that these effects are bidirectional, and dependent on whether partners drink together vs. apart, and the drinker's gender. However, little is known about how these processes differ across people. One individual difference relevant to how people behave in relationships and how they regulate their emotional experience is adult romantic attachment. The current study therefore used an existing database in which both members of 69 couples completed measures of attachment orientation, and provided daily reports of alcohol use, and relationship functioning for a period of 3 weeks to examine the complex interplay among individual differences in attachment and patterns of daily alcohol use and relationship functioning. Results showed a complex picture of effects that were often dependent on multiple factors. Although insecure attachment styles were generally found to have adverse effects on relationship functioning, alcohol use, and the reciprocal associations between them, as expected, the magnitude and direction of effects depended on factors such as the similarity of attachment styles between partners, whether partners drank together vs. apart, and the gender of the drinker. Implications for attachment theory and future research are discussed.