A MULTI-METHOD ANALYSIS OF THE ACQUIRED PREPAREDNESS MODEL OF RISK FOR ALCOHOL PROBLEMS

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ABSTRACT

The acquired preparedness model (APM) integrates both general risk factors and alcohol-related cognitive factors to understand the development of alcohol use and its associated problems. The present project utilized an innovative multi-method approach (self-report questionnaires and event-related potential [ERP] techniques) to conduct a more comprehensive and in-depth analysis of the APM. Participants were 137 young adult (M = 22 years old, SD = 3, 59% female) social drinkers recruited from a Midwest college town. Self-report measures assessed reward sensitivity (general risk factor) and alcohol outcome expectancies (cognitive factor). The P3 component of the ERP was recorded while participants responded to infrequent normal- and rotated-head oddball targets (general risk factor) and while they viewed infrequent, alcohol cues (cognitive factor). Consistent with previous research, results indicated a significant indirect path from reward hypersensitivity to drinking frequency through more positive expectancies about alcohol’s effects. Positive alcohol expectancies were also found to mediate the influence of reward hypersensitivity on substance use problems, suggesting that the acquisition of more positive alcohol expectancies may reflect the formation of more positive drug-relate expectancies. A significant mediation effect for negative expectancies on the association between reward hypersensitivity and alcohol-related problems was observed. Common method variance had a marked impact on the results of mediation analyses for involving the P3 component. These findings point to the importance of accounting for method effects to reduce the likelihood of spurious results and misspecification of theoretical models.