

Public Abstract

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Title:Socioeconomic Status and Adolescent Alcohol Involvement: Evidence for a Gene-Environment Interaction

Adolescent alcohol use patterns are the result of both genetic and environmental influences. Genetic and environmental factors can also interact with each other to decrease or increase risk for alcohol use. Socioeconomic status (SES) is one environmental factor that might interact with genetic risk for alcohol use. Two theories exist for understanding how SES might interact with genetic risk: 1) the social control model (Shanahan & Hofer, 2005) and 2) the diathesis stress model (South et al., 2015). The current study examined both family social status and financial resources as factors that might interact with a person's genetic risk for alcohol use using data from the 1962 National Merit Twin Study. Results suggested that a low SES environment might interact with genetic risk to produce an increased genetic vulnerability for alcohol use. These findings suggest that the influences on alcohol involvement vary as a function of an adolescent's socioeconomic status. This could be important for interventions targeting those who are doubly at risk for alcohol use--both genetically and environmentally.