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The association between coping-motivated drinking and alcohol-related consequences.

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Background: College students' alcohol use is an important topic of research. Past research indicates that people who drink to cope are at a higher risk for alcohol-related consequences compared to other drinking motives (i.e., enhancement, social, or conformity motives). This project aims to analyze drinking motives, specifically the subscales of coping-anxiety motives and coping-depressive motives, and their association with alcohol-related consequences in a unique population. In addition, the moderating effects of stress will be tested.

Methods: The data for this project was collected through a survey that was given to students (N=176) at the University of Missouri – St. Louis. Participants were eligible if they reported drinking in the past four weeks and were compensated with SONA extra credit or entry into a raffle for a \$20 gift card. To test the relationship between coping-anxiety and coping-depressive motives and alcohol-related consequences, we conducted a negative binomial regression using R version 4.1.3 and the packages “foreign” and “MASS”.

Results: Greater coping-anxiety motives were associated with a reduced number of alcohol-related consequences (IRR = 0.939, CI = [0.888, 0.994], $p = .029$) while coping-depressive motives were associated with experiencing more alcohol-related consequences (IRR = 1.065, CI = [1.001, 1.132], $p = .047$). Stress did not moderate these relationships.

Discussion: Our findings for coping-depressive motives are congruent with previous findings while coping-anxiety motives run contrary to previous research. This may indicate that coping with feelings of depression are particularly salient for understanding drinking consequences for students at UMSL. This project tested the effects of drinking motives on outcomes, but it is possible that experiencing consequences may shape individuals' beliefs and motives about drinking. Future research should examine trajectories of drinking motives from consequences experienced so that we may better understand who is at-risk for long-term, repeated drinking-related consequences.