

Summarizing evidence in drinking motive research – A systematic review and a meta-analysis

Summary

Current state of research: Explaining up to 50% of the variance in young people's drinking, several studies have demonstrated that drinking motives are among the most proximate factors for alcohol use and constitute a gateway through which more distal influences are mediated. In the last decade, a variety of research initiatives have sought to better understand the impact of drinking motives in various domains. These various initiatives have been highly influenced by a comprehensive theoretical model (Cox & Klinger, 1988), a 4-dimensional measurement instrument (Cooper, 1994) and an overview of empirical research (Kuntsche, Knibbe, Gmel & Engels, 2005). Despite the bulk of resulting evidence, up to now, no attempt has been made to systematically summarize the more recent evidence qualitatively and quantitatively in a way using state-of-the-art criteria.

Objectives: The aim of the proposed study is to conduct a comprehensive qualitative and quantitative overview of results on drinking motives and associated outcomes published in the last 10 years (i.e., from beginning of 2003 until end of 2012). The former will be done as a systematic literature review focusing on recent developments and emerging topics in the field, while the latter will use meta-analysis to quantify empirical findings on motives and drinking patterns, alcohol-related negative consequences and other outcomes.

Methods of investigation and data to be collected: Adhering to the PRISMA statement (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff & Altman, 2009), to the Standards for Systematic Reviews (Eden, Levit, Berg & Morton, 2011) and to recommendations of the Cochrane Collaboration (Higgins & Green, 2011), a systematic review and a meta-analysis will be conducted following a six-step procedure: (1) organization of the process and the review team, (2) development and publication of the review protocol, (3) computer-assisted literature search, (4) quality assessment of identified studies, (5) summary and discussion of the findings using both qualitative (systematic review) and quantitative (meta-analytic) methods, (6) writing of two manuscripts and submission to open-access peer-reviewed international journals.

Expected value: The standards to be applied in the proposed study will ensure the objectivity and quality of the review. Supported by a meta-analysis, the review will characterize the strength of the evidence in the area of drinking motives. Such objective methods are essential in producing scientifically valid, transparent, reliable, and reproducible results on which scientists, clinicians, policy makers and others can rely in their research initiatives and decision making. The proposed study will also facilitate and contribute (1) to provide important information about the strength of relationships between drinking motives and alcohol-related and non-related outcomes across studies by means of meta-analysis, which can help to better gauge the importance of drinking motives for inclusion in future research, prevention/treatment activities, and public health initiatives; (2) to provide a comprehensive and up-to-date systematic overview of the use of drinking motives in current research and prevention activities in a scientifically valid, transparent, reliable and reproducible way; (3) to summarize recent developments and emerging topics in drinking motive research intended to further stimulate research, prevention, and intervention considerations and activities.

Dissemination strategies: Besides publication of two articles, the findings will be presented at an international scientific conference. It is also our firm intention to inform the general public of our findings by translating them into press releases or brochures to ensure their wider circulation.