

Alcohol Use and Living Environment: The Relations among College Hispanic Women

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Introduction

- Studies show that young adults between the ages of 18-24 have the highest rates of alcohol use, as well as the greatest percentage for problem drinkers (Kandel & Logan, 1984; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1997; Hingson et al., 2005).
- It has been found that occasional heavy drinking is higher in females in college than their counterparts who are not in college, with 34% for college females versus 29% for noncollege females (Monitoring the Future, 2006).

Alcohol Use and Gender

- Female students are at high risk for problem drinking because of
 - biological differences in the metabolism of alcohol (Perkins, 2002).
 - changing gender norms (Rahav et al., 2006).
- Changes in drinking norms may indicate that college women may be becoming more alike to their male counterparts in terms of alcohol use and alcohol-related problems (Ham & Hope, 2003).

Binge Drinking and Negative Consequences

- Binge drinking is defined as the consumption of at least five standard drinks in a row for men or four drinks in a row for women (Wechsler, Dowdall, Davenport, & Rimm, 1995).
- Binge drinkers were more likely than other students to experience alcohol-related problems (Wechsler, Lee, Kuo, & Lee, 2000; Wechsler et al., 1995).
- Alcohol use may be especially risky for women as research has indicated that alcohol use increases the risk of college women of being victims of sexual assault (Parks & Stewart, 2004; Corbin et al. 2001; Testa et al., 2006).

Alcohol Use and Ethnicity

- Alcohol consumption and binge drinking among Hispanic students may fall somewhere between alcohol consumption by White and African American students (Clements, 1999).
- McCabe 2002 found that being a Hispanic woman was associated with more frequent heavy episodic drinking when compared to being a Hispanic man.

Alcohol Use and Living Environment

- One of the factors that may contribute to alcohol consumption is the living environment (Martin & Hoffman, 1993).
 - Students living in substance-free dormitories or off campus with their parents had the lowest rates of binge drinking and negative secondhand effects of alcohol use when compared to individuals living in dormitories that allow drinking, fraternities, sororities, and those living off campus without parents.
 - It may be that students who live at home with their parents are more affected by parental expectations about drinking than about their peer norms (Martin & Hoffman, 1993).

Drinking Refusal Self-Efficacy

- Drinking refusal self-efficacy is the ability to refuse alcohol in specific situations (Oei & Morawska, 2004; Lee & Oei, 1993).
- High frequency consumption has been found to be related to low drinking refusal self-efficacy, and that those with lower drinking refusal self-efficacy drink more frequently when given the opportunity to drink (Lee & Oei, 1993).
- Living with one's parents may increase drinking refusal self-efficacy, thereby reducing alcohol consumption (Oei & Morawska, 2004).

Hispanic Culture

- Familismo includes the need to preserve strong family ties, the expectation that the family will be the primary source of instrumental and emotional support, the feeling of loyalty to the family, and that family comes first over individual needs and desires (Negy & Woods, 1992).
- Hispanic familismo may explain the lower rate of alcohol consumption among college Hispanic women than Anglo-American female students (Halgunseth, Ispa, & Rudy, 2006).
- The impact of living with the family versus on campus may be even more powerful for Hispanic women than women of other ethnic backgrounds due to greater family involvement and monitoring.
- Caetano (1987) found that there was a relationship between acculturation and alcohol use.

The Current Study

- The purpose of the current study was to examine the relationship between living arrangements and drinking behaviors among female Hispanic college students.

Hypotheses

1. Female Hispanic college students would engage in less high risk drinking when living at home with parents and/or relatives, than those with non-familial living arrangements (i.e., living alone or with roommates on-campus or off-campus).
2. Students would report lower levels of alcohol dependency if living at home with parents and/or relatives than those who did not.
3. College Hispanic women would report a greater ability to resist alcohol if they live at home with parents and/or relatives compared to those students with non-familial living arrangements.

Participants

- 285 Hispanic women from FIU
- 17-26 years old, $M = 18.75$ ($SD = 1.38$)
- 31 participants did not live with family
- 254 participants did live with family

Measures

- Self-report measures
 - **Demographics sheets** included a question assessing the participants' current living situation. Living status was then separated into two categories: living with family and not living with family.
 - **Alcohol Use Disorder Identification Test (AUDIT)**; Babor, de la Fuente, Saunders, & Monteiro, 2001.
 - The AUDIT is a 10-item questionnaire that assesses hazardous drinking.
 - **Short Alcohol Dependence Data questionnaire (SADD)**; Raistrick, Dunbar, & Davidson, 1983.
 - The SADD is a 15-item measure that assesses the range of current state alcohol dependence.
 - **Drinking Refusal Self-Efficacy Questionnaire (DRSEQ)**; Young, Oei, & Crook, 1991.
 - It is a 31-item self-report instrument used to assess participants' beliefs about the ability to refuse alcohol across situations.

Procedures

- Participants volunteered for research participation.
- After reading and signing the informed consent forms, participants were asked to complete the questionnaires.
- Participants received class credit for participating in the study.

Results: Drinking Risk and Living Arrangement

- To test the hypothesis that female Hispanic college students would engage in less high risk drinking when living at home with parents and/or relatives, than those with non-familial living arrangements, a Pearson's Chi-square test with living status (living with parents/relatives vs. living alone or with a roommate on/off campus) and drinking risk status (high vs. low risk based on AUDIT cutoff score of 5; Reinert & Allen, 2007) was conducted.
- This test did not reveal a significant pattern of differences in living arrangements and drinking risk status, $\chi^2(1, N= 267) = 1.04, p= .31$.
- Participants living with family were just as likely to have the same drinking risk status as those that lived in non-familial arrangements.

Results: Drinking Risk and Living Arrangement

Chi-square for type of drinking risk and type of living arrangement

Level of Drinking Risk	Type of living arrangements		Total
	Not living with family	Living with family	
Low risk	18	164	182
High risk	12	73	85
Total	30	237	267

Note. Level of drinking risk based on a cutoff of 5 on the Alcohol Use Disorder Identification Test.

Results: Hazardous Drinking

- For hypothesis 1 a t-test with living status and the AUDIT total score was also conducted.
- The results were not statistically significant $t(265) = 1.50, p= .14$, indicating that the female Hispanic students residing with family members reported similar levels of hazardous drinking as did students not living with family members.

Results: Alcohol Dependency

- To test the hypothesis that the students would report lower levels of alcohol dependency if living at home with parents and/or relatives than those who did not, a t-test with living status and the SADD total score was conducted.
- The test did not reveal significant differences in mean levels of alcohol dependency for type of living arrangement $t(264) = -1.20, p= .85$.
- Students' level of alcohol dependency was not related to living arrangement.

Results: Drinking Refusal Self-Efficacy Levels

- To test the hypothesis that college Hispanic women would report a greater ability to resist alcohol if they live at home with parents and/or relatives compared to those students with non-familial living arrangements, a t-test with living status and DRSEQ total score was conducted.
- Results revealed that Hispanic female students living with family reported similar levels of drinking refusal self-efficacy as did Hispanic female students who had non-familial living arrangements, $t(275) = -.42, p= .67$.

Results: Hazardous Drinking, Alcohol Dependency, and Drinking Refusal Self-Efficacy Levels

Hazardous Drinking, Alcohol Dependency, and Drinking Refusal Self-Efficacy Levels by Living Arrangement.

	Living Arrangement Status	
	Not living with family (N= 31) ^a	Living with family (N= 247) ^b
AUDIT total score	M=4.83 (SD=.74)	M=3.76 (SD=.24)
SADD total score	M= 3.71 (SD= 4.22)	M= 3.88 (SD= 4.64)
DRSEQ total score	M= 105.37 (SD= 13.47)	M= 106.74 (SD= 17.32)

Note. n1 = 30 for the AUDIT and DRSEQ. n1 = 237 for the AUDIT and n1 = 235 for the SADD. AUDIT = Alcohol Use Disorder Identification Test. SADD = Short Alcohol Dependence Data Questionnaire. DRSEQ = Drinking Refusal Self-Efficacy Questionnaire.

Discussion

- The purpose of the current study was to examine the relationship between living arrangements and drinking behaviors among college Hispanic women.
- Results did not support the research hypotheses.

Discussion: Hypothesis 1

- It was hypothesized that female Hispanic college students would engage in less high risk drinking when living at home with parents and/or relatives, than those with non-familial living arrangements
- Contrary to previous findings, results indicated similar levels of risky drinking in students living with family and students not living with family.
- It is possible that living arrangements do not solely influence one's propensity to engage in risky drinking for college Hispanic women; it is also level of acculturation.
- Previous research has failed to reach a consensus on this matter, and therefore, further study is necessary (Caetano & Clark, 2003; De La Rosa, 2002; Epstein et. al., 2001).

Discussion: Hypothesis 2

- It was hypothesized that the students would report lower levels of alcohol dependency if living at home with parents and/or relatives than those who did not.
- Results indicate similar levels of alcohol dependency for those living with family and those not living with family.
- It is possible that levels of alcohol dependency are more correlated to genetic predisposition (Ratsma, Van Der Stelt, & Gunning, 2002; Haber, Jacob, & Heath, 2005; Heath, et. al., 1997) than to environmental factors in college students.

Discussion: Hypothesis 3

- The hypothesis that college Hispanic women would report a greater ability to resist alcohol if they live at home with parents and/or relatives compared to those students with non-familial living arrangements was not supported by the current findings.
- Alternatively, the values established through familismo may be so deeply established that Hispanic women behave accordingly, regardless of environmental factors.

Limitations

1. There were only 30 participants who reported non-familial living arrangements and 237 participants living with family for the AUDIT.
2. Only 30 participants for those not living with family and 247 participants living with family for the DRSEQ, and 31 participants not living with family and 247 participants living with family for the SADD.
3. It is also unclear how a nationally representative sample of Hispanic college women could have produced different findings.
4. Lack of information on how long students had been living on their own and further analysis revealed that there was also a significant difference in age among participants not living with family (M= 19.61) and those living with family (M= 18.65).
5. It is also unclear if changing the cutoff score for the AUDIT from 5 to 6 could have produced different findings as some researchers have recommended an AUDIT score of 6 or greater rather than 5 or greater.

Future research

- Little research has been done in regards to the changes occurring in the growing Hispanic population through acculturation, particularly in regards to drinking among Hispanic women.
 - Further research should be done with level of acculturation in Hispanic college women, as well as with specific countries of origin and current region.
- The importance of these studies would be to help with intervention efforts aimed at stopping heavy drinking habits and avoid negative consequences as a result of drinking, as well as programs to continue familial support on university campuses, for college Hispanic women.

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