

Background

- There is a robust association between romantic relationship stress and elevated levels of alcohol use (Keyes, Hatzenbuehler, & Hasin, 2011).
- Minority couples may experience this more due to racial inequities & greater social disadvantages (e.g., poverty & stigma) (Mulia, Ye, Zemore, & Greenfield, 2008).
- Racial discrimination has also been linked to increased alcohol use and alcohol-related problems (Williams, et al 2018).
- Ethnic minorities report higher rates of IPV and high-risk drinking that is likely influenced by complex factors that include persistent alcohol dependence (Caetano, Schafer, & Cunradi, 2017).
- Large bodies of research have linked perceived racial stress and elevated levels of alcohol consumption (Farahmand, Arshed, & Bradley, 2020).
- The current study examines the relationship between race, perceived stress, & alcohol-related problems among community couples.

Aims

- We hypothesize that race will moderate the relationship between our sample's alcohol-related problems and their perceived stress. Such that the couples that self-identify as Black will have stronger relationships with perceived stress than White couples.

Methods

Participants:

- 92 (N= 184) Couples that self-identify as Black or White.
- Same and Mixed sex couples were included in the sample, 22% were Black.
- All couples shared the same racial identity.
- At least one in the dyad had a diagnosis of Alcohol Use Disorder.

Measures:

- The Alcohol Use Disorder Identification Test (AUDIT) was used to screen the couples for any alcohol related problems.
- The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) was used to measure stress levels within the sample.

Procedures: Participants completed a battery of self report questionnaires as part of a larger study.

Results

- A two-level multilevel analysis was estimated to test the associations between the couples' race, their perceived stress, and any alcohol-related problems.
- Alcohol related problems were regressed onto the perceived stress scores and racial identity.
- The analysis of our sample yielded no significant associations between race, perceived stress, & alcohol related-stress.

Discussion

- It is possible the sample's characteristics may have contributed to the observed associations.
- Given the levels of IPV and AUD in the sample, it may have been difficult for the measure to identify stress specifically related to race.
- Similarly, racialized oppression, and discrimination may be such a normative experience for marginalized populations that they may not identify this as stress.
- Future studies should be conducted using a measure that specifically identifies race-related stress.
- Future research is needed to determine these associations within interracial couples as well, particularly given the stigma associated with interracial dating.
- Due to the disparate racial outcomes of substance use problems in the United States, exploring the differential impact of stress experienced by marginalized populations can positively inform the treatment practices of mental health clinicians.

References

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