

Do Research Assessments Make College Students More Reactive to Alcohol Events?



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BACKGROUND



- The alcohol field has begun to examine assessment reactivity (e.g., Clifford, Maisto, & Davis, 2007; Epstein et al., 2005; Morgan et al., 2008).
- Assessment and/or event reactivity may help explain non-significant differences between greater and lesser forms of BMI among non-treatment seeking young adults (e.g., Borsari & Carey, 2005; Gwaltney et al., 2011; White et al., 2006).
- It is therefore important to examine behavior change proximal to alcohol events while testing whether such changes differ between assessment and non-assessment groups.
- It is also unknown if reactivity effects differ as a function of time, or by participant or event characteristics.

METHOD



- The sample was derived from a larger naturalistic study of college student alcohol use ($N = 1,053$; 57.5% female).
- Those reporting an alcohol event ($n = 492$) were more likely to be white or multi-race ($p < .001$) and showed higher rates of pre-college past-month drinking (3.0 [5.4] vs. 0.7 [2.7]; $p < .001$) and heavy drinking (1.2 [2.8] vs. 0.2 [1.2]; $p < .001$) days, and AUDIT score (4.6 [4.4] vs. 0.7 [1.8]; $p < .001$).
- Generalized Estimating Equations (GEE; Liang & Zeger, 1986) were used to examine NDD, NHDD, and odds of negative alcohol consequences over the pre (4 weeks) and post-event (12 weeks) time interval.
- Additional analyses examined participant gender, alcohol severity (AUDIT), and event aversiveness as moderators of assessment effects.

Cognitive Reactivity: Readiness to Change

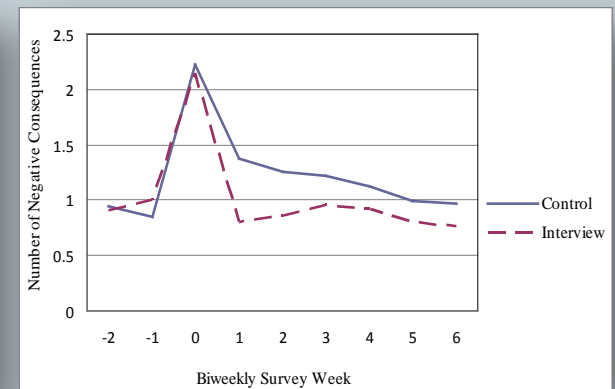
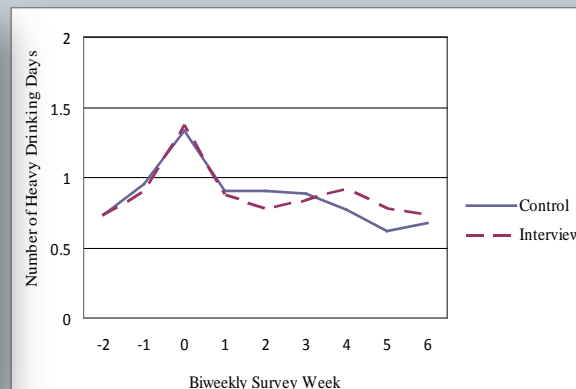
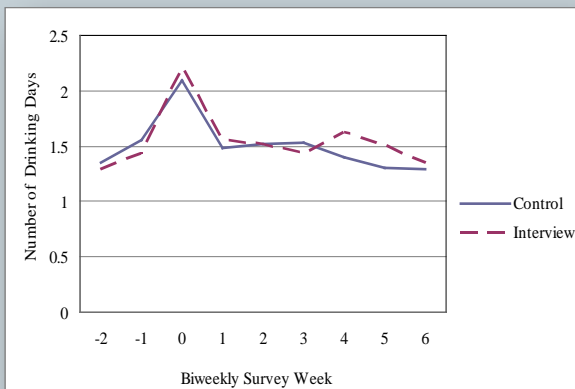


- Hierarchical MLR examined Readiness (Contemplation Ladder) to change alcohol use at the 3-month interview.
- After covariates (BL readiness, gender, w/multi-race, AUDIT, aversiveness, school status (public, private), semester one selection), Assessment Group predicted higher Readiness to change alcohol use than control (Effect Size_{change} = .29).
- The second step examining interactions with gender, AUDIT score, and average event aversiveness was non-significant.

Behavioral Reactivity: Alcohol Use and Consequences



- **Discontinuous change model** (Singer & Willett, 2003; with Poisson distribution).
- There were reductions in NDD ($\beta = -0.09(.04)$, $p < .05$), NHDD ($\beta = -0.17(.06)$, $p < .005$), and further consequences (OR: .70 [95%CI: .52, .91]) post-event, but no differential reductions by Assessment Group.



Moderators of Assessment Reactivity Effects



- Female participants showed greater reductions in NDD and NHDD if they were assigned to the Assessment Group.
- There was greater post-event reduction in NDD among Assessment Group participants with high pre-college alcohol severity (AUDIT).
- Conversely, those who reported high aversiveness of their event and were in the Control Group showed greater reduction in NHDD.

SUMMARY and DISCUSSION



- Support for motivational reactivity to assessments in this primarily non-contemplative to contemplative sample.
- Modest behavioral **event reactivity** was found across groups.
- No behavioral **assessment reactivity** for frequency of drinking, heavy drinking, or further consequences.
- Differential assessment reactivity was found within particular student subgroups (females, high alcohol severity, high event aversiveness).
- This work may have methodological implications for screening and brief intervention trials with young adult alcohol users.

- **Thank you to my co-authors**



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Questions?

