



PERSONALITY AND THE ONSET OF ALCOHOL USE DISORDERS FROM LATE ADOLESCENCE THROUGH YOUNG ADULthood

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Introduction

- ❖ The magnitude and stability of personality differences as they are related to the development of alcohol use disorders (AUD) from late adolescence to emerging adulthood remain unclear.
- ❖ Theoretical perspectives of AUD “types” posit that AUDs in emerging adulthood (age 18-25) are more characteristic of behavioral undercontrol/impulsivity, whereas AUDs in young adulthood (age 25 and above) are more often characterized by neuroticism.

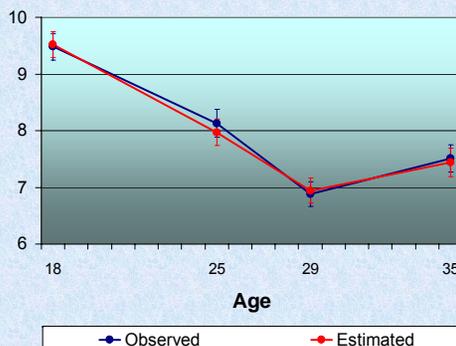
Present Study

- ❖ The present study examined the influence of the personality dimensions of neuroticism and psychoticism on new cases of AUDs (alcohol abuse and/or dependence) from age 18-35.
- ❖ In light of recent research suggesting that personality makes systematic changes during emerging and young adulthood, personality was modeled as a time-varying covariate.

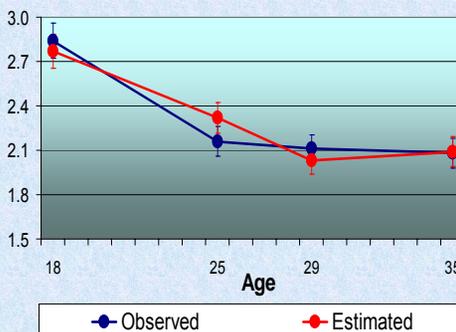
Method

- ❖ $N = 489$ first-year college students (Age = 18.2) at freshman year of college (47% men; 52% paternal history of alcoholism)
- ❖ Six follow-up Assessments at ages 19, 20, 21, 25, 29, and 35
- ❖ AUD (alcohol abuse or dependence) assessed at ages 18, 25, 29, and 35 using criteria from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-III AUD)
- ❖ Neuroticism and psychoticism assessed at ages 18, 25, 29, and 35 by the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire
- ❖ Family history of alcoholism (FH) assessed at baseline with Short Michigan Alcoholism Test (SMAST; Selzer, 1975) and the Family History-Research Diagnostic Criteria (FH-RDC; Endicott et al., 1978)
- ❖ Participants diagnosed with a positive or negative FH

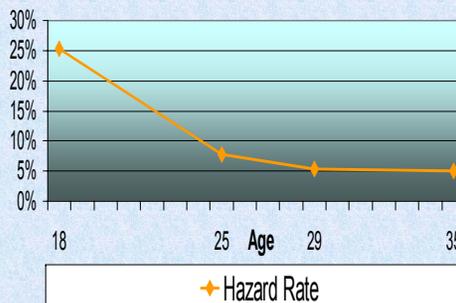
Mean Neuroticism Scores



Mean Psychoticism Scores



New Cases of AUD by Age



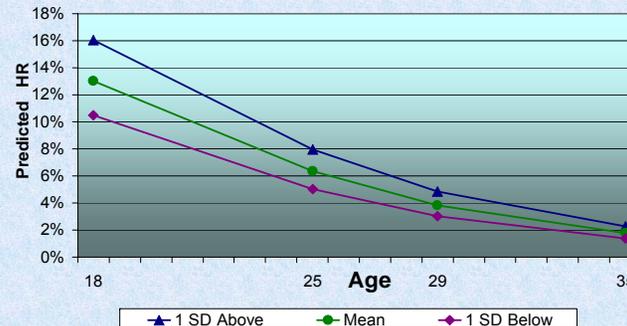
Analysis

- ❖ Event-history analysis was used to estimate the respective influence of neuroticism and psychoticism on new cases of AUD.
- ❖ Personality was modeled as a time-varying covariate.
- ❖ Sex was included as a control variable in all analyses.

Results

- ❖ The greatest risk for AUD occurred at age 18 and declined as participants aged.
- ❖ New cases of AUD occurring in both emerging and young adulthood were linked to higher levels of neuroticism ($\beta = .30, p < .0001$).
- ❖ The relation of psychoticism and new cases of AUD varied as a function of time.

Interaction of Psychoticism with Time



- ❖ New cases of AUD during emerging adulthood (age 18 or 25) were linked with higher levels of psychoticism ($\beta = .33, p < .0001, \beta = .20, p < .0001$ at ages 18 and 25, respectively), whereas new cases of AUD during young adulthood (age 29 or 35) were not significantly related to psychoticism ($\beta = .11, p = .12, \beta = -.01, p = .91$ at ages 29 and 35, respectively).

Discussion

- ❖ These findings are consistent with the notion that psychoticism, a broad marker of behavioral undercontrol, is characteristic of AUDs occurring during late adolescence and emerging adulthood.
- ❖ However, these findings suggest that increased levels of neuroticism are not limited to AUDs in young adulthood but rather are linked to the development of AUDs from late adolescence through young adulthood.