Predictors of progression and regression of readiness to change among college students

Amee J. Epler
*University of Missouri - Columbia*

Kenneth J. Sher
*University of Missouri - Columbia*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.wustl.edu/guzeposter2008](https://digitalcommons.wustl.edu/guzeposter2008)

**Recommended Citation**

This Poster is brought to you for free and open access by the 2008: Alcohol, Suicide, and Suicidality at Digital Commons@Becker. It has been accepted for inclusion in Posters by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@Becker. For more information, please contact vanam@wustl.edu.
Predictors of Progression and Regression of Readiness to Change Among College Students

Amee J. Epler & Kenneth J. Sher

University of Missouri & Midwest Alcoholism Research Center

Supported by Grants from NIAAA: R37 AA7231; P50 AA11998; T32 AA13526, and K05 AA017242

Introduction

- Despite efforts to reduce heavy drinking among college students, college-student alcohol use and its negative consequences remains a concern for campuses across the nation.
- Readiness to change alcohol consumption may be particularly important in determining whether attempts to reduce or quit drinking will be ultimately successful.
- Readiness to change health behaviors can be described using stages of change from the Transtheoretical Model.
  - Precontemplation describes individuals who are not considering change or who do not think that the behavior is problematic.
  - Contemplation describes individuals who are considering change or who recognize that the behavior is problematic, but have not yet made change plans.
  - Action describes individuals who are currently making changes.

Method

- Participants were selected from an ongoing, longitudinal study of alcohol use and health behaviors conducted over a 4-year period (N=3,700) at a large Midwestern university.
- Current drinkers who had completed Waves 6 and 7 of the study, corresponding to the Spring semester of their junior year and the Fall semester of their senior year were included (n = 1,748; M age = 20.8, SD = 0.40; 62% female at Wave 6).
- Readiness to change was assessed at both Waves 6 (baseline) and 7 (follow-up) using one item: “During the past 3 months, have you considered drinking less?”
- Wave 6 (baseline) heavy drinking was assessed using one item that asked about the frequency of consuming 5 or more drinks in one setting during the past month.
- Wave 6 (baseline) Alcohol abuse and dependence criteria were assessed using 26 alcohol use consequences and past month frequency of getting drunk, consuming 5+ drinks and 12+ drinks.
  - Items were combined to create dichotomous variables indicating the presence or absence of each of the DSM-IV criteria for Alcohol Abuse (n=4) and Dependence (n = 7).
  - In addition, two continuous variables were created to indicate the total number of Abuse (range 0-4) and Dependence (range 0-7) criteria met.
- In order to examine progression of readiness to change among drinkers who report precontemplation at Wave 6, multivariate logistic regressions including age, sex, and abuse/dependence criteria were used to predict progression to contemplation/action at Wave 7.
- In order to examine progression and regression of readiness to change among drinkers who report contemplation at Wave 6, multivariate logistic regressions including age, sex, and abuse/dependence criteria were used to predict progression to action or regression to precontemplation atWave 7.
- Analyses were conducted for all drinkers, controlling for baseline heavy drinking, and for a subset of heavy drinkers (≥5 drinks at least weekly).

Results

Rates of Progression of Readiness to Change Drinking
- Over 70% (see marginal percents on Figure 1) of students reported that they were not interested in changing their drinking or did not feel that their drinking was a problem (Precontemplation).
- Between 14 and 15% (see marginal percents on Figure 1) of students reported that they were interested in changing their drinking or felt that their drinking might be a problem, but had not made a change (Contemplation).
- Between 11 and 12% (see marginal percents on Figure 1) of students reported that they had recently cut down or quit drinking (Action).
- Approximately 13% of students who reported Precontemplation at Wave 6 (baseline) progressed to Contemplation/Action by Wave 7 (follow-up). An additional 3% of students progressed from Contemplation to Action (Wave 7).
- Only 7% of students who reported Contemplation at Wave 6 regressed to Precontemplation by Wave 7 (Figure 1).

Predictors of Progression of Readiness to Change Drinking
- Both Alcohol Abuse and Dependence criterion counts predicted progression from Precontemplation at Wave 5 (baseline) to Contemplation/Action at Wave 7 (follow-up) among all drinkers, controlling for frequency of heavy drinking (Figure 2, left panel).
  - Specifically, it appears that Abuse Criterion #2 (n = 1.51, 95% CI = 1.03-2.22), use if physically hazardous conditions, and Dependence Criterion #6 (n = 1.97, 95% CI = 1.18-3.30), giving up activities to drink, were uniquely associated with increased odds of progression to Contemplation/Action among all drinkers controlling for frequency of heavy drinking, age, and sex.
  - Among a subset of heavy drinkers, only Alcohol Dependence criteria predicted the same progression.
- Neither Alcohol Abuse nor Dependence criterion counts predicted progression from Contemplation at Waves 4 to Action at Wave 7 among all drinkers and among a subset of heavy drinkers (Figure 2, right panel).

Predictors of Regression of Readiness to Change Drinking
- Being male and Dependence criterion counts predicted decreased odds of regression from Contemplation at Wave 6 (baseline) to Precontemplation at Wave 7 (follow-up) among all drinkers, controlling for heavy drinking (Figure 3).
- Among a subset of heavy drinkers only Dependence criterion count predicted decreased odds of regression (Figure 3).

Conclusions
- To date, there have been no prospective studies, excluding intervention studies, on readiness to change drinking among college students.
- These results suggest that both use in physically hazardous situations and giving up activities are associated with a reduction in motivation to change drinking among college student drinkers who previously had no motivation to change.
- It will be important to examine, non-criteria predictors in future work.
- Understanding the antecedents of motivation to reduce alcohol consumption in college students may be important for intervention efforts with this population.