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The Creation of an Alcohol-Intimacy Expectancy Scale

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Introduction
Widespread belief that alcohol facilitates the initiation of sexual experience and intimacy.

Does Alcohol Facilitate Sexual Activity?
People report a freeing of sexual desire following moderate doses of alcohol (Edwards, 1960), and alcohol expectancies can explain these reported aphrodisiac qualities (Lang, 1985).

Does Alcohol Facilitate Intimacy?
Defining Intimacy: “feelings of closeness and affection between interacting partners; the state of having revealed one’s innermost thoughts and feelings to another person; relatively intense forms of nonverbal engagement (notably, touch, eye contact, and close physical proximity); particular types of relationships (especially marriage); sexual activity; and stages of psychological maturation.” (Schwending & Reis, 1986, p. 224, emphasis added)

“… the degree of closeness two people achieve. Closeness means both physical closeness (being together, touching) and psychological closeness (feeling close to each other; sharing thoughts and feelings).” (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1983, p. 18, emphasis added)

Intimacy and Alcohol
On first dates, intimacy expectations increase if alcohol is present (Mor & Mongeau, 2004).

Alcohol consumption appears to help committed partners express intimate feelings (Traezen & Lewin, 1999).

However, social intimacy and binge drinking are negatively correlated (Nuckel, 1994).

Expectations of alcohol’s aphrodisiac qualities also predict higher attractiveness ratings of faces following suboptimal alcohol primes (Friedman, McCarthy, & Davanzo, 2005).

Widespread belief that alcohol facilitates the initiation of sexual experience and intimacy. (123 males, 160 females).

Alcohol Expectancy Items
Social Items (17)
- I am more outgoing at parties after a few drinks of alcohol.
- Drinking makes large get-togethers and parties more fun.
- I am friendlier when I am drinking.
- After a few drinks, I feel more accepted socially.
- I am more likely to reveal my “true self” after a few drinks.
- After a few drinks, I find it easier to socialize with people I don’t know well.
- When I drink alcohol, I find it easier to socialize with people I don’t know very well.
- When I drink alcohol, I am more outgoing and talkative at parties.
- It is easier to strike up a conversation with someone I don’t know well.
- It is easier to say what is in my mind after a few drinks.
- I am more likely to reveal my “true self” after a few drinks.
- I am more likely to express my innermost thoughts and feelings after a few drinks.
- I feel emotionally close to a romantic partner or date when I am drinking.
- Sharing a drink with someone I care about makes me feel warm and cozy.
- When I drink alcohol, I feel it easier to socialize with people I don’t know very well.
- When I drink alcohol, I find it easier to socialize with people I don’t know very well.
- When I drink alcohol, it is easier for me to carry on a casual conversation with someone I just met.
- When I drink alcohol, I find it easier to socialize with people I don’t know very well.
- When I drink alcohol, I feel it easier to socialize with people I don’t know very well.
- When I drink alcohol, it is easier for me to carry on a casual conversation with someone I just met.

Study Aims
We sought to create and test items assessing expectancies of intimacy as a first step in creating a new scale measuring alcohol intimacy expectancies.

Alcohol expectancies account for increased levels of self-disclosure following placebo and actual alcohol consumption (Schippers et al., 1997).

Alcohol expectancies are associated with increased tendencies to pursue relationship-enhancing behaviors and decreased intentions to resist sexual advances (Twila et al., 2006).

Method
Newly created alcohol-intimacy expectancy items were administered to participants interpersed with items assessing social facilitation alcohol expectancy items.

Two Factor EFA Solution

Discussion
Results suggest related but separate constructs for alcohol social expectancies and alcohol intimacy expectancies.

Defining Intimacy: “feelings of closeness and affection between interacting partners; the state of having revealed one’s innermost thoughts and feelings to another person; relatively intense forms of nonverbal engagement (notably, touch, eye contact, and close physical proximity); particular types of relationships (especially marriage); sexual activity; and stages of psychological maturation.” (Schwending & Reis, 1986, p. 224, emphasis added)

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Data were analyzed using a series of Exploratory Factor Analyses using oblique rotation type, the quartimax rotation criterion, and Kaiser weights.

A two factor solution provided suitable model fit and confirmed theoretical factor structure expectations (RMSEA = .07).

Further refinement of the scale is necessary, as is validation of the scale through the assessment of intimacy drinking motivations and differential situational drinking by those high or low in alcohol intimacy expectancies (i.e., to see if those high in this construct are more likely to drink in intimate situations).

Both constructs were assessed in order to differentiate social expectancies from intimacy expectancies.

After removing item 26, results were virtually identical.