**Alcohol Use and Mental Health Well-Being Among Adults**

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**ABSTRACT**
Alcohol abuse and dependence is a serious problem in the United States among adults. Research has shown a significant association of alcohol abuse/dependence and effects on a person’s mental health. This study aimed to provide further information on the participant’s depression and suicide ideation and gain a better understanding of that relationship. The current study hypothesizes that individuals with higher rates of alcohol use have a significant correlation with higher levels of depressive symptoms and higher rates of suicidal ideation. Researchers conducted a secondary analysis of data taken from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2014. The study included adults aged 26 and older, with a wide variety of demographic backgrounds. The survey was conducted from January to March 2014. The study focused on the dependent variable: alcohol abuse or dependence, and the independent variable: depressive symptoms.

**METHODOLOGY**

**Research Design and Data Collection Procedures**
- The current study is a secondary analysis of the data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2014 (United States Department of Health and Human Services, 2014).
- This survey was considered cross-sectional because the participants were only interviewed once and were not asked to participate in interviews later years.
- This study was conducted by the NSDUH and RTI staff members.
- The data used to conduct this study was already collected for other purposes.
- The current study focuses on the dependent variable: alcohol abuse or dependence, and the independent variable: depressive symptoms.

**Sample and Sampling Methods**
- The original study included civilian, non-institutionalized, participants over the age of 12, who lived in the United States during the time of the survey.
- The sample for this study was chosen using a stratified and multistage sample design (United States Department of Health and Human Services, 2014).
- The current study is focused on adults aged 26 or older and, therefore, only utilized data from participants who identified as 26 or older.
- The age requirement (26 and older) was the only inclusion criteria for the current study.
- The sample size for the current study is made up of 28,602 participants.

**Measures**
- The current study focuses on the dependent variable: alcohol abuse or dependence, as well as the two independent variables: depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation (within the last year).
- Alcohol abuse and dependence was measured by recoding several variables to determine if the participant was alcohol dependent or abusive.
- Depressive symptoms were measured by asking participants if they had felt sad or depressed in the past 12 months.
- Suicidal ideation was measured by asking participants if they had ever seriously thought about trying to kill themselves.

**RESULTS**

### Chi-Square Test

- A chi-square test was used to analyze the independent variables and their relationship with the dependent variable (alcohol abuse/dependence).
- Depression
  - Analysis suggests that participants who identified as having alcohol abuse/dependence in the past year were more likely to have depression (14.3%) compared to those who did not report alcohol abuse or dependence (8.4%).
  - A significant association was found ($\chi^2(1) = 76.11$, p < 0.001), while a Phi statistic suggested a weak relationship (.052).
- Suicidal ideation
  - The participants who reported experiencing alcohol abuse or dependence were more likely to experience suicidal ideation (10.3%) compared to those who did not report alcohol abuse or dependence (3.3%).
  - A significant association was found ($\chi^2(1) = 241.63$, p < 0.001), while a Phi statistic suggested a weak relationship (.092).

**DISCUSSION**

**Summary of Findings**
- This study found that those individuals who report alcohol abuse or alcohol dependence have a higher tendency of also reporting depression within the same year.
- The findings indicate that individuals who report alcohol abuse or alcohol dependence are more likely to experience suicidal ideation within the same year.

**Implications for Research and Practice**
- This study highlights the importance of interventions for individuals struggling with alcohol abuse or dependence.
- These findings are also significant for suggesting preventive measures for those that have alcohol abuse or dependence.
- Social workers should advocate for funding in this field, along with creating more jobs.
- This research could be implemented by creating mental health programs specifically for the substance abuse field.
- Social workers can provide direct treatment to clients that will help them cope with depression or suicidal ideation.

**Strenghts and Limitations**
- The current study is a cross-sectional study which limits the ability to understand the information in a longitudinal setting.
- The questions for the study were nominal and therefore limited the understanding of depression or suicidal ideation.
- The majority of the participants were under the age of 49 years old (68.6%), meaning that it may not be generalizable to the older adolescent population.
- Participants also identified mainly as Non-Hispanic White (65.9%), which unfortunately means the survey lacked diversity.

**REFERENCES**
- The current study found that individuals who report alcohol abuse or alcohol dependence have a higher tendency of also reporting depression within the same year.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**
I would like to thank Dr. Lee for her patience and help during the completion of this project. I would also like to thank the Social Work department and my fellow colleagues who helped me through this program. Finally, I would like to thank my family for their continuous support.