The relationship of positive and negative alcohol expectancies to patterns of consumption of alcohol in social drinkers

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Abstract:

Negative alcohol expectancies have recently come to occupy a more important position in the expectancy literature, but recent claims that positive expectancies are unimportant in the consumption of alcohol when compared with negative expectancies are based on potentially flawed methodology. This study investigated the relative contribution of positive and negative expectancies to the consumption of alcohol using an instrument designed to measure both positive and negative expectancies. One hundred ninety-three men and women from the general community participated in the study. Findings showed while negative expectancies accounted for the greater proportion of variance of frequency of consumption, positive expectancies remained an important predictor of consumption, accounting for the greater proportion of variance of quantity consumed per session. The interesting but sometimes counterintuitive directions of these relationships can be explained in terms of social learning principles. The relatively neglected concept of negative expectancies is worthy of further use and investigation.