Psychometric properties of a quitting time for alcohol questionnaire: Factor structure, reliability, and validity

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Abstract:

Research into the dynamics of alcohol use has traditionally focused on etiological factors, particularly on the reasons an individual engages in drinking behaviours. Although reasons for the permanent cessation of drinking have also been well documented, little is known about the reasons for the episodic cessation of alcohol use that is characteristic of nonproblematic drinking patterns. The purpose of the present study was to develop and validate a questionnaire designed to monitor the reasons an individual temporarily stops drinking at the end of a drinking episode. A 23-item Quitting Time for Alcohol Questionnaire (QTAQ) was developed and distributed to a community based sample of 252 participants. Factor analysis revealed three conceptually distinct factors, QTAQ-IS (Internal Status) QTAQ-AA (Avoidance Adherence) and QTAQ-IC (Immediate Context), which accounted for 36.3% of the variance. Cross-validation on a large sample of undergraduate students (N = 479) confirmed the three-factor solution (accounting for 33% of the variance). Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the factors ranged from .74 to .81 for the community sample and from .62 to .78 for the student sample. The validity of the emergent factors was demonstrated by their ability to classify participants according to self-reported alcohol consumption and alcohol dependence criteria, and also by their significant predictive relationship with these criteria. The present findings suggest that the QTAQ is a useful instrument both for research and for use in clinical practice.