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PARENTING STYLE, GENDER, BEER DRINKING AND DRINKING PROBLEMS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

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Abstract. ***Background and Purpose***. Many college students and young adults in various parts of the world have difficulty with drinking too much alcohol and are at-risk for alcohol use disorders. A permissive parenting style and beer drinking are risk factors for alcohol abuse among late adolescents and young adults. ***Methods***. This study examined the indirect relations between permissive parenting (measured with the Parental Authority Questionnaire, PAQ) and Alcohol Use Identification Test (AUDIT, 2nd edition) scores via beer drinking frequency (measured with the Student Alcohol Questionnaire, SAQ) among a sample of college students (ages 18 to 23) in the Northeast region of the United States. In addition, the indirect relation between gender and AUDIT scores via beer drinking frequency were also examined through Structural Equation Modeling. ***Results***. As predicted, students of permissive parents drank more beer and this was associated with more alcohol related problems. Likewise, young women drank significantly less beer than young men and this was associated with fewer alcohol dependence symptoms and healthier drinking habits. ***Conclusion***. This study builds upon a number of studies that have found that beer drinking is potentially more problematic than wine drinking (and to some extent, liquor drinking) among young adults. Findings suggest that reducing beer drinking frequency, especially among boys, may be an intermediate target for future parenting intervention studies that aim to prevent alcohol use disorders.

Keywords: Parenting Style; Alcohol Abuse; Young Adulthood (18–29 years); Male; Female.

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Children thrive when their parents provide a nurturing and supportive environment (Froiland, 2011a; Froiland, 2013; Powell, Son, File, & Froiland, 2012) while also conveying positive expectations (Baumrind, 1966; Froiland & Davison, 2014; Froiland, Peterson, & Davison, 2013). The manner in which caregivers communicate with their children is crucial to the development of positive mental health outcomes (Froiland, 2011b; Froiland, 2014; Uji, Sakamoto, Adachi, & Kitamura, 2014). Furthermore, certain parenting styles put youth at risk for alcohol use and abuse (Montgomery et al., 2008).

College alcohol use has been identified as an eminent problem on college campuses. Among young adults, approximately 63% of males and 58% of females reported being current drinkers in 2012 (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, SAMHSA, 2013). Binge drinking is considered the consumption of five or more drinks consecutively for men and four or more for women (Wechsler, Dowdall, Davenport, & DeJong, 1994). The 2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (SAMHSA, 2013) revealed that binge drinking was reported by 40% of young adults aged 18-25 and the rate of heavy drinking was 13%. Within this same age group, 46% of males and 33% of females reported binge drinking (SAMHSA, 2013). Binge drinking is problematic due to potential health problems and legal complications (Wechsler et al., 1994). Consumption of large amounts of alcohol over a short period of time can result in dangerous levels of blood alcohol concentration.

Alcohol use represents the most prominent feature of college student fatality (Hingson, Heeren, Winter, & Wechsler, 2005). In particular, an estimated 1,717 alcohol-related non-traffic deaths among college students were reported in 2001 (Hingson et al., 2005). Approximately 31% of the eight million college students in the United States (U.S.) meet the diagnostic criteria for alcohol abuse (Knight et al., 2002) and nearly half of college students diagnosed with alcohol use disorder (AUD) between the ages of 18 and 19 continued to meet AUD criteria when they were 25 years old (Sher & Gotham, 1999).

Given the prevalence of alcohol consumption and the consequences of alcohol abuse, it is important to identify factors that increase the likeli-

hood that adolescents and young adults will get inebriated during the college years and develop AUD. Studies have shown a relationship between the quality of parenting and substance use and abuse among offspring (Baumrind, 1989). Baumrind (1971) identified three parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive. Children of parents with an authoritative parenting style exhibit fewer psychological and behavioral problems (Baumrind, 1989; Kritzas & Grobler, 2005). Authoritative parents offer a firm and assertive approach, while simultaneously encouraging their children to express their opinion and explore their interests. An authoritative parenting style is characterized by clear expectations, firm rules, explaining rationales for rules, and consistent discipline (Baumrind, 1966). In contrast, authoritarian parents expect children to obey their rules and demands without explanation. They provide an orderly environment, while maintaining clear guidelines. Authoritarian parents exert control with minimal input from children in making decisions and developing expectations (Baumrind, 1991). Authoritarian parents offer little nurturance and emotional support to their children (Black & Baumrind, 1967).

Permissive parenting has been identified as a risk factor for increased alcohol use and abuse among youth and young adults (Becona et al., 2013; Cohen & Rice, 1997; Patock-Peckham, Cheong, Balhorn, & Nagoshi, 2001). For example, Patock-Peckham and Morgan-Lopez (2006) indicated that permissive parenting by one's same gender parent, increases impulsivity, alcohol use and alcohol-related problems, and reduces drinking control. Permissive parenting is characterized by overindulgence and a lack of supervision (Baumrind, 1966; Loeber & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1986). This lack of supervision is problematic because perceived parental monitoring predicts a lower likelihood of alcohol misuse (Barnes, Hoffman, Welte, Farrell, & Dintcheff, 2006). Permissive parents do not make clear rules and the inappropriate behavior of children is infrequently addressed (Baumrind, 1966). Adolescents reporting inadequate rules and limited communication about alcohol are prone to begin drinking alcohol at an early age and drink more as they get older (Koning, van den Eijnden, Verdurmen, Engles, & Vollebergh, 2012). Permissive parents score high on responsiveness, but low on demandingness and control (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Demandingness entails the requests and expectations parents impose on their children, which are characterized

by the establishment of parental standards, supervision, and disciplinary efforts (Spera, 2005). McKinney & Renk (2008) found that late adolescent girls report parents being less permissive than boys do.

Because alcohol abuse among adolescents and young adults is a per-vasive problem in many nations, researchers have explored the etiology of alcohol use, concluding that adolescence is a period during which substance use is typically initiated (Faden, 2006). The effects of parenting styles on behavioral development have been thoroughly investigated throughout childhood. However, there is a need for more research on the long-term effects of parenting styles beyond adolescence, particularly, young adulthood. Young adulthood is a transitional period characterized by growth, change, potential for greater contribution to society and exploration. Young adults begin to establish their own identities and focus on their future endeavors. Perceived parenting styles and parental behavior play an important role in this period of development in which college students are often living on their own for the first time and have more control over their schedule than ever before in their lives.

Gender and Preference for Beer

College males consume more alcohol than females (Ham & Hope, 2003). Women often prefer wine over beer and hard liquor, whereas young men often prefer to drink beer (Klatsky, Armstrong, & Kipp, 1990). In fact, Kidorf, Sherman, Johnson & Bigelow (1995) found that among a sample of college students on the East Coast of the U.S., women drank about one-third as much beer as men. In a study involving over 100,000 participants in California, men were over three times as likely to report a preference for beer, whereas women were apt to prefer wine, which was associated with women having a lower risk for mortality due to coronary disease (Klatsky, Friedman, Armstrong, & Kipp, 2003). Likewise, in a nationally representative study of young adults in the U.S., men were significantly more likely to prefer beer, whereas women were more likely to prefer wine and wine preference was associated with healthier habits, such as less smoking and less fast food consumption (Paschall, & Lipton, 2005). On the other hand, young adults that prefer beer are more likely to report recent alcohol-related problems (Paschall & Lipton, 2005) and beer is the most common alcoholic beverage consumed by those that are susceptible to causing alcohol-related harm, such as by driving

a motor vehicle shortly after a binge drinking episode (Naimi, Brewer, Miller, Okoro, & Mehrotra, 2007). Young adults who favor beer are less likely to drink in moderation (Paschall & Lipton, 2005), as drinking beer is much more strongly associated with binge drinking than wine or liquor drinking among college students under the legal drinking age (Wechsler, Kuo, Lee, & Dowdall, 2000). In addition, another study in the United Kingdom (UK) found that young men are much more likely than young women to express a preference for beer (Meier, Purshouse, & Brennan, 2010). Moreover, a longitudinal study found that adolescent boys, but not girls, consume more beer (but not wine or liquor) when they remember more television commercials for alcoholic beverages (Connolly, Casswell, Zhang, & Silva, 1994).

Current Study

This study examined the following hypotheses: 1) permissive parenting will be associated with more beer drinking; 2) gender will be associated with beer drinking, with women drinking beer less frequently; 3) gender will be indirectly related to alcohol-related problems via beer drinking frequency; 4) permissive parenting will be indirectly related to alcohol-related problems via beer drinking frequency.

METHODS

Sample

Participants included 62 undergraduate students enrolled in psychology courses at a public university in the Northeast region of the U.S. Students were between 18 and 23 years old (M = 19.16 years, SD = 1.2). The majority of participants were female (67.7%). The percentages of students at each grade level are as follows: 46.8% freshmen; 27.4% sophomores; 17.7% juniors; and 8.1% seniors. The mean grade point average was 3.08 (SD = 0.44). The majority of students reported growing up in a two parent family (62.9%).

Procedures

Participants were recruited from the General Psychology human participant pool, as well as an upper class psychology course. They were granted extra credit within their psychology courses for their involvement. Questionnaire completion sessions occurred during designated

meeting times on six occasions over the course of two weeks, with a researcher present. Prior to distribution of the surveys, informed consent forms were dispersed and questions were answered.

Measures

Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ). The PAQ (Buri, 1991) is a 30-item questionnaire designed to measure Baumrind's (1971) classic parenting styles. The questions address three sub-scales: permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative, with 10 questions representing each parenting style. The PAQ asks students to answer questions as they recall their parents over the years they were raised in their parent(s) or guardians' home. If parents divorced when the students were younger, the PAQ instructs them to answer according to the parent they spent the most time with. The responses to the questions are rated on a 5-point Likert Scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". Scoring involves summing the items that comprise each sub-scale, with each sub-scale having a maximum score of 50. Higher scores on a sub-scale (e.g., permissiveness) indicate that the rater perceives their parent as expressing more of that style. Patcock-Peckham and Morgan-Lopez (2009) found acceptable alpha reliabilities ranging from .77 to .90 for the subscales of the PAQ among college students. Likewise, Segrin, Woszidlo, Givertz, Bauer & Taylor (2012) reported alpha reliabilities from .78 to .82.

Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT), Second Edition. The AUDIT was developed by the World Health Organization to screen for problematic drinking patterns (Babor, Higgins-Biddle, Saunders, & Monteiro, 2001). The measure is composed of 10 items (each on a 0 to 4 scale) pertaining to alcohol use, dependence symptoms, and problems due to alcohol use. The overall score is a sum of all item responses, with scores of 8 or higher representing a likelihood of baneful drinking and the risk of alcohol dependence (Babor et al., 2001). Several studies have confirmed the reliability and validity of the AUDIT (e.g., Fleming & MacDonald, 1991; Reinert & Allen, 2007).

Beer Drinking Frequency from the Student Alcohol Questionnaire (SAQ). The SAQ (Engs, 1977) is an instrument containing scales related to drinking patterns, alcohol-related problems, and alcohol knowledge. However, for the purposes of this study, only a limited number of items were utilized. The items that were analyzed targeted the frequency of

beer, wine, and liquor consumption. Beer drinking frequency was rated by students on the following scale: 0 = never; 1 = once a year or less; 2 = more than once a year; 3 = once a month; 4 = once a week; 5 = every day. The SAQ is a reliable tool for measuring college students' drinking patterns (Engs, 1977).

Analytic Plan

The primary model (see Figure 1) was tested via Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) in AMOS 19.0. All analyses involved 62 cases and there was no missing data. Model fit was determined by a non-significant chi-square, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) of .95 or greater, and a root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) of .06 or lower (Froiland & Davison, 2014; Froiland, Powell & Diamond, 2013; Froiland, Powell, Diamond & Son, 2013; Froiland, Peterson, & Davison, 2013; Hu & Bentler, 1999). In order to examine indirect relations between gender and AUDIT scores (hypothesis 3), as well as permissive parenting and AUDIT scores (hypothesis 4), the bootstrapping test was employed to examine the significance of the indirect effects (Froiland, Powell, Diamond, & Son, 2013; Froiland, Powell, & Diamond, 2013; Shrout & Bolger, 2002).

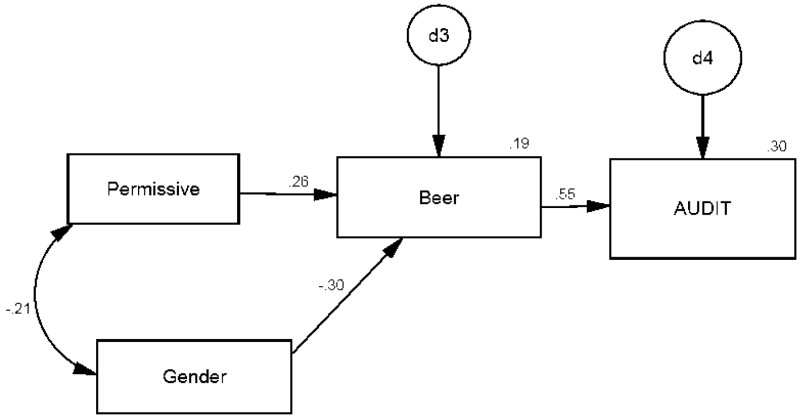

Figure 1. *The relations between permissive parenting, gender, beer drinking frequency and risk for alcohol use disorder. Beer = Beer Drinking Frequency. AUDIT = Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test. All path coefficients are significant (p<.05).*

A second model was also tested, in which a direct path from permissive parenting to AUDIT scores was added to the primary model. The purpose of this was to see if permissive parenting was directly positively associated with drinking problems, above and beyond the indirect relation between permissive parenting and AUDIT via beer drinking frequency.

RESULTS

Preliminary Analyses

Students in the study, on average, reported that their parents were highest on authoritative and less permissive (see Table 1). The average student reported drinking liquor once a month, beer a little less than once a month, and wine somewhere between once a year and more than once a year. Paired sample t-tests revealed that students reported drinking liquor significantly more often than beer $t(61)=2.43$, $p<.05$, and imbibed beer significantly more often than wine $t(61)=5.32$, $p<.05$. AUDIT scores indicate that the average participant in the study was at risk for alcohol-related problems and AUD, because the mean was just above the cutoff of 8 (Babor et al., 2001).

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics for Parenting Style and Alcohol Consumption*

	Range	Mean	Std. Deviation
Beer	0–4	2.63	1.42
Wine	0–4	1.77	1.08
Liquor	0–4	3.00	1.04
Permissive	13–45	25.05	6.19
Authoritarian	16–49	31.21	7.35
Authoritative	22–45	37.05	5.56
AUDIT	0–26	8.55	6.11

Note. N = 62. Beer = Beer drinking frequency. Wine = Wine Drinking Frequency. Liquor = Liquor Drinking Frequency. AUDIT = Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test.

A one-way ANOVA indicated that women in the study reported drinking beer less frequently than men $F(1,60)=8.60$; $p<.05$. The one-way ANOVA's comparing means between men and women for liquor and wine drinking were insignificant, indicating that women imbibed liquor

and wine as frequently as men. Another one-way ANOVA indicated that men and women had comparable AUDIT scores: $F(1,60)=.33$, $p>.05$, although men scored about a point higher.

See Table 2 for bivariate correlations. Beer drinking frequency was moderately positively correlated with AUDIT scores, indicating that those who drank beer more often were more likely to report difficulties due to drinking. Also, whereas permissive parenting and authoritarian parenting were significantly negatively related, there was no significant association between authoritative and permissive parenting. Permissive parenting was the only parenting variable significantly related to both beer drinking frequency and AUDIT scores.

Table 2. *Bivariate Correlations Among Parenting Style and Alcohol Outcomes*

Factors	Authoritative	Authoritarian	Permissive	BeerDrinking
Authoritative	–			
Authoritarian	–.26*	–		
Permissive	.07	–.31*	–	
BeerDrinking	.02	–.04	.33**	–
AUDIT	.16	–.18*	.27*	.55**

Note. AUDIT – Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test.
*p<.05. **p<.01.

Structural Equation Model Findings

The structural equation model (see Figure 1) provided a good fit with the data, according to the following fit statistics: a non-significant chi-square ($\chi^2(2)=2.58$, $p=.28$), indicating that the data do not differ significantly from the model; CFI .98; TLI=.95; RMSEA=.07. Confirming hypothesis one, the path coefficient from permissive parenting to beer drinking frequency was significant, indicating that students who perceived their parents as permissive drank more beer (see Figure 1). In accordance with hypothesis two, the path coefficient from gender to beer drinking frequency was negative and significant, indicating that women reported drinking beer significantly less frequently than men. The path coefficient from beer drinking frequency to the AUDIT was positive and significant,

suggesting that students that consume beer more frequently are at risk of developing alcohol-related problems and AUD.

The indirect effect of gender on AUDIT scores was significant (unstandardized indirect effect = –2.13, $p<.05$; standardized indirect effect = –.16). This indicates that young women are at a lower risk for drinking problems, because they drank beer less frequently than young men. The indirect effect of permissive parenting on AUDIT scores was on the borderline of significance (unstandardized indirect effect = .14; $p=.05$; standardized indirect effect = .14). This indicates that permissive parenting is indirectly related to AUDIT scores via beer drinking frequency. The *R*-squared for the model is .30, such that 30% of the variance in AUDIT scores is explained by permissive parenting, gender and beer drinking frequency.

When a direct path between permissive parenting and AUDIT scores was added to the primary model, the model did not fit the data as well (e.g., the TLI dropped below the acceptable level) and the standardized path coefficient between permissive parenting and AUDIT was small (.10) and insignificant, $p=.36$. All other associations in the model remained significant. This is quite interesting because the positive bivariate correlation between permissive parenting and AUDIT was moderate and significant (see Table 2). Taken together, these findings indicate that the relationship between permissive parenting and AUDIT is completely indirect, via beer drinking frequency.

DISCUSSION

This study found that permissive parenting and gender were both indirectly related to alcohol problems via beer drinking frequency. These findings support the findings of previous studies that have found that permissive parenting puts students at risk for greater alcohol use and abuse (e.g., Becona et al., 2013; Cohen & Rice, 1997; Patock-Peckham and Morgan-Lopez, 2006), while also indicating that beer drinking frequency may mediate the relationship between permissive parenting and alcohol-related problems. This study also confirms previous studies that have found that young men drink more beer than young women (e.g., Klatsky et al., 1990; Kidorf et al., 1995; Klatsky et al., 2003; Meier et al., 2010). Whereas previous studies have indicated that drinking beer is associated with more alcohol problems (Paschall & Lipton, 2005), this is

the only study we know of to test whether or not there is a significant indirect relation between gender and alcohol problems via beer drinking frequency. If future longitudinal studies replicate this finding, beer drinking frequency among young men may be a target for intervention, whereas wine drinking is generally less of a concern as it is associated with healthier habits (Pascall & Lipton, 2005) and greater longevity (Klatsky et al., 2003).

The permissive parenting style has been repeatedly linked to alcohol use and abuse (e.g., Becona et al., 2013; Cohen & Rice, 1997; Patock-Peckham & Morgan-Lopez, 2006), as well as less self-regulation (Patock-Peckham et al., 2001), which can affect various domains of life. Furthermore, indicators of sound parenting styles have been linked to psychological health and academic success (Baumrind, 1991; Froiland, 2011b; Froiland, 2013; Froiland, 2014; Froiland & Davison, 2014; Froiland, Peterson, & Davison, 2013). Based on the present findings and gradually growing body of literature on parent interventions, we suggest that parenting interventions in middle school, high school and college continue to teach parents to speak to children in a supportive way that encourages youth to see the purpose of diligently studying and developing a healthy lifestyle (e.g., Froiland, 2013; Froiland, 2014; Joussemet, Mageau, & Koestner, 2013). However, we add that parents of adolescent boys and young men may need to be especially aware of their sons' greater risk for consuming more beer and developing more drinking problems. Because parents may be more permissive with late adolescent boys (McKinney & Renk, 2008), they may need specific training for overcoming this tendency and helping boys and young men to see the values of sobriety (when under the legal drinking age) and self-control in the realm of drinking. They may also need training in helping to supportively monitor their students' drinking habits, without swinging the pendulum towards an authoritarian style. Perhaps society has a responsibility as well. Hundreds of millions of dollars in beer advertisements are often directly aimed at young to middle-aged men (e.g., during football, baseball and hockey games) and are replete with sexual imagery that attempts to create an association between drinking certain brands of beer and escapist fantasy fulfillment (Messner & de Oca, 2005). Even teenage boys report seeing desirable qualities in beer commercials (Aitken, Leathar, & Scott, 1988) and consume more beer as they get older when they remember more commercials (Connolly et al., 1994). However, frequent and binge

beer drinking actually puts young men at a high risk for developing AUD, higher rates of coronary disease (Klatsky et al., 2003), eating more fast food (Paschall & Lipton, 2005), drunk driving (Naimi et al., 2007), relationship troubles, and a host of other problems.

Limitations

This study relied on questionnaires administered at one point and time. Future studies could improve upon this by following college students' perceptions of parenting styles and alcohol consumption over a few years. This is important for examining temporal relationships as well as considering the fact that parents often change over time as well as students (Powell et al., 2012). We did not measure student's intrinsic motivation to learn which has been robustly linked to students' academic development (Froiland, 2014; Froiland & Oros, 2014), psychological health (Froiland, 2011b; Froiland, 2013; Froiland, Oros, Smith & Hirchert, 2012), and prevention against alcohol and drug abuse (Battistich, Schaps, Watson, Solomon, & Lewis, 2000). Another important mediator that should be measured in future related studies is self-regulation, because adults with lower self-regulation are more likely to abuse alcohol and lower self-regulation has been linked to a permissive parenting style (Patock-Peckham, Cheong, Balhorn, & Nagoshi, 2001).

CONCLUSIONS

This study provided further evidence that the permissive parenting style puts college students at-risk for drinking more frequently and more drinking problems. Also, this study indicated that young women drink less beer and this puts them at a lower risk for alcohol-related problems. Because both gender and permissive parenting had an indirect relationship with alcohol-related problems via beer drinking frequency, reducing beer drinking frequency may be worthwhile of further investigation as an intermediate target on the way to less drinking problems.

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AUKLĖJIMO STILIUS, LYTIS, ALAUS VARTOJIMAS IR ALKOHOLIO VARTOJIMO PROBLEMOS STUDENTŲ IMTYJE

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Santrauka. ***Tyrimo pagrindimas ir tikslas***. Studentai ir jauni suaugusieji daugelyje pasaulio šalių suvartoja per daug alkoholio ir turi padidintą riziką vystytis alkoholio vartojimo sutrikimams. Nuolaidus auklėjimo stilius ir alaus vartojimas yra piktnaudžiavimo alkoholiu vėlyvoje paauglystėje ir jauno suaugusiojo amžiuje rizikos veiksniai. ***Metodai***. Šiame tyrime analizuojama netiesioginė sąsaja tarp nuolaidaus auklėjimo stiliaus, vertinto Tėvų autoriteto klausimynu (the Parental Authority Questionnaire, PAQ) ir probleminio alkoholio vartojimo, vertinto Alkoholio vartojimo atpažinimo testu (AUDIT, 2nd edition) remiantis alaus vartojimo dažniu, vertintu Studentų alkoholio klausimynu (Student Alcohol Questionnaire, SAQ), studentų imtyje (amžiaus intervalas 18–23) Jungtinių Amerikos Valstijų šiaurės rytų regionuose. Taip pat, pasitelkiant struktūrinį lygčių modeliavimą, analizuota netiesioginė sąsaja tarp lyties, AUDIT balų ir alaus vartojimo dažnio. ***Rezultatai***. Kaip ir buvo tikėtasi, studentai, kurių tėvai pasižymėjo nuolaidžiu auklėjimo stiliumi, vartojo daugiau alaus ir tai buvo susiję su dažnesnėmis kitomis alkoholio priklausomybės sukeltomis problemomis. Jaunos moterys alaus vartojo reikšmingai mažiau nei jauni vyrai ir tai buvo susiję su mažiau alkoholio priklausomybės sukeltų simptomų ir sveikesniais alkoholio vartojimo įpročiais. ***Išvada***. Šis tyrimas, kaip ir daugybė ankstesnių, nustatė, kad alaus suvartojimas jaunų suaugusiųjų tarpe yra sukeliantis daugiau problemų nei vyno (ar iki tam tikro laipsnio stipraus alkoholio) vartojimas. Tyrimo rezultatai rodo, kad alaus vartojimo dažnio mažinimas, ypač vaikinų grupėje, gali būti tarpinis taikinys tėvams skirtose intervencijose, ypač nukreiptose į alkoholio vartojimo sutrikimų prevenciją.

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: Auklėjimo stilius; probleminis alkoholio vartojimas; jauno suaugusiojo amžius (18–29); vyras; moteris.

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