

## **The association between exposure to mother's and father's alcohol use and children's normative perceptions**

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**Introduction and Aims:** We used a longitudinal multiple-informant family study to examine the impact of exposure to mothers' and fathers' drinking on young children's normative perceptions of who drinks alcohol.

**Design and Methods:** 329 children (four to six years old at baseline [ $M_{\text{age}} 4.78$  ( $SD=.725$ )], 51% girls) completed the Dutch electronic Appropriate Beverage Task [eABT] where they attributed alcoholic beverages to a variety of persons depicted in an illustrated scenario and parents completed an online survey, including information on use and exposure.

**Results:** Children more frequently exposed to their mothers' drinking provided females shown in the eABT significantly more often with alcoholic beverages than children less frequently exposed to mothers' drinking. There was no effect for mother's exposure on providing males in the eABT with alcoholic beverages. Similarly, children more frequently exposed to their fathers' drinking provided fathers significantly more often with alcoholic beverages than children less frequently exposed to fathers drinking. Again, there was no effect of father's exposure on providing the females with alcoholic beverages, but there was also no effect for father's exposure on providing 'other males' with alcohol. Observed patterns held after adjusting for age and sex.

**Discussions and Conclusions:** For the first time, this study demonstrates the gender-specific effect of exposure to parents drinking on young children's perceptions of person-specific drinking norms, particularly mothers' drinking, providing unique evidence in a notably young population on an understudied dimension of alcohol-related perceptions that has important implications for future drinking behaviour.

**Implications for Practice or Policy:** Efforts should be made to inform parents and carers about the association between parental alcohol exposure and children's alcohol-related cognitions from a young age, particularly the gender-specific nature of this knowledge, to inform parental practices.

**Disclosure of Interest Statement: Funding:** This study was funded by a Vidi Grant 452-13-003 awarded from the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) to Emmanuel Kuntsche. This work was supported by an Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship awarded to Megan Cook. This work has just been accepted for publication and is included in Megan Cook's doctoral thesis.