

Modelling the relationship between environmental and social cognitive determinants of risky drinking among emerging adults

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Introduction and Aims. Existing literature has established key environmental, and social cognitive variables related to risky drinking in emerging adults, but further research is needed on the interaction between these variables. The aim of this study was to extend understanding of how environmental and social cognitive variables interact to influence risky drinking among emerging adults. We hypothesized that the social cognitive factors of alcohol outcome expectancies (AOEs) and drinking refusal self-efficacy (DRSE) would sequentially mediate the relationship between environmental factors (perceived parental and peer drinking) and risky drinking.

Design and Methods. A sample of 988 Australian emerging adults completed an online survey including measures of demographic, substance use, environmental variables (perceived drinking by parents and peers) and social cognitive variables (AOEs and DRSE). This study employed a cross-sectional design. Path analysis was used to identify indirect pathways for the relationship between environmental factors and drinking behaviour, through social cognitive variables.

Results. In line with predictions, the relationship between risky drinking behaviour and the environmental factor of perceived parental drinking was mediated by AOEs (positive and negative), and these pathways were in turn mediated by DRSE. Similarly, the relationship between risky drinking and perceived peer drinking was mediated by positive and negative expectancies, but contrary to predictions, DRSE did not mediate these pathways.

Discussion and Conclusions. This study extends on previous research by revealing novel pathways between environmental influences for drinking behaviour (perceived drinking by peers and parents), via social cognitive factors that are conducive to change (AOEs and DRSE).

Disclosure of Interest Statement: None to declare.