Too Scientific; Didn't Understand!

Article

Let me explain!

Measuring different reasons for alcohol use

Why?

Many people drink alcohol, but **not all people drink alcohol for the same reasons**. We know that some reasons for drinking alcohol can predict heavier drinking and problems with alcohol later in life. Hence, researchers, doctors, and clinicians would like to have **a good but short questionnaire to measure reasons for drinking** that is easy to use in their participants and patients.

What & How?

In this study, we compared three different versions of a commonly used **questionnaire to assess reasons for drinking**. These reasons include:

1. **Coping:** to feel less bad than you feel now
2. **Enhancement:** to feel even better than you feel now
3. **Social:** to feel more sociable or enjoy social situations
4. **Conformity:** to fit in with others

We **compared a short, medium, and long version** of this questionnaire to assess whether a shorter - more convenient - version might work as well or even better than the long version.

We also measured whether these different reasons for drinking might be related to **how often you drink, how much you drink, and how often you drink many glasses on one occasion** ("binge drinking").

Who?

A total of **434 adults who drank alcohol during the last year** participated in this study. Most participants were from **the Netherlands** and were **in their early twenties**, a period in which heavy drinking is very common.

What did we find?

Using different methods to measure the accuracy and quality of questionnaires, we showed that the **short version** of the questionnaire worked **as well or even better** than the **medium and long version.**

Our participants reported **more enhancement and social reasons than coping and conformity reasons** for drinking.

People with **more coping reasons** drank alcohol **more often** than those with fewer coping reasons.

People with **more enhancement reasons** drank **more alcohol** on days when they were drinking than those with fewer enhancement reasons.

People with **more social reasons** were **more likely to drink many drink**s on a single occasion ("binge drinking") than those with fewer social reasons.

It did not matter **whether you used the short, medium or long version** of the questionnaire: **the results were very similar!**

Important!

The short version of the questionnaire seems to be **a good alternative** for the medium and longer versions that are often used. This can **save time**, both for the participant or patient and for the researcher, doctor, or clinician.

It is important to note that **different reasons for drinking** are associated with **different characteristics of alcohol use** and might thereby have **different health consequences** or risk for future drinking problems.

There are a lot of **differences between participants!** This questionnaire is **a tool to identify reasons for use**, but it remains important to **look beyond questionnaire scores** in research and health care settings.

Kroon, E., Romein, C., Andriese, C., Franken, I., & El Marroun, H. (2025). Validation and comparison of three different versions of the Drinking Motives Questionnaire: a network analysis approach. European Addiction Research. https://doi.org/10.1159/000546920

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