



Associations Between Personality Pathology and Alcohol Use

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INTRODUCTION

Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) is a widely studied area of research within the field of psychology due to both prevalence and influential role in more than two hundred diseases and injuries (WHO, 2024). There has been a particular interest in comorbidity with AUD and Cluster B personality disorders, particularly antisocial personality disorder (APD) and borderline personality disorder (BPD) (Compton, 2005).

Studies have examined a high rate of co-occurrence between BPD and AUD, with recent meta-analytic findings documenting prevalence rates for those with comorbid AUD and BPD ($N = 15,603$) to be 55.28%, with rates of dependence and misuse being 44.59% and 18.84%, respectively (Silva et al., 2026). Long & colleagues (2017) have documented significant associations between BPD, APD and AUD, finding that in their sample of 2,801 Norwegian twins, borderline and antisocial PD criteria were the strongest predictors of phenotypic and genotypic liability to alcohol misuse and AUD.

However, while research has documented evidence for the prevalence of comorbid personality pathology and AUD, explanatory evidence of *why* certain PDs associate with AUD differently is under explored. Emotion dysregulation is a common risk factor discussed for those with comorbid BPD and AUD, but the consensus for if this model extends to APD is unclear (Stesiv et al., 2023). In the present study, we conducted preliminary analyses to examine the relationship between BPD and APD as they relate to alcohol use in ($N = 70$) emerging college men ($Mage = 19.88$)

METHOD

Measures

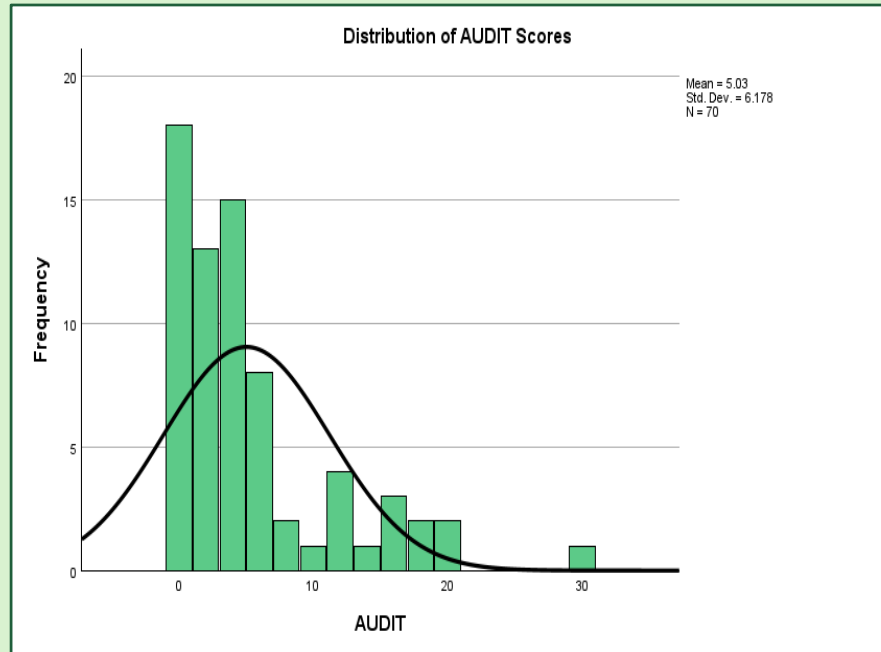
Alcohol Use

- The Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT; Saunders et al., 1993) is a 10-item self-report measure used to screen for alcohol use and problematic drinking patterns. The AUDIT assesses quantity and frequency of drinking, drinking intensity, symptoms of dependence and tolerance, and negative consequences related to alcohol. Possible scores range from 0-40, with higher scores indicating greater alcohol use and problems

Personality Pathology

- The Antisocial Personality and Borderline Personality Subscales of The Personality Diagnostic Questionnaire-4 (PDQ-4; Hyler et al., 1988) was used to assess symptoms of anti-sociality and borderline personality.
- Both subscales of the PDQ-4 consist of 9 true/false statements that assess symptoms of Antisocial and Borderline Personality. For example, "I don't care if others get hurt as long as I get what I want" (Anti-social PD) and "I'll go to extremes to prevent those who I love from ever leaving me" (Borderline PD)

Hierarchical regression analyses were conducted to examine the relationship between two different personality pathologies (BPD vs APD) and alcohol use and alcohol use problems.



**In Emerging College Men,
both Antisocial PD and
Borderline PD negatively
associate with Alcohol Use and
Related Problems**

RESULTS

- To account for skewness and kurtosis, the AUDIT was log-transformed
- A hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine whether Antisocial Personality Traits (APD) and Borderline Personality Traits (BPD) predicted Alcohol Use and Related Problems (AUDIT).
- In Step 1 of the model, APD was entered as the sole predictor. The model was significant $F(1, 68) = 7.63, p = .008$ and accounted for approximately 9.8% of the variance in AUDIT scores ($R^2 = 0.98$), suggesting higher levels of antisocial personality traits were associated with lower alcohol use ($\beta = -.031, p = .008$)
- In Step 2 of the model, BPD was added as a predictor, the overall model remained significant $F(2, 67) = 6.40, p = .003$ and explained 16.0% of the variance in AUDIT scores ($R^2 = .160$). There was a significant increase in the variance explained ($\Delta R^2 = .063, p = .029$).
- When both predictors were included in the model, BPD emerged as a significant negative predictor ($\beta = -0.26, p = .029$), while APD demonstrated a marginal effect ($\beta = -0.23, p = .053$)

DISCUSSION

- The regression analysis found a negative association between both APD and BPD traits and alcohol use. Our main hypothesis was found to be non-significant; however, this is an interesting finding.
- Given that past work has examined positive associations between APD and BPD traits and alcohol use, one possible explanation for our results may lie in declining alcohol use in the population (Keyes, 2022).
- Additional factors that could explain this relationship may be psychiatric medication/therapeutic treatment adherence or other substance use such as a cannabis being more salient to this population.
- Limitations to our study include our sample size being 70 and only focused on college men from a Northern Texas University, as well as the cross-sectional nature of our study limits temporal conclusions for this relationship.
- Further research would do well to expand the sample size, control for additional covariates that may influence the relationship between personality pathology and alcohol use and utilizing a longitudinal multi-level design to allow for temporal conclusions to be drawn.