

Coping Motives on the Interaction Between Perceived Danger and Alcohol-Impaired Driving (AID)

Peja M. James¹, Olivia M. Warner², Denis M. McCarthy²

¹Department of Biology, Howard University, Washington, D.C., 20060, USA, ² Department of Psychology, University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri, 65201, USA

Abstract

Objective: Alcohol-Impaired driving (AID) continues to be a prevalent behavior among young

adults and accounts for over 1 million arrests annually and approximately 1/3 of all traffic fatalities. Previous research indicates that individual differences in the perceived danger of AID is a reliable predictor of engagement in AID. The current study examines whether the extent to which an individual drinks to cope with negative mood moderates the association between perceived danger and AID.

Methods: Fifty-nine young adult moderate drinkers (M age= 24.9 years; 57% female; 83% White) completed a six-week ecological momentary assessment (EMA) study. Drinking motives were assessed at baseline (DMQ-R; Cooper, 1994); participants completed daily reports of alcohol use and AID attitudes (e.g., perceived danger of AID) while drinking, as well as morning reports of AID.

Results: Perceived danger of AID significantly predicted AID, such that for every unit increase in perceived danger, the odds of AID decreased by 66%. However, the hypothesized interaction between coping motives and perceived danger on the odds of AID was not statistically significant ($p = .64$).

Conclusions: This study is the first to consider the interaction between coping motives and perceived danger in the prediction of AID. In line with existing work, our findings suggest that between-person differences in perceived danger significantly predicted AID, but did not support coping motives as moderators of this relationship. One limitation is that coping motives were assessed at the trait level. Future research is needed to test whether event-level variability in coping motives might alter the influence of perceived danger on AID.