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DRINKING MOTIVES OF COMMUNITY DWELLING OLDER ADULTS AND ITS ASSOCIATED FACTORS

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Statement of the Problem: Although a decrease in alcohol consumption by older adults has been demonstrated, the number of older adults using alcohol is growing. Due to the ageing processes, older adults are more vulnerable to the adverse consequences of alcohol use. There is little knowledge about the reasons why older adults are using alcohol despite the fact that drinking motives are an important factor in predicting alcohol use and alcohol problems. Recent studies in older populations reported the association between drinking for social reasons and binge drinking. Drinking to cope has been linked to alcohol related problems. The purpose of this study is to describe the drinking motives of older adults and its associations with alcohol use and alcohol related problems.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: In a retrospective cross sectional research the alcohol use and drinking motives of community dwelling older adults were studied. The study sample consisted of 1093 adult's aged 65 years and older using alcohol at the time of the interview. The participants were questioned about their alcohol use with the extended version of the AUDIT. The Drinking Motives Questionnaire and the geriatric version of the Michigan Alcohol Screening Test were used for the registration of the drinking motives and the alcohol related problems respectively.

Findings: The most frequent cited drinking motive for men and women are the social motives, followed by the enhancement and the coping motives. The most relevant associations are moderate to strong positive associations between the enhancement motive and the quantity of alcohol, between the coping and enhancement motives and binge drinking and between coping and enhancement motives and self-reported alcohol related problems.

Conclusion & Significance: Drinking motives can be associated with alcohol use and alcohol related problems in older adults. Awareness among health care givers about this topic is necessary.

Biography

Yannic van Gils is a clinical psychologist and a psychotherapist with years of experience in education and clinical fields. The focus of her PhD research is to describe the biopsychosocial factors that discriminate older adults at risk for alcohol related problems. Prevention and interventions are efficient strategies for older adults, but still under recognized.

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