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The Effects of Binge Drinking on Attention in Young Adults.

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Abstract

Alcohol binge drinking is ubiquitous among young adults. While the neurotoxic effects of general alcohol consumption are well known, binge drinking has unique effects on the brain through the intoxication and withdrawal cycle. In particular, the research regarding binge drinking and attention is mixed; this study investigates this relationship in young adults. University students (N=105) were recruited. Socio-demographic and alcohol use information was collected, then participants completed cognitive tasks based on the Attention Network Theory: alerting, orienting, and executive control. Binge drinking, sex, and age of first binge did not predict attention impairment, nor did sex moderate the relationship. The tasks measuring attention did not relate in the expected manner. While there were no differences in attention performance between those who binge drink and controls in this study, the relationship between binge drinking and attention impairments in young adults may be more nuanced and future research directions are suggested.