

Gender, Stress, Coping and Alcohol Use

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Men drink more and experience more drinking-related problems than do women, both in adolescence (Barnes & Welte, 1986; Lex, 1991) and as adults (Hilton, 1987; Lex, 1991). To date, efforts to explain these differences have focused on gender role socialization factors, which have proven only partially successful in accounting for male-female differences in alcohol use and abuse (e.g., Huselid & Cooper, 1992). Thus, other factors need to be considered if we are to understand more adequately the underlying source of gender differences in alcohol involvement. Both stress and coping factors have been cited as potentially useful explanatory mechanisms (e.g., Cooper et al., 1992a; Huselid & Cooper, 1992). That is, if men lead more stressful lives or use more maladaptive forms of coping than women, these differences may account for their relatively greater alcohol use. The present study therefore examines in a systematic manner the extent to which stress and coping factors can account for -or mediate - gender differences in alcohol involvement among both adolescents and adults. In contrast to these expectations results showed that stress and coping suppressed the link between gender and alcohol use involvement.

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