



Women's "Embarrassing" Sexual Experiences: Alcohol, Expectations, and Motives

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INTRODUCTION

- Abbey et al (2006 & 1999) have shown that alcohol consumption plays an important role in sexual disinhibition in women.
 - According to social learning theory, people behave in accordance with their expectations— this has implications with alcohol use as well
 - Sexual decision making has been shown to be affected adversely by alcohol intoxication (Maisto, Carey & Carey, 2004).
 - The present study examines the interaction between:
 - women's sexual expectations
 - frequency and amount of alcohol consumption reasons and
 - endorsements for engaging in sexual activity
- Hypotheses:
- The more frequently a woman drinks, the more likely she has engaged in self-reported "embarrassing" sexual activity and sexual coercion
 - The more alcohol consumed at a given time will lead to self-reported "embarrassing" sexual activity and sexual coercion
 - A higher degree of positive expectations regarding sex as a result of drinking will predict the occurrence of "embarrassing" sexual activity and coercion
 - The more reasons and endorsements a woman has for engaging in sexual activity will lead to more "embarrassing" sexual activity and coercion

METHODS

- 60 female students 96% Caucasian, mean age = 18.8, sd = 1.2
- Participants were heterosexual, currently dating and normal drinkers
- Administered questionnaire in small groups in private rooms on campus. Participants were paid \$10 for their participation.
- The questionnaire included instruments (among many others) to assess drinking, alcohol expectancies, sexual experiences, and various other questionnaires
- The Quantity-Frequency Index** (adapted from Cahalan, et al 1969) yields a 90-day drinking summary, and identifies the type of alcohol that the individual consumes (i.e. hard liquor, beer, and wine).
- Revised Alcohol Expectancy Questionnaire** (Rohsenow, 1983) is a self-report questionnaire that asks individuals about their expectations of the outcome of consuming alcohol along eight domains: 1) global positive; 2) social and physical pleasure; 3) social expressiveness; 4) sexual enhancement; 5) power and aggression; 6) tension reduction and relaxation; 7) cognitive and physical impairment; & 8) careless unconcern.

•Women's Sexual Experiences

(Noel & Ogle, Unpublished) assesses the reasons and the number of endorsements for engaging in sexual activity

•Additional Items

- "Engaged in sexual behavior that you felt embarrassed about or would not have done if you were sober"
- Engaged in sexual behavior because you felt coerced, forced, or unable to stop the other person,"

RESULTS

An analysis of covariance was performed, and a three-way interaction was found among

- women's sexual motives
 - expectations under the influence of alcohol
 - and amount of alcohol per occasion
- on self-reported number of "embarrassing" sexual incidents in the last year ($F(1,51)=4.397$; $p<.05$).

Interestingly, the frequency of alcohol use was not associated with the number of embarrassing sexual incidents

Further, this three-way interaction was associated only with self-reported embarrassing choices, not reported sexual coercion.



DISCUSSION

Based on these results, it appears that women who reported "embarrassing" sexual behavior under the influence of alcohol have:

- Higher positive expectations regarding alcohol and sex
- More reasons and endorsements for engaging in sexual activity in general (even when they are not drinking)
- Are drinking more alcohol at a given instance (i.e. tend to drink more per drinking occasion than those who reported fewer or no "embarrassing" sexual behavior)

A possible explanation is that drinking women become disinhibited from social gender norms and responsibility, but in retrospect, they feel regretful

Another possibility is that intoxication offers an "excuse" for engaging in behavior they might not endorse when sober (more purposeful?).

In addition, how often a woman drinks alcohol is not significantly associated with the extent to which she will engage in "embarrassing" sexual behavior

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