

## Introduction

- The frequency of alcohol consumption among undergraduates (UGs) during COVID-19 varies (Acuff et al., 2021)
- UGs drinking to cope with COVID-19 anxiety may drink more alcohol (Mohr et al., 2021)
- UGs drinking to cope are at risk for alcohol-related problems (ARP; e.g., DUI) (Cooper et al., 2015)
- COVID-19 anxiety may increase risk for drinking to cope and ARP (Charles et al., 2021)
- Relations between COVID-19 anxiety, drinking to cope, and ARP has not been tested among UGs in the U.S.

## Research Question, Hypotheses

- Do UGs who drink to cope with COVID-19 anxiety experience more ARP?
- Controlling for alcohol consumption, COVID-19 anxiety, and drinking to cope will explain a significant amount of variance in ARP (**H1**)
- COVID-19 anxiety will predict greater drinking to cope (**H2**), which will predict more ARP (**H3**)

## Methods

### Procedure:

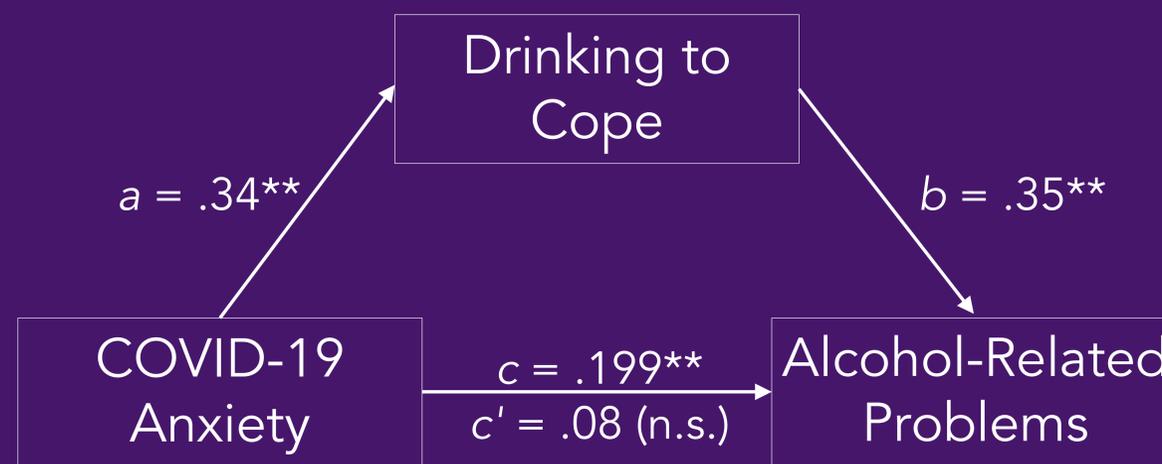
- Online survey distributed Oct-Dec 2020
- 409 UGs reporting drinking in the past month
- COVID-19 anxiety: adapted CES-D, GAD-7, IES-R (Pew Research Center, 2020)
- Drinking to cope: Drinking Motives Questionnaire Revised (Cooper, 1994)
- Alcohol consumption: Daily Drinking Questionnaire (Collins et al., 1985)
- ARP: BYAACQ (Kahler et al., 2005)

### Analyses:

- Descriptive statistics, bivariate correlations
- Simple mediation analysis (PROCESS Macro Model 4; Hayes, 2022)
  - Predictor = COVID-19 anxiety
  - Mediator = Drinking to cope
  - Outcome = ARP
  - Covariate = Alcohol consumption

# DRINKING TO COPE WITH COVID-19 ANXIETY PREDICTS GREATER ALCOHOL PROBLEMS FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

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Total model variance:  $F_{(3, 354)} = 38.88, p < .001, R^2 = .25$

\*\* $p < .001$

Note. Reported weights are standardized



Undergraduate students drinking to cope with COVID-19 anxiety experienced more alcohol problems, regardless of how much they drank

## References



## Results

### Participant Demographics

Variable	
Age	
M (SD)	21.12 (4.19)
Range	18-64
Gender	%
Men	28.14
Women	68.14
Non-binary, Genderqueer	3.68
Race	
Asian	7.20
Black	10.17
Latinx	8.44
White	60.79
Multiracial	11.91
Other	1.50

### Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations

Variable	M (SD)	Min-Max	1	2	3
1. Drinks per week	8.22 (8.39)	1-74			
2. COVID-19 anxiety	1.20 (0.73)	0-3	-.14*		
3. Drinking to cope	1.98 (0.94)	1-5	.20**	.31**	
4. ARP	3.68 (3.94)	0-19	.34**	.14**	.42**

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$

Note. ARP: Alcohol-related problems; COVID-19 anxiety and drinking to cope measured on five-point scales ranging from *none of the time* to *all of the time*

## Discussion

- UGs drinking to cope with COVID-19 anxiety experienced more alcohol problems, regardless of how much they drank
- Findings emerged in early stages of pandemic: vaccines not available, remote learning/living
- With new variants there is growing uncertainty; coping motives may still be salient
- Mental health providers can help UGs by inquiring about their drinking motives
- Collegiate recovery programs and mutual help groups can help UGs learn adaptive coping skills (Liese & Monley, 2021; Vest et al., 2021)