

## Changes in Perceptions of Individual and Peer Drinking in the COVID-19 Pandemic

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### INTRO

- COVID-19 has influenced the social sphere during times of quarantine, but it is unknown whether these changes relate to normative beliefs about substance use behaviors.
- Aim: Examine whether college students perceive that their peers experiences changes in drinking that match their own patterns of drinking in COVID-19.

### METHOD

Participants: Undergraduate students (N=553), predominantly female (74.4%) and White (74.1%), with an average age of 20.6.

Procedure: one-time online survey measuring their perceived changes in quantity and frequency of their own and their peers drinking behaviors.

Analysis: Chi-square test of independence were run.

### RESULTS

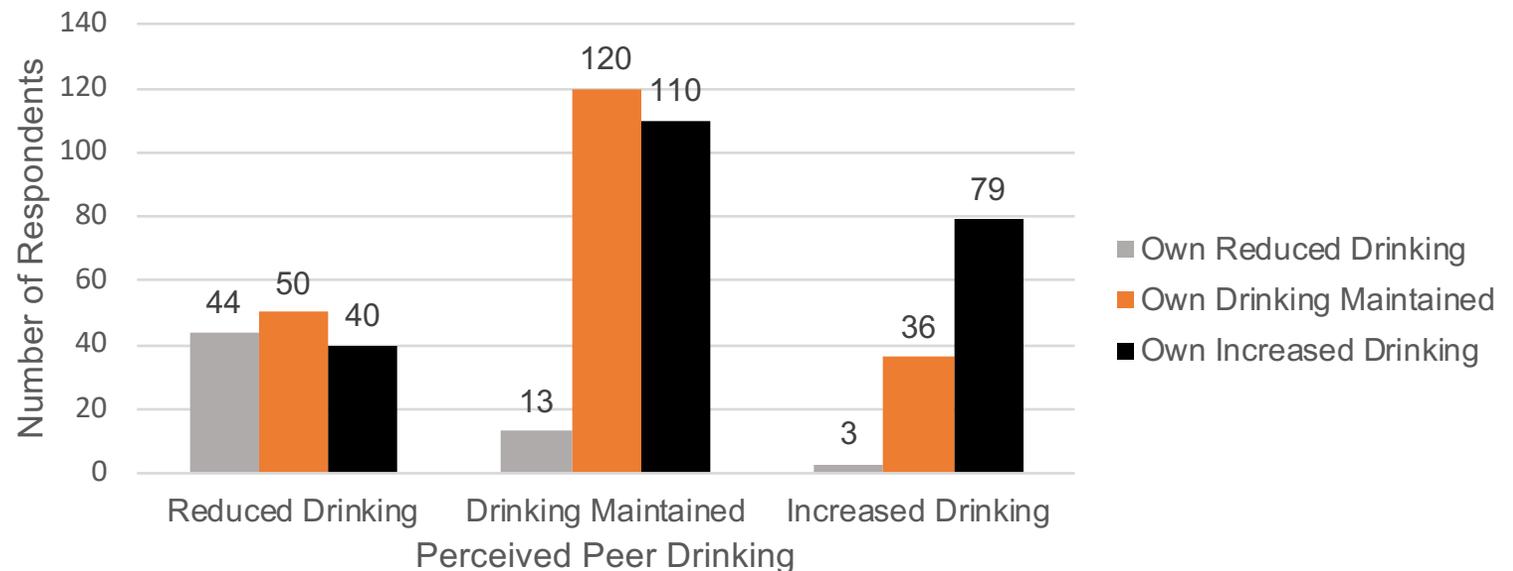
- Tests of independence revealed significant differences in perceptions of both own and peer quantity quantity  $X^2(4, N = 495) = 91.95, p < .001$  and frequency  $X^2(4, N = 495) = 77.12, p < .001$  of drinking behaviors.

### DISCUSSION

- Students who perceived either no change or increases in their own drinking were more likely to perceived that peers also experienced either no change or increases in drinking.
- Results may be useful in informing normative and education-based interventions for substance use treatment in the context of COVID-19, particularly among college students, a population with high rates of engagement in risky drinking.
- Further investigation into how these perceptions relate to actual rates of change is warranted.

*Students whose drinking remained consistent or increased during COVID-19 perceived that their peers experienced similar patterns of drinking.*

Perceived Peer Drinking and Own Drinking in COVID-19



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