Resistance to Peer Pressure Across Alcohol, Steroid, and Sedative User Groups

Shabria S. Smith, M.S., Ashley K. Dorsey, M.S., & Kristine M. Jacquin, Ph.D.

Introduction

Approximately 1,000,000 Americans misused prescription sedatives as of 2018 (Bustamante, 2021). Previous studies found factors such as motivations to sleep or get high (Rigg & Ibañez, 2010), and relieve anxiety (Becker et al., 2007) or depression symptoms (Zullig & Divin, 2012) influence nonmedical prescription drug use. Furthermore, literature suggests peer pressure is related to substance abuse among adolescents and young adults (DiGuiseppi et al., 2018; Griffin et al., 2015). Researchers have not examined peer influence in different types of sedative users (nonmedical and medical). Our research helped fill this gap.

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine if individuals who engage in non-medical use of sedatives are more susceptible to peer pressure in comparison to non-users and medical users. The best predictors of susceptibility to peer influence were older age, alcohol use, and steroid use.

Methods: Participants

- N = 412 American adults
- Age: M = 32.7, SD = 11.5
- Gender identity = Male (53.2%), Female (42.7%), Non-binary (2.2%), Agender (1.2%), Transgender (0.4%), Genderqueer (0.2%)

Methods: Procedure

- Groups - Participants were grouped based on substance use; prescription sedative users were further grouped based on whether use was prescribed (medical users) or not (nonmedical users).
- Data was collected online using the Drug Use Survey (Jaccquin & Davis, 2009) and Resistance to Peer Influence Scale (Steinberg & Monahan, 2007).

Results

- ANOVA was conducted with sedative user group as IV and resistance to peer influence as DV.
- There was no main effect, F(3, 382) < 1, p = .78, partial η² = .003. Age was significantly correlated with resistance to peer influence, r = .17, p = .001, so age was used as a covariate in an ANCOVA, but sedative user group was not significant.
- Additional ANOVAs were conducted to determine if resistance to peer influence differs across other substance user groups.
- There was a significant effect for alcohol user group, F(4, 394) = 5.38, p < .0001, partial η² = .05.
- Non-drinkers (M = 31.08, SD = 5.50) reported more resistance to peer influence than current drinkers (M = 28.00, SD = 5.12).
- Non-steroid users (M = 29.38, SD = 5.51) reported significantly more resistance to peer influence than current steroid users (M = 23.00, SD = 4.24), F(4, 394) = 3.48, p = .008, partial η² = .03.

Discussion

- Resistance to peer influence did not differ across sedative user groups.
- However, we found a relationship between alcohol and steroid use and greater susceptibility to peer influence.
- The results suggest that resistance to peer influence may reduce risk of alcohol and steroid use, but not prescription sedative use.

References


American Psychological Association 2022 Conference