



Food and Alcohol Disturbance Among US College Students: A Narrative Review

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INTRODUCTION

Background

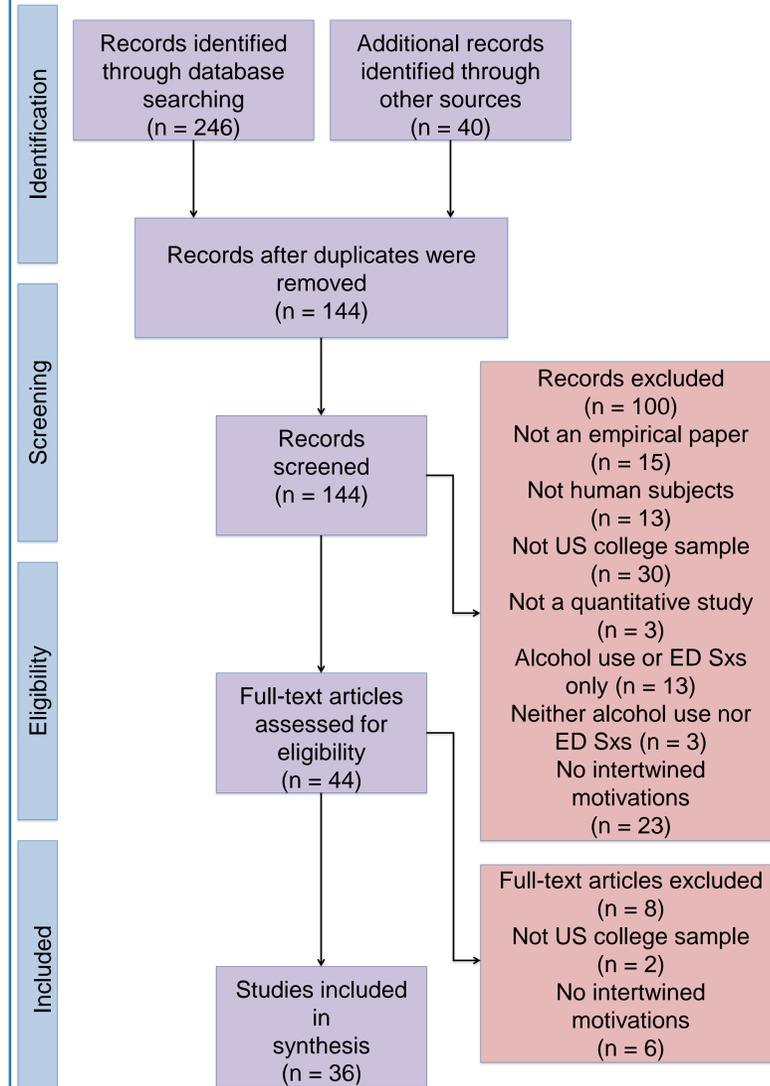
- Disordered eating and problematic alcohol use are primary health concerns on US college campuses
- Research has highlighted that a reciprocal association between disordered eating and alcohol use might exist for some individuals (e.g., Dodge & Clarke, 2018; Peralta et al., 2019). This phenomenon is referred to as food and alcohol disturbance (FAD)
- Most definitions of FAD emphasize the use of compensatory behaviors to offset caloric intake associated with alcohol consumption and/or enhance intoxication effects (e.g., Dinger et al., 2017; Gorrell et al., 2018)

Study Aims

- Aim 1:** Examine how FAD has been conceptualized in the current literature
- Aim 2:** Determine estimated prevalence rates of FAD, and how this differs according to demographic factors and subcultures
- Aim 3:** Identify the psychological correlates of FAD
- Aim 4:** Investigate the consequences of FAD

METHOD

Figure 1: Search Strategy Flow Chart



RESULTS

Prevalence

- Prevalence estimates of FAD behavior ranged from approximately 10-55% of participants (see Figure 2)
- Gender:** FAD behaviors, especially those connected to weight control, might be more common in women
- Race/Ethnicity:** Findings are inconclusive but white students may be more likely to engage in FAD than Black/African American students
- Subculture:** Greek affiliation may be associated with higher FAD and athlete status with lower FAD

Correlates

- Alcohol use:** Drinking quantity, frequency and episodes of heavy episodic drinking may predict FAD
- Disordered eating:** Disordered eating (e.g., cognitive restraint, excessive exercise, and drive for thinness) may predict FAD
- Personality:** Masculinity and masculine orientation may potentially predict FAD
- Affective:** Potential links between PTSD symptoms, cortisol levels, and coping motives
- Social:** Peer appearance pressures, internalized sexual objectification, and conformity motives were identified as correlates

Consequences

- FAD associated with higher levels of alcohol-related consequences

DISCUSSION

Limitations of Current Research

- Measures and definitions for examining FAD have been inconsistent
- Enhanced intoxication effects have been largely neglected
- Samples have been predominantly White and female
- Few studies have examined the same correlates
- Majority of studies are cross-sectional

Future Directions

- A comprehensive and consistent definition of FAD is needed
- Enhanced intoxication effects should be further evaluated when studying FAD behaviors
- Studies should also recruit more diverse samples in order to examine prevalence among different demographics
- Additional research is needed to examine the underlying motives of FAD as well as to identify other predictors and correlates that might increase risk
- Longitudinal research on the progression and outcomes of FAD is warranted

METHOD

- Literature searches occurred from June 2019 to June 2020
- Search terms: drunkorexia, "food and alcohol disturbance", and "compensatory behavior" AND alcohol AND eating
- Electronic databases included PsycINFO, PubMed, and Web of Science
- Identified 36 articles spanning from 2009 to 2020

RESULTS

Conceptualization

- The Compensatory Eating and Behaviors in Response to Alcohol Consumption Scale (CEBRACS) was the most commonly utilized measure followed by single items (see Table 1)
- Almost a third of the studies did not address enhanced intoxication effects
- The majority of studies operationalized FAD behaviors as including proactive (i.e., before drinking) eating (e.g., caloric restriction) and/ or exercise modification

Figure 2: Bar Graph of the Studies that Reported the Prevalence of FAD Behaviors

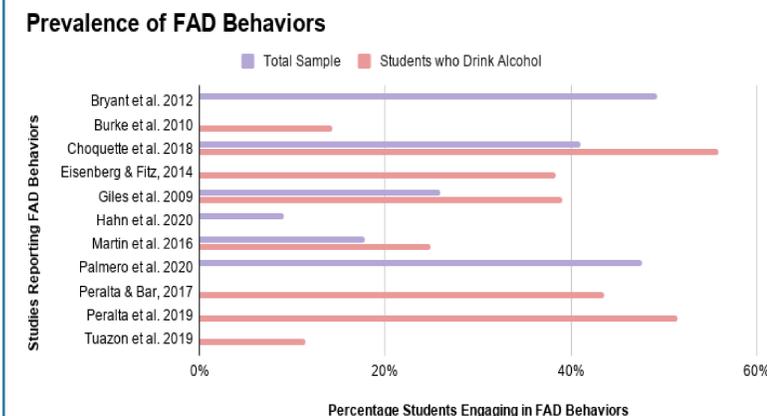


Table 1: Measurement of FAD and the Number of Studies that Used Each

| Measurement of FAD Behaviors | Number of Studies Using Measure |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Single Item | 12 |
| CEBRACS | 18 |
| Drunkorexia Scale | 2 |
| Drunkorexia Motives & Behaviors Scale | 2 |
| ICB-WGA | 1 |
| CEDBS | 1 |

CEBRACS = Compensatory Eating and Behaviors in Response to Alcohol Consumption Scale; ICB-WGA = Inappropriate Compensatory Behaviors to Avoid Gaining Weight from Consuming Alcohol; CEDBS= College Eating and Drinking Behaviors Scale