SOBER-SORTING: GAY ONLINE DATING APP USE AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO SUBSTANCE ABUSE

RECOVERY AND RELAPSE

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Background
- Gay and bisexual men have a high risk for substance use disorders, partially facilitated by permissive social norms
- Dating behaviors impact substance use and recovery
- Minimal research exploring dating's impact on gay/bisexual men's recovery progress
- Many dating apps have direct methods for identifying sobriety

Methodology
- 94 gay/bisexual men in recovery from drugs and/or alcohol, that had used a gay online dating app in the last 6 months
- Sober-sorting: percent agreement on "In the last 6 months, I only contacted sober people or people in recovery [when using gay online dating apps] when I was seeking [long-term romantic partners/casual sexual partners with no commitment]"
- Recovery progress: Substance Use Recovery Evaluator (SURE; Neale et al., 2016)

Implications and Future Directions
- Sober-sorting as a part of a broader recovery process in some contexts
- Dating for long-term romantic partners being more impactful on recovery progress than seeking non-committal sex on dating apps
- Sober-sorting conceptual development and measure development in future work

Sober-sorting: making dating/hook-up decisions based on the sobriety status of a potential partner

- Sober-sorting when looking for long-term romantic partners was related to better recovery progress
- Sober-sorting when looking for non-committal sex was not related to recovery progress

Sober-sorting may be related to the recovery progress of gay and bisexual men when looking for longer-term relationships, but not hook-ups.

The authors would like to thank the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), in collaboration with APA divisions 28 and 50, for their generous virtual travel support.