

# **Marital and Family Processes: Alcohol Use in the Context of Marital Relationships**

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**You have asked me how I feel about whiskey. All right, here is how I feel about whiskey**

**If you mean that evil drink that topples Christian men and women from the pinnacles of righteous and gracious living into the bottomless pits of degradation, shame, despair, helplessness, and hopelessness, then, my friend, I am opposed to it with every fiber of my being.**



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However, if you mean that drink that enables man to magnify his joy, and to forget life's great tragedies and heartbreaks and sorrow .... then my friend, I am absolutely, unequivocally in favor of it.



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This is my position, and as always, I refuse to be compromised on matters of principle.

Noah S. "Soggy" Sweat, Jr, delivered on April 4, 1952, at a banquet before the Mississippi Legislature while the prohibition issue was before the Legislature.

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## Outline

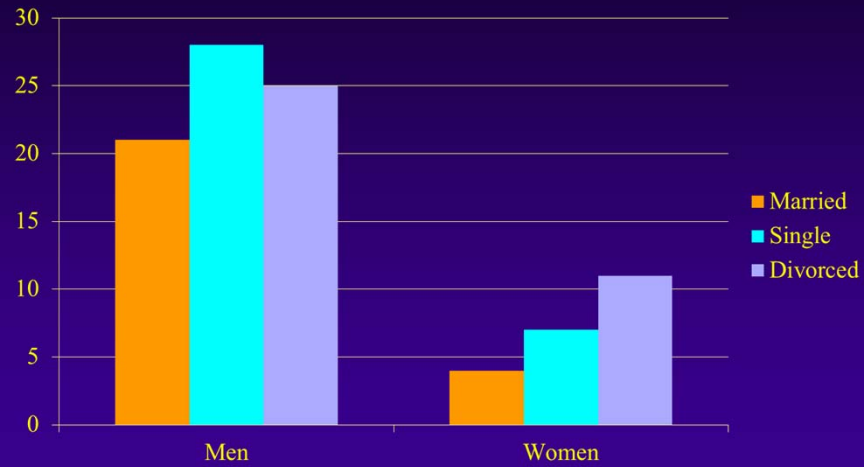
- Intimate relationships are key protection against substance use.
- Partners have similar substance use and each is influenced by their partner's use.
- Positive marital relationships are generally protective, although there can be negative effects.
- How does substance use impact marriage
  - Marital functioning
  - Marital stability
  - Intimacy vs conflict

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**Intimate relationships are key protection against substance use.**

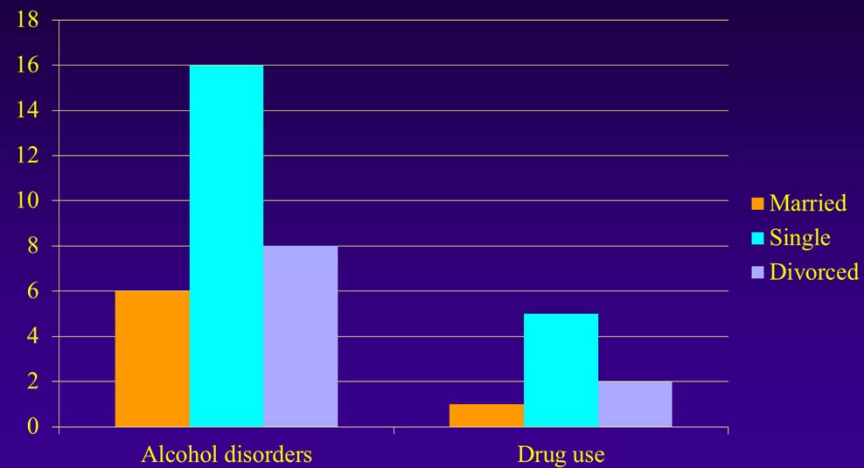
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## Marital Status and Heavy Drinking Cahalan, Cisin, and Crossley (1969)



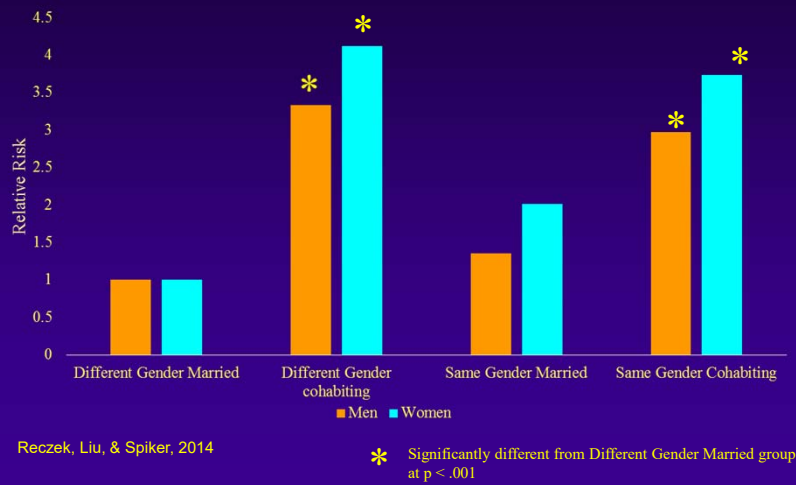
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## Marital Status and Substance Use Disorders NESARC



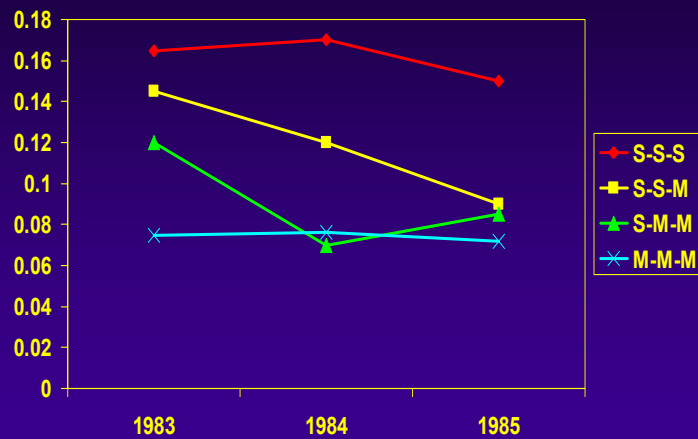
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## Relative Risk for Current Heavy Drinking from National Health Interview Surveys



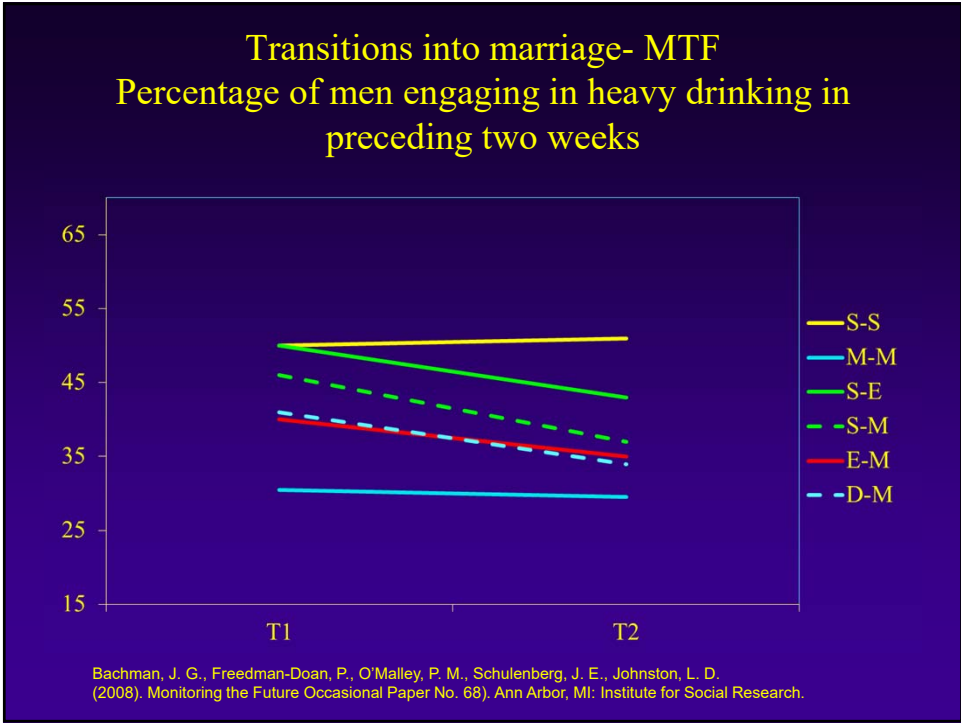
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## Proportion of Heavy Drinkers (5 or more drinks once a week) according to Marital Transition

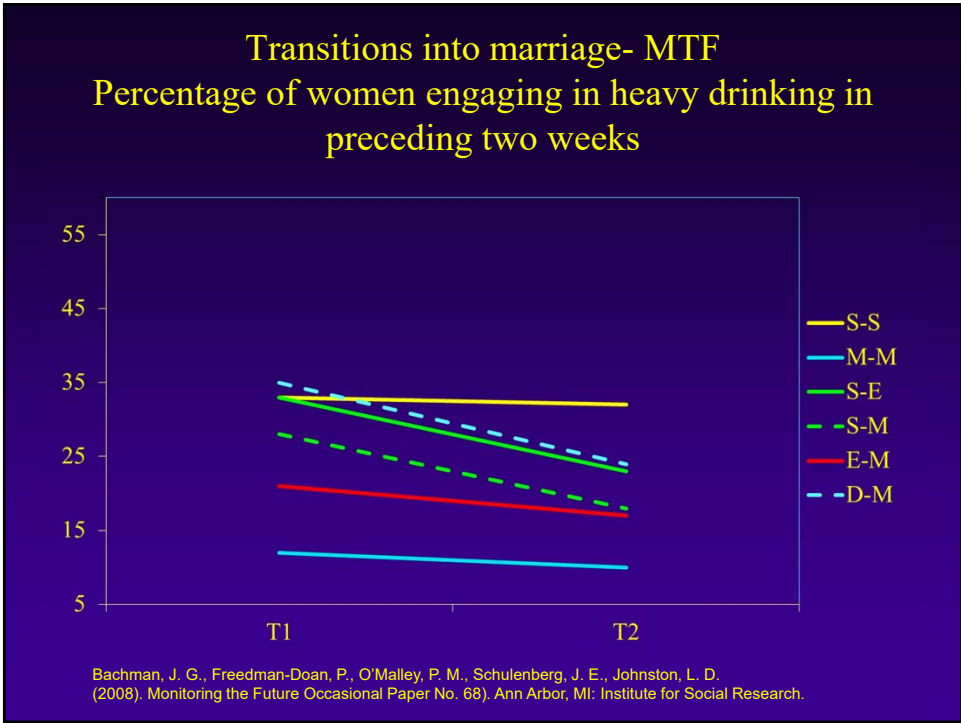


Miller-Tutzauer, Leonard, & Windle, 1991

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## Effects observed in MTF

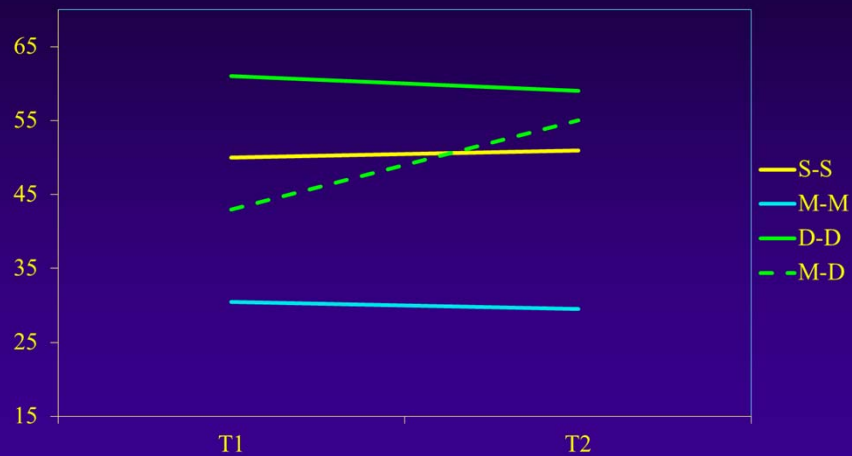
	Heavy Drinking	Cigarette	Marijuana	Cocaine
Marriage	reduces	reduces	reduces	reduces
Separation/divorce	increases	increases	Increases for women	No effect
Cohabiting/not engaged	reduces	No effect	No effect	No effect
Cohabiting/engaged	reduces	reduces	reduces	reduces
Engaged/not cohabiting	reduces	reduces	reduces	reduces

Staff, et al, 2010

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## Transitions out of marriage- MTF

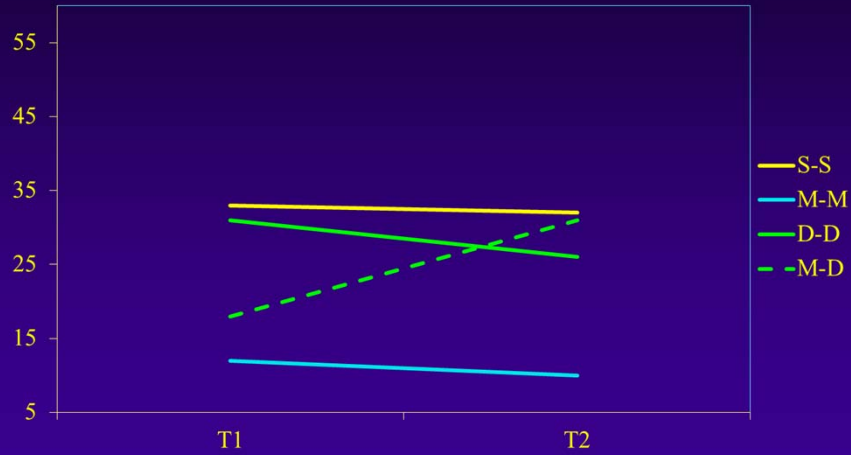
### Percentage of men engaging in heavy drinking in preceding two weeks



Bachman, J. G., Freedman-Doan, P., O'Malley, P. M., Schulenberg, J. E., Johnston, L. D. (2008). Monitoring the Future Occasional Paper No. 68). Ann Arbor, MI: Institute for Social Research.

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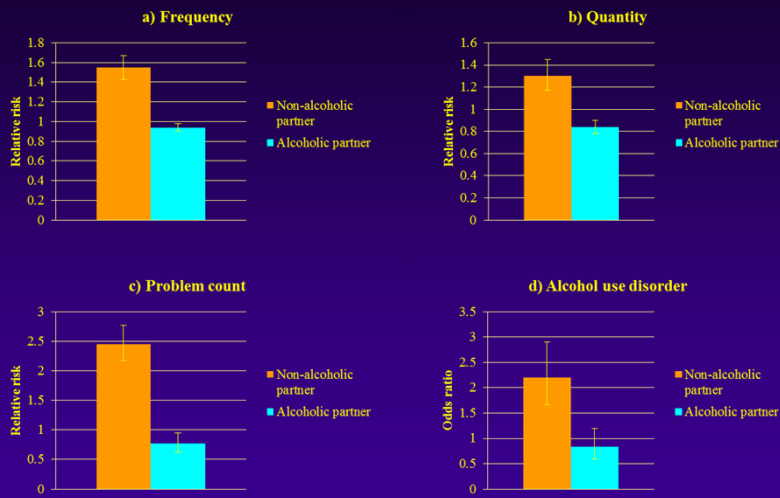
## Transition out of marriage- MTF Percentage of women engaging in heavy drinking in preceding two weeks



Bachman, J. G., Freedman-Doan, P., O'Malley, P. M., Schulenberg, J. E., Johnston, L. D. (2008). Monitoring the Future Occasional Paper No. 68). Ann Arbor, MI: Institute for Social Research.

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## Removal of influence-Divorcing a bad partner



Smith, Homish, Leonard & Cornelius, 2012

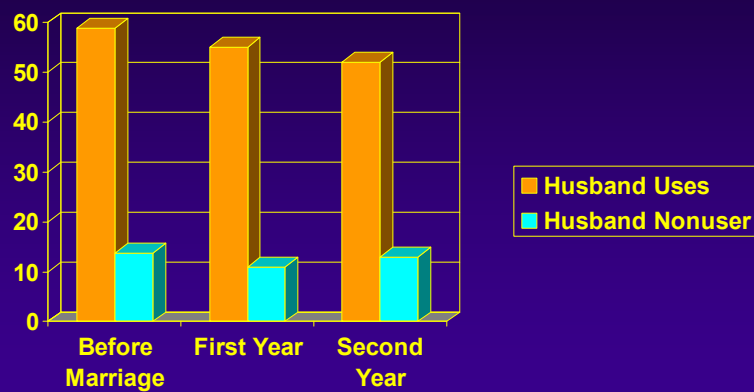
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Partners have similar substance use and each is influenced by their partner's use.

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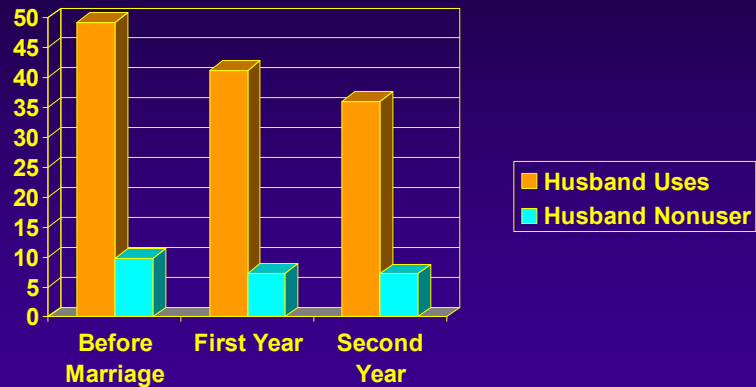
## Wife Smoking as a function of Husband Smoking



Homish, G.G., & Leonard, K.E. (2005) Spousal influence on smoking behaviors in a US community sample of newly married couples. *Social Science and Medicine*, 61, 2557-67.

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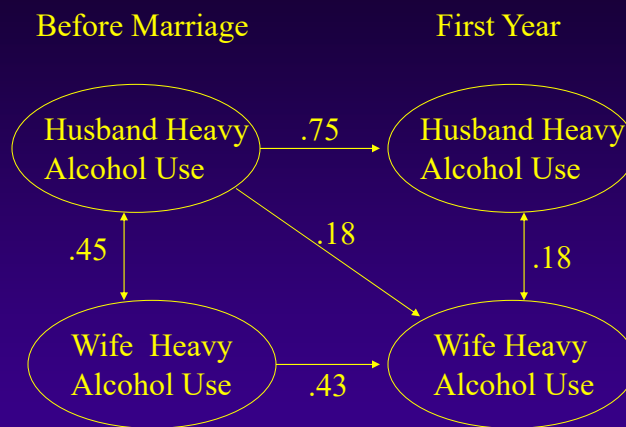
## Wife Marijuana Use as a function of Husband Marijuana Use



Leonard, K.E., & Homish, G.G. (2005). Changes in Marijuana Use over the Transition into Marriage. *Journal of Drug Issues*, 35(2), 409-430.

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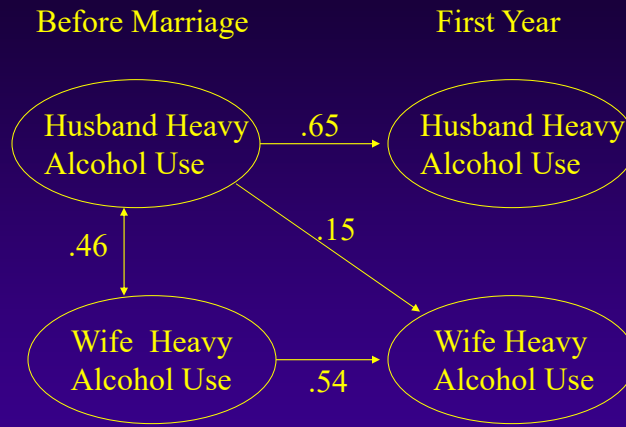
## Husband and Wife Influence on Heavy Drinking



Leonard & Eiden, 1999

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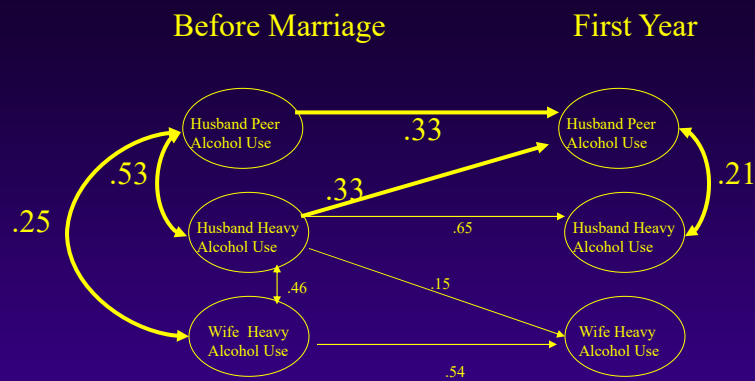
## Husband and Wife Influence on Heavy Drinking



Leonard & Mudar, 2003

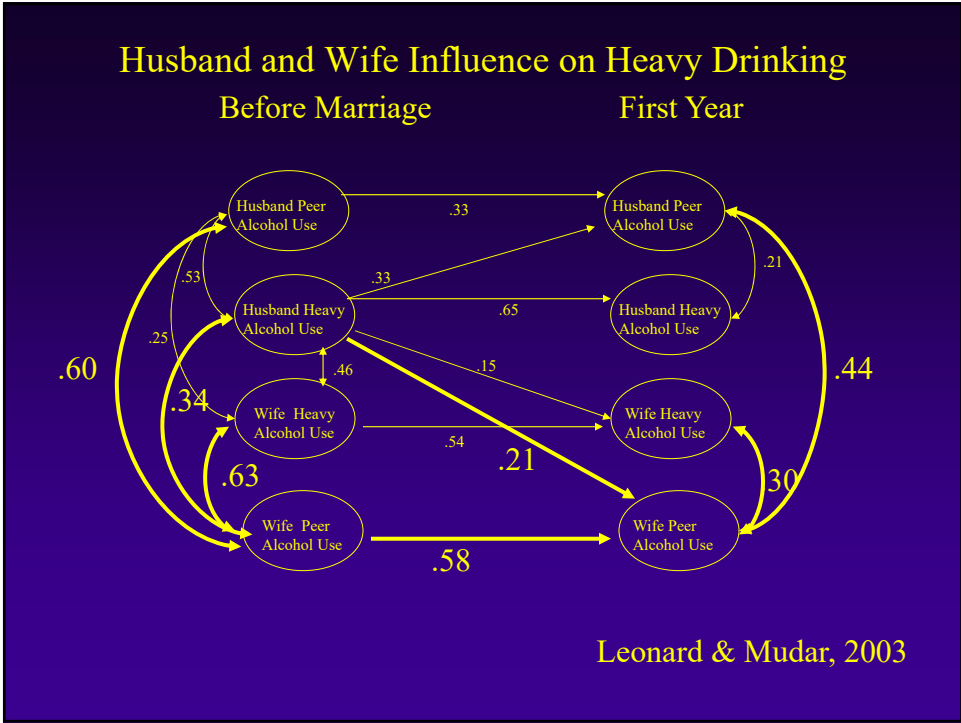
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## Husband and Wife Influence on Heavy Drinking

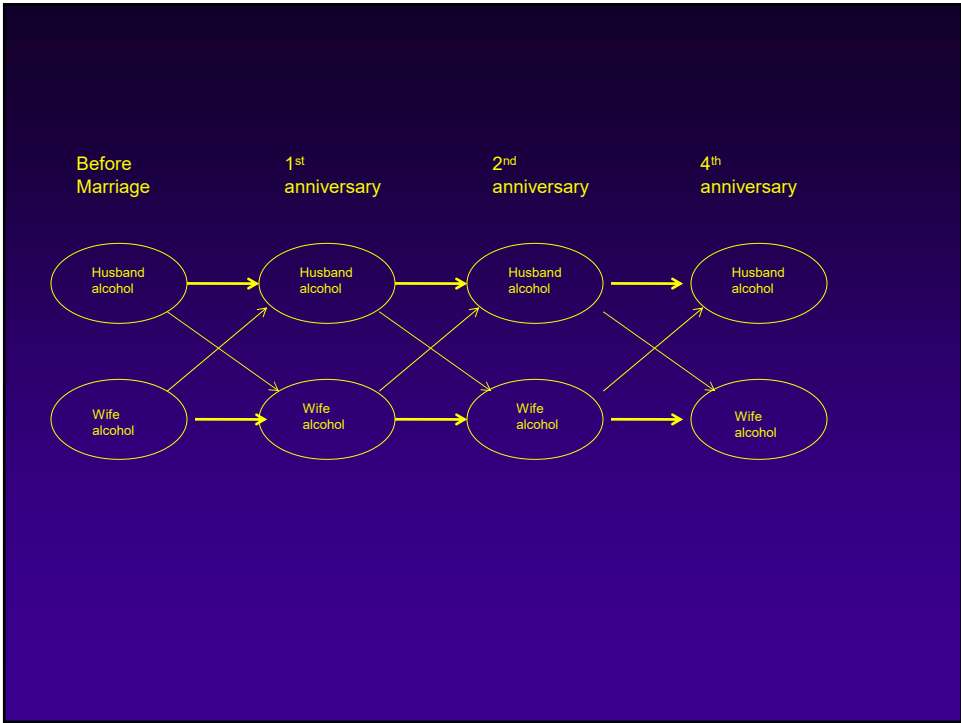


Leonard & Mudar, 2003

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Controlling for previous heavy drinking, expectancies, personality, marital satisfaction, and drinking buddies...

Prospective Prediction of Husband Heavy Drinking/Alcohol Problems (Odds Ratio)

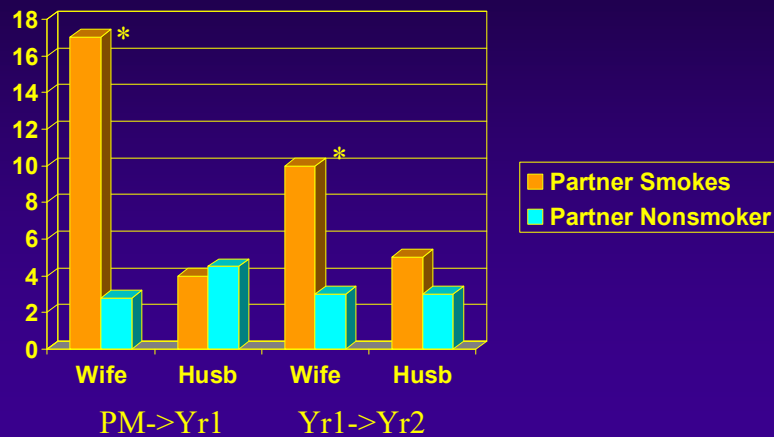
Wife Predictors		Husband Heavy Drinking	Husband Alcohol Problems
Wife	<i>Heavy drinking</i>	<b>1.06***</b>	<b>0.95</b>
Wife	<i>Alcohol problems</i>		<b>1.04***</b>

Prospective Prediction of Wife Heavy Drinking/Alcohol Problems (Odds Ratio)

Husband Predictors		Wife Heavy Drinking	Wife Alcohol Problems
Husband	<i>Heavy drinking</i>	<b>1.05***</b>	<b>1.00</b>
Husband	<i>Alcohol problems</i>		<b>1.04***</b>

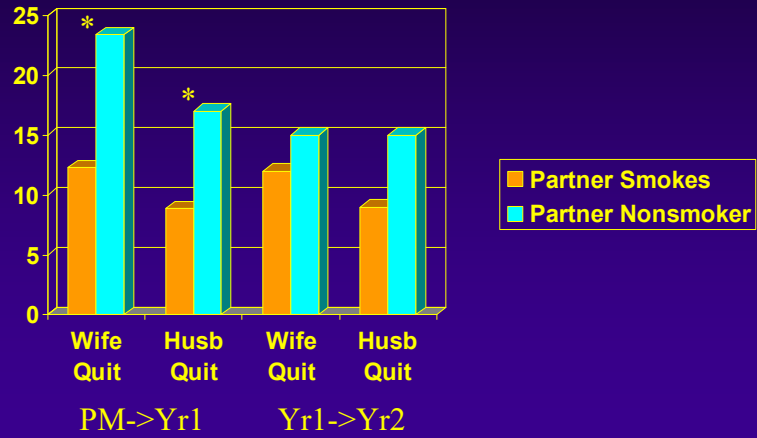
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Start Rates in Nonsmokers as a function of Partner Smoking



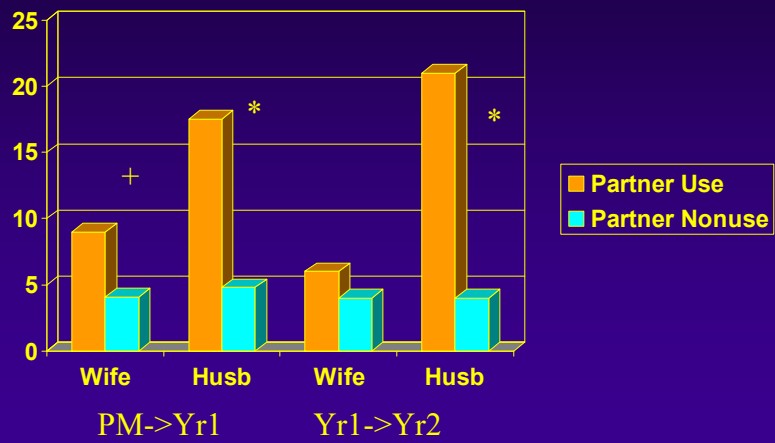
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### Quit Rates in Smokers as a function of Partner Smoking



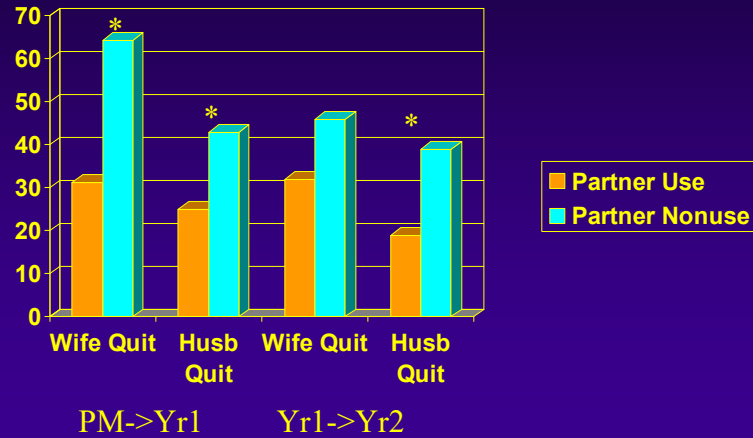
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### Marijuana Start Rates in Nonusers as a function of Partner Use



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## Quit Rates in Marijuana Users as a function of Partner Use



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## Partner Influence on Health Behaviors

Variables	O.R. Predicting Husband Behavior	O.R. Predicting Wife Behavior
Healthy eating	1.12***	1.12***
Unhealthy eating	1.11***	1.12***
Physicals	1.49*	1.38*
Regular exercise	2.16***	2.10***

Homish, G.G. & Leonard, K.E. (2008). Spousal Influence on General Health Behaviors. Social Science and Medicine.

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Positive marital relationships are generally protective, although there can be negative effects.

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Prospective Prediction of Husband Heavy Drinking/Alcohol Problems (Odds Ratios)

	Predictors	Heavy Drinking	Alcohol Problems
Husband Predictors			
	<i><b>MAT</b></i>	<b>0.97</b>	<b>0.87**</b>
	ASB	1.08+	1.19
	<i>Negative affect</i>	1.00	1.13+
	Wave 1 heavy drinking	1.22***	
	<i>AEQ-SPP</i>	1.12***	1.29***
	<i>AEQ-PA</i>	0.99	1.33***
	Wave 1 Alc. problems		1.09***
	<i>Heavy drinking</i>		1.37***
	Wife Predictors		
<i>Heavy drinking</i>		1.06***	0.95
<i>Alcohol problems</i>			1.04***
Social Network			
	<i>H drinking buddies</i>	1.02***	1.05**
	<i>H heavy drinkers</i>	1.01	1.06**

Leonard & Homish, 2008

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### Prospective Prediction of Wife Heavy Drinking/Alcohol Problems (Odds Ratio)

	Predictors	Heavy Drinking	Alcohol Problems
<b>Wife Predictors</b>			
	<i><b>MAT</b></i>	<b>0.97*</b>	<b>0.77***</b>
	ABC	1.19**	1.52*
	Wave 1 heavy drinking	1.25***	
	<i>AEQ-GP</i>	1.05*	1.03
	<i>AEQ-SPP</i>	1.08***	1.27*
	Wave 1 alc. problems		1.20***
	<i>Heavy drinking</i>		1.43***
	Pregnancy	0.93**	0.81
<b>Husband Predictors</b>			
	<i>Heavy drinking</i>	1.05***	1.00
	<i>Alcohol problems</i>		1.04***
<b>Social Network</b>			
	<i>W drinking buddies</i>	1.03***	1.05*
	<i>W heavy drinkers</i>	1.02**	1.02

Leonard & Homish, 2008

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## Emotional Intimacy

- **Emotional Intimacy – PAIR** (Schaefer & Olson, 1981)
  - My partner listens to me when I need someone to talk to.
  - I can state my feelings without him/her getting defensive.
  - I often feel distant from my partner. [R]
  - My partner can really understand my hurts and joys.
  - I feel neglected at times by my partner. [R]
  - I sometimes feel lonely when we're together. [R]

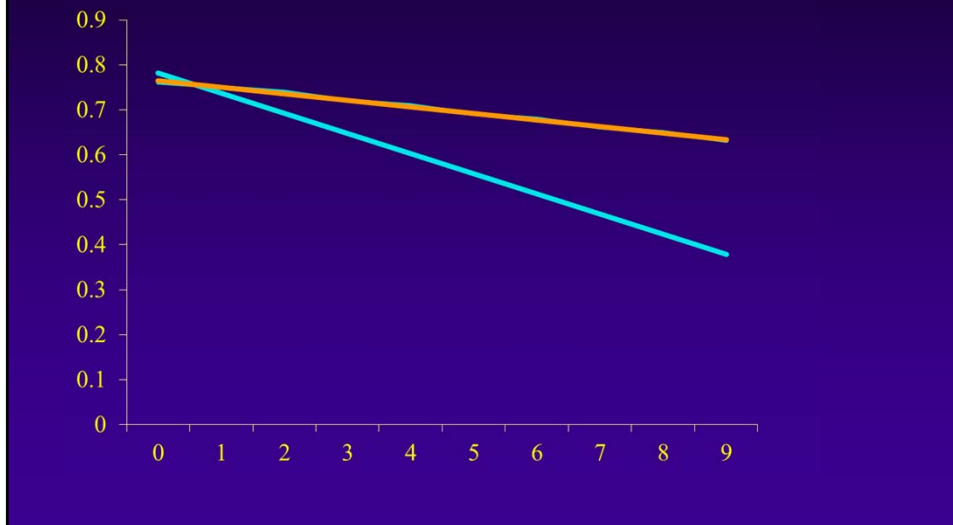
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## Perceived Intimacy is associated with reductions in alcohol problems



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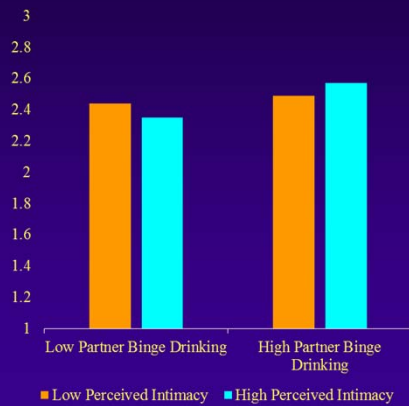
## Similar effect of intimacy on changes in smoking (Derrick, Homish & Leonard, 2013)



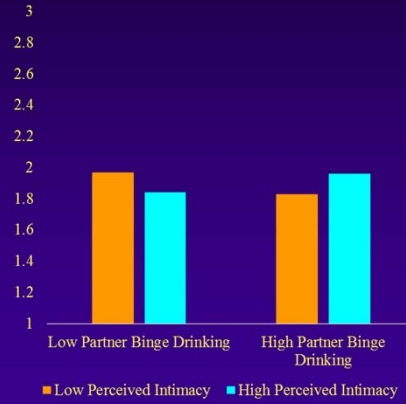
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## Partner influence is stronger among couples with high perceived intimacy

### Husband Binge Drinking



### Wife Binge Drinking



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If most couples have similar substance use and are influenced by each other, what is the impact of discrepant patterns.

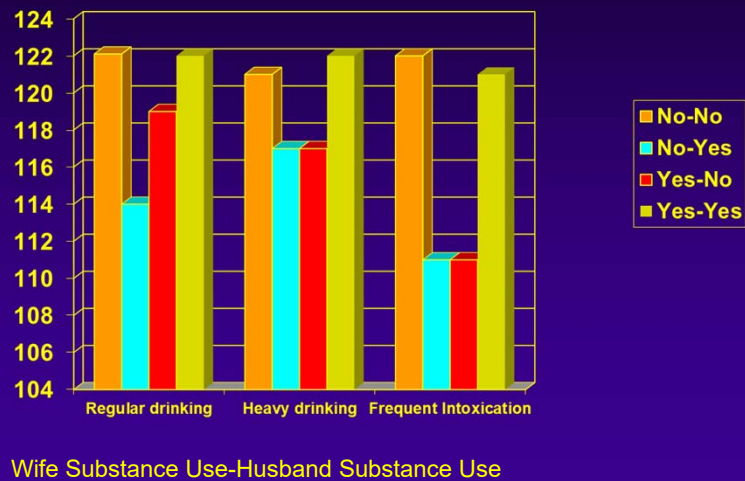
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## Wife Marital Satisfaction according to Wife-Husband Drug Use



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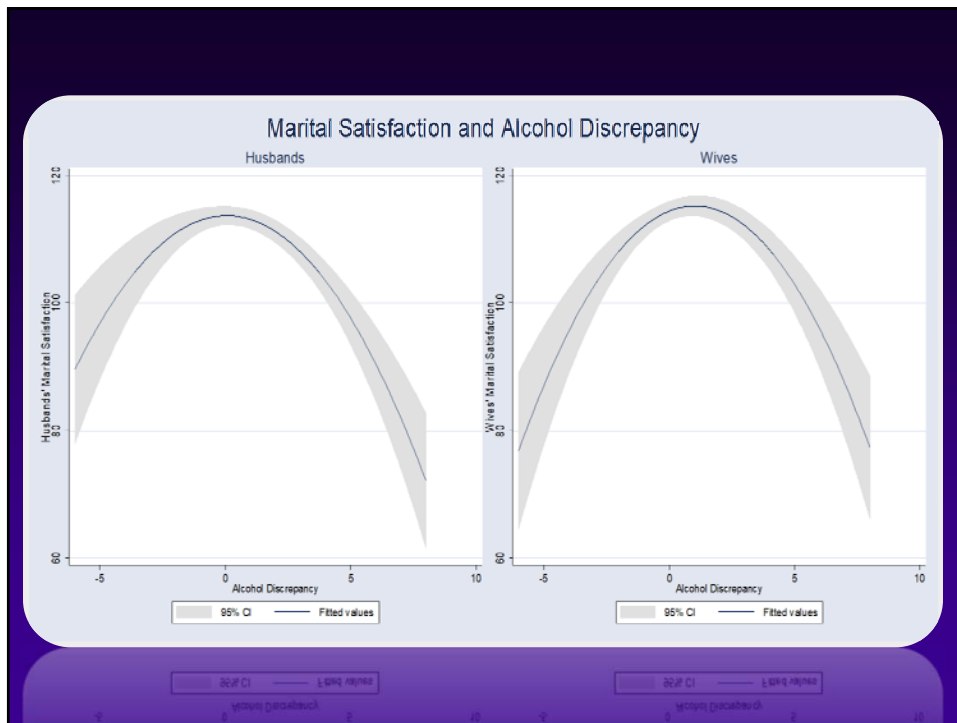
## Wife Marital Satisfaction according to Wife-Husband Drinking Categories



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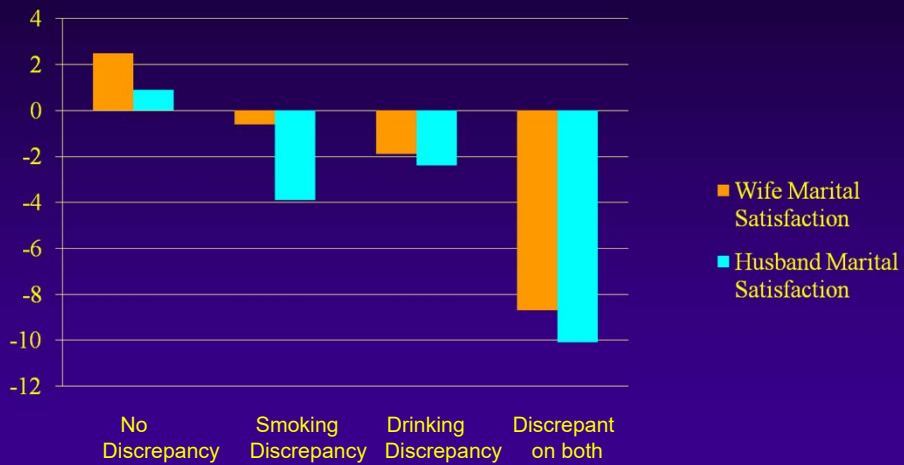
## Longitudinal Association between Discrepancies and Marital Satisfaction

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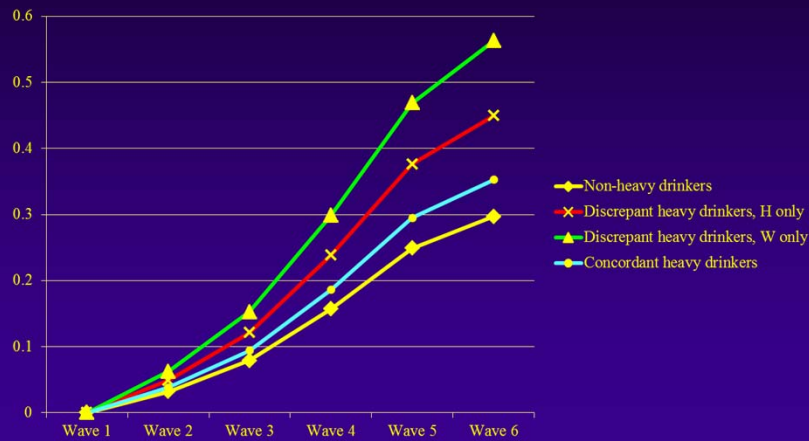
## Longitudinal impact of smoking and drinking discrepancies on marital satisfaction



Homish, Leonard, Kozlowski, & Cornelius, 2009

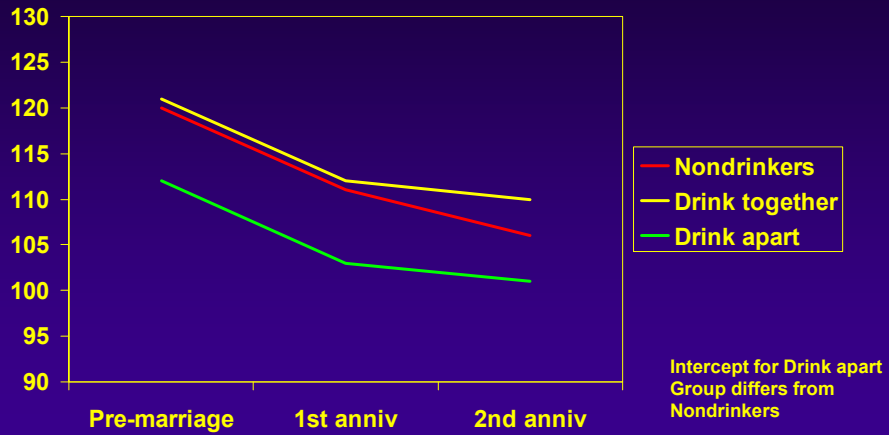
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## Divorce hazard and heavy drinking



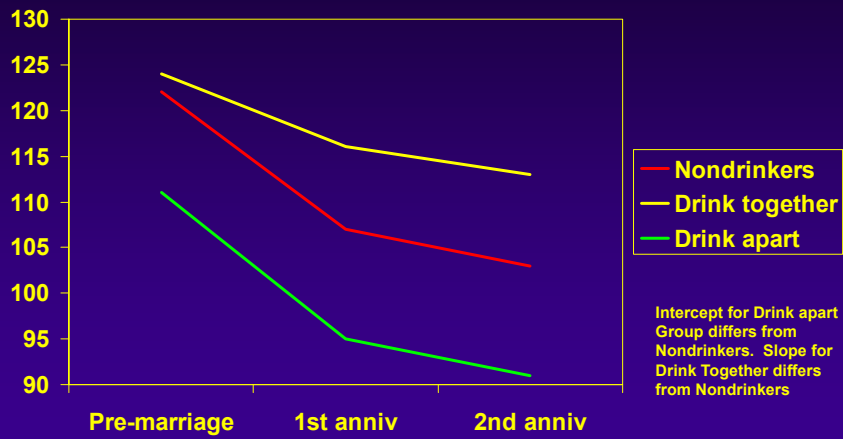
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## Marital satisfaction among men in congruent drinking couples



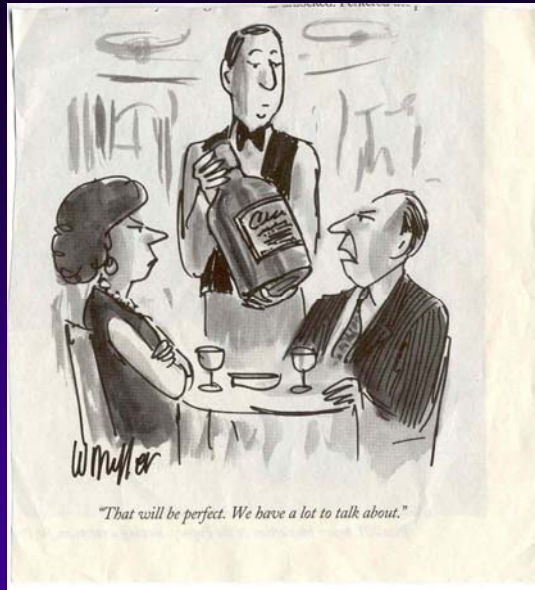
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## Marital satisfaction among women in congruent drinking couples



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Couples drinking and drinking together is positive for marriage, but doesn't husband and wife drinking increase aggression?



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## Drinking and episodes of intimacy

- 119 cohabiting couples (ages 21-46)
- Drink four or more drinks at least once a month—largely similar drinkers
- For 56 consecutive days, each partner independently reported episodes of alcohol use and intimacy events, “interaction or conversation with your partner that involved intimacy, love, caring, or support”.
- Temporal associations between each partner’s alcohol use and intimacy were examined using the Actor–Partner Interdependence Model.

Testa et al 2019

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## Alcohol and intimacy events

Variable	Male report intimacy	Female report intimacy
<b>Level 1 within couples</b>		
Simultaneous alcohol use	.25***	.24***
Actor only alcohol use	.07	.11**
Partner only alcohol use	.05	.06
<b>Level 2 between couples</b>		
Total simultaneous drinking	-.003	-.006
Actor total solo	.00	.003*
Partner total solo	.002	.00

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### Alcohol is also predictive of intimacy events when...

- Alcohol is also predictive of intimacy events when...
  - One is drinking but the partners are together
  - When the drinking is taking place at home
- Alcohol predicts fewer intimacy events
  - When the woman is drinking and the partner is not there

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## Elixir of Love or Venom of Violence

Does alcohol have different effects at different times or different effects for different couples?

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Does alcohol have different effects at different times or different effects for different couples?

	Conflict after drinking	Intimacy after drinking
Event level predictors		Fewer drinks
		Not drinking with others
	Relationship discord before drinking	Relationship harmony before drinking
Couple level predictors		
		Fewer average drinks per occasion
	Total conflict over past 30 days	Total intimacy events over past 30 days

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## How does marriage shape drinking?

- Marriage leads to reductions in heavy drinking and drinking problems.
- It creates an opportunity for interpersonal influence
- Marital satisfaction/intimacy is a critical component
- There is a de-selection process in which incompatible consumption patterns are associated reduced satisfaction and increased risk of divorce.
- Drinking can facilitate positive interactions, but this depends on the context and the couple.
- What are the implications of one partner changing his or her drinking?