

Patterns of Expectancies Held Among Simultaneous Alcohol and Marijuana (SAM) Users

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INTRODUCTION

- Simultaneous alcohol and marijuana (SAM) use is common among college students and is associated with greater negative consequences compared to the use of only one drug
- Positive expectancies tend to predict the frequency of both alcohol and marijuana use, while negative expectancies have been found to predict abstinence and a lower likelihood of use
- Yet, alcohol and marijuana expectancies have not been sufficiently examined as related to SAM use
- To address this gap, the current study sought to examine patterns of alcohol and marijuana expectancies held among SAM users. This study was exploratory in nature and had no priori hypotheses

METHOD

- 1012 college students (70.9% female; 51.8% White; $M_{age} = 19.63$) who reported past-month alcohol and marijuana use (77.2% of the sample reported SAM use) were recruited from seven US universities
- Participants completed expectancy measures for alcohol (compromised of 7 factors) and marijuana (compromised of 6 factors), and past-month SAM frequency. Frequency and quantity of past-month alcohol and marijuana were also collected

RESULTS

- Collapsing individual expectancy factors into positive and negative expectancies by drug, a hierarchical multiple regression revealed that positive expectancies ($F_{(2,1005)} = 6.11, p = .002$), but not negative expectancies ($F_{(2,1003)} = 0.04, p = .96$), were significant predictors of SAM frequency above and beyond quantity and frequency of alcohol and marijuana use
 - Specifically, higher frequency of SAM use was associated with weaker positive alcohol ($\beta = -0.08, p = .038$) and stronger positive marijuana expectancies ($\beta = 0.11, p = .003$)
- A second hierarchical multiple regression examined which specific alcohol and marijuana expectancy factors accounted for these effects
 - SAM frequency was associated with weaker social alcohol expectancies ($\beta = -0.14, p = .007$) and stronger sexual and social facilitation marijuana expectancies ($\beta = 0.11, p = .009$)

DISCUSSION

- Contrary to the general expectancy literature, positive expectancies do not uniformly appear related to increased SAM use, as positive alcohol expectancies were inversely related to use
 - Yet, positive marijuana expectancies, specifically social expectancies, were positively associated with SAM use
- It is possible that college student's with strong social marijuana expectancies may add marijuana to their alcohol when they want to enhance socialization, perhaps even more so when they believe that alcohol alone is not sufficient for obtaining optimal social functioning
- Future research should further examine these relationships to understand whether these patterns of expectancies are causally related to SAM use or occur consequently
- Moreover, given the positive associations between SAM use and positive marijuana expectancies, it may be efficacious to target positive marijuana expectancies when implementing intervention efforts that are designed to reduce SAM use



Positive alcohol expectancies were inversely related to SAM use. Conversely, positive marijuana expectancies, specifically social expectancies, were positively associated with SAM use



Table 1.

Predicting SAM Frequency from Positive and Negative Alcohol and Marijuana Expectancies

Variables	β	t	p
Alcohol Quantity	0.17	3.99	.000
Alcohol Frequency	0.11	2.40	.017
Marijuana Quantity	0.03	0.72	.470
Marijuana Frequency	0.21	4.57	.000
Positive Alcohol Expectancies	-0.08	-2.07	.038*
Positive Marijuana Expectancies	0.11	2.99	.003*
Negative Alcohol Expectancies	-0.01	-0.20	.840
Negative Marijuana Expectancies	0.01	0.27	.788

Table 2.

Predicting SAM Frequency from Specific Alcohol and Marijuana Expectancy Factors

Variables	β	t	p
Alcohol Quantity	0.16	3.51	.000
Alcohol Frequency	0.11	2.51	.012
Marijuana Quantity	0.01	0.14	.892
Marijuana Frequency	0.23	5.02	.000
Alcohol Social Expectancies	-0.14	-2.70	.007*
Alcohol Tension Reduction Expectancies	-0.02	-0.56	.576
Alcohol Liquid Courage Expectancies	0.08	1.37	.173
Alcohol Sexuality Expectancies	-0.01	-0.11	.909
Marijuana Relaxation and Tension Reduction Expectancies	0.05	1.15	.250
Marijuana Social and Sexual Facilitation Expectancies	0.11	2.63	.009*
Marijuana Perceptual and Cognitive Enhancement Expectancies	-0.05	-1.10	.270
Alcohol Cognitive and Behavioral Impairment Expectancies	-0.08	-1.85	.064
Alcohol Risk and Aggression Expectancies	0.06	1.22	.224
Alcohol Self-perception Expectancies	-0.01	-0.20	.842
Marijuana Global Negative Effects Expectancies	0.05	1.46	.145
Marijuana Craving and Physical Effects Expectancies	0.00	0.06	.956