

Paper Session E3: Risky Behaviors of Adolescents and Young Adults: Assessment and Intervention

Conduct Disorder, Depressive Symptoms, and Risky Driving Behaviors in an At-Risk Sample of Late Teens and Young Adults

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Purpose: Motor vehicular crashes (MVCs) are the leading cause of disability and death for teens and young adults. Risk factors associated with risky driving behaviors in late teens and young adults (LYA) are critical to understand in order to decrease MVC injury. The purpose of this study was to test the hypothesis that conduct disorder and depressive symptoms are associated with risky driving behaviors among LYA who take part in high-risk driving and problem drinking.

Theoretical Framework: This study was grounded in a model for risky driving in LYA focusing on precursors, moderators and consequences of risky driving.

Methods: This study examined data from 110 LYA, ages 18-24, enrolled from a Midwestern emergency department population who screened positive for risky driving and problem drinking. Participants were enrolled in a randomized control trial of screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment. The analysis presented here used data from the baseline assessment. Relationships between behaviors associated with conduct disorder before age 15, conduct disorder after age 15, depressive symptoms, and three domains of driving behaviors (aggressive, competitive, and risky) were examined using bivariate and multivariate analyses. In multivariate analyses, separate regressions models were used for the three domains of driving behaviors.

Results: In bivariate relationships, reporting of conduct disorder before age 15 was significantly ($p < .05$) associated with aggressive ($r = .41$) and risky ($r = .26$) driving behaviors. Conduct disorder after age 15 was significantly associated with all three types of driving behaviors ($r = .29-.48$). Depressive symptoms were significantly associated with aggressive driving ($r = .37$). In multivariate analyses controlling for race, sex, and age, conduct disorder after age 15 and depressive symptoms were significantly associated with aggressive driving. Conduct disorder after age 15 was also significantly associated with risky and competitive driving. Conduct disorder before 15 was not significantly associated with any of the driving behaviors.

Conclusions and Implications: Among this sample of LYA who engage in high-risk driving and problem drinking, these results highlight the importance of screening for conduct disorder and depression. In addition to screening, as teens with these conditions learn to drive, targeted interventions to reduce risky driving behaviors may be warranted to reduce MVC injury.