

ATTACHMENT, MENTAL HEALTH AND ALCOHOL USE BY MEN: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF CUMULATIVE LIFETIME VIOLENCE SEVERITY.

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BACKGROUND

Our measure of cumulative lifetime violence severity (CLVS) captures a wide range of violence experiences over men's lifespan by role (target/perpetrator), type (psychological, sexual, physical), context (family, partner, community and workplace) and has been associated with negative mental health outcomes. Little attention has been paid to factors that may influence these relationships.

PURPOSE

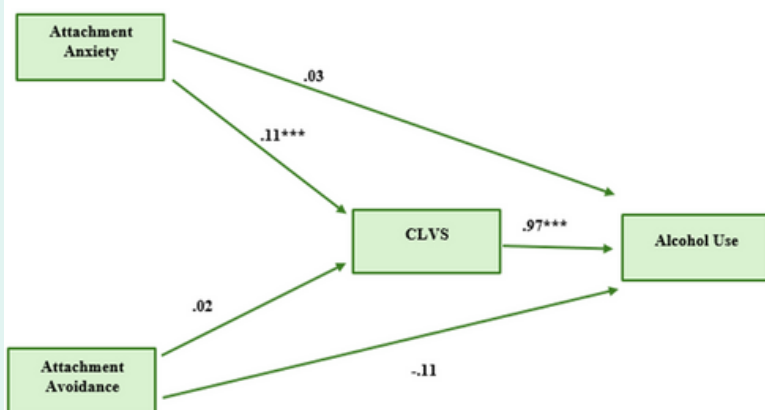
- To explore the mediating role of CLVS in the relationships between attachment (anxiety or avoidance) and depression, anxiety, PTSD and alcohol use.

METHODS

A Canadian, community convenience sample of 597 English speaking men, 19 years and older who self identified as having experiences as a target and/or perpetrator of violence were recruited to take part in an online survey. The survey included the CLVS scale measuring both frequency and distress of 44 experiences of violence during childhood and adulthood as well as established measures of mental health symptomology and alcohol use. Mediation analyses were conducted.

RESULTS

- Both attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance directly affected depression, anxiety severity and PTSD severity. However, only attachment anxiety indirectly affected depression, anxiety severity and PTSD severity through CLVS.
- Notably, neither attachment anxiety nor attachment avoidance directly affected alcohol use, however attachment anxiety indirectly affected alcohol use through CLVS.



KEY MESSAGES

- Our findings provide new insights that insecure attachment may indirectly affect mental health and alcohol use through perceived CLVS.
- Anxious attachment, by heightening the emotional distress in relation to violence experiences may lead to greater perceived CLVS, which may influence severity of mental health symptoms and alcohol use.
- Interestingly, no indirect effects were noted between avoidant attachment and mental health outcomes through CLVS. Perhaps men with this style of attachment often withdraw from others, therefore may have less distress related to their violence experiences.
- The alcohol use model yielded the most novel findings. Neither type of insecure attachment had direct effects on alcohol use. However, attachment anxiety had an indirect effect on alcohol use through CLVS. Perhaps alcohol alleviates distress from both anxious attachment and CLVS, rendering the direct pathway insignificant.