

Review of: "Which sociocultural determinants of pre-drinking amongst undergraduate university students influence motivation"

Paul McArdle¹

¹ Cumbria Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

This is an important topic and the authors have attempted to survey a potentially large international population. The authors are clearly expert in their field.

However, I wonder if the introduction is too long and possibly repetitive. Apart from attempting to ask a wider population about pre-drinking and drinking games, the question asked by the paper did not come through with great clarity.

The idea of normalisation theory is interesting but I didn't grasp how it is a 'barometer for change'. Perhaps this could be explained.

The authors refer to the harm associated with the binge drinking described. What are these harms? is there a causal link between binge drinking and alleged harms? Some doubt this. Could it be that already vulnerable young people are the ones most likely to engage and that harms stem from their vulnerability as much as alcohol. Could it even be that PD and DG are in themselves harmless? If we are claiming harm, and not just being censorious spoilsports, we need evidence beyond mere correlation.

As is often the case in international drinking studies, the UK appears to be an outlier. Explanations for this, relatively cheap alcohol, worse underlying mental health problems, many more living a way from home compared to some other states, could do with some expansion. Is a total sample of only 200+, possibly only a tiny proportion of the populations surveyed, sufficient to draw conclusions? If so, the reader may need to be persuaded.