

Peer Review

Review of: "Balancing the Bio in a Biopsychosocial Model of Hazardous Drinking and Alcohol Use Disorders"

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This commentary provides a clear, well-argued critique of an overly “bio/genetic-heavy” framing of Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) within a supposed biopsychosocial model. The central contribution is conceptual: it highlights how emphasizing biogenetic explanations can unintentionally (1) divert attention from high-impact population/public-health policies (price, availability, marketing, norms), and (2) increase stigma, fatalism, and reduced perceived control among people experiencing AUD—thereby potentially harming recovery and help-seeking.

Strengths include: strong linkage to policy evidence hierarchies (upstream vs downstream interventions), thoughtful discussion of “genetic essentialism/determinism” and how messaging can be co-opted by industry narratives, and a balanced stance that does not reject biology but calls for proportionality and explicit acknowledgment of harms/limits of current genetic/neuroimaging utility.

Limitations: as a reply/commentary, it does not present new data, and some claims (e.g., effects of genetic attributions on behaviour/stigma) would benefit from tighter signposting of effect sizes/contexts and clearer boundaries for when biogenetic framing is helpful versus harmful. A short concluding “practical recommendations” box (for clinicians/researchers/policymakers) would increase usefulness.

Overall, it is a persuasive, timely piece advocating for a genuinely balanced biopsychosocial approach that prioritises modifiable psychosocial and commercial determinants while avoiding unintended stigma and policy displacement.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.