ALCOHOL USE AND MISUSE AMONG AMERICAN INDIANS: APPLYING A MODIFIED HISTORICAL TRAUMA MODEL


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Although Native Americans are commonly associated with alcohol misuse, little is known about stressors or coping mechanisms that may influence alcohol use patterns. Using Wave 2 of the National Epidemiologic Survey of Alcohol and Related Conditions (NESARC), a nationally representative data set, I examine patterns of drinking status, frequency and actual consumption of specific alcoholic beverage preference, and binge drinking. To better explain these relationships, I will investigate the influence of stressors and coping mechanisms in the context of a modified historical trauma model. Stressors include adverse childhood experiences, family dysfunction during childhood, receiving welfare as a child, having an alcoholic biological parent, and perceived racial discrimination. Coping mechanisms such as high ethnic identification, preference for other Native American peers, preference for using a native language, level of social support, and social network size are also examined. While there is some evidence certain stressors increase the risk of being a current drinker relative to lifetime abstainers, the modified trauma model is limited in its ability to explain American Indian drinking behavior.