

Lack of Attention to Sociocultural Factors in Goodhines et al. (2019)

Goodhines et al. (2019) examined the impact of using cannabis and/or alcohol as a sleep aid on the quality and duration of sleep in college students over a span of 14 days. The study relied on self-reported daily sleep patterns, substance use, and negative consequences of substance use. On nights in which cannabis was used as a sleep aid, participants reported a longer duration of sleep, less time spent awake during the night after initial onset of sleep, and greater fatigue the following day. Because of the low reported frequency of alcohol use with the intention of aiding sleep, no association was found between alcohol and sleep-related outcomes or negative drinking consequences.

The researchers acknowledged the unique developmental aspects of emerging adulthood in the college student population (Arnett, 2016), but they paid little attention to the implications of social and cultural diversity on students' substance use or sleeping patterns. Students of Color and first-generation college students, or students for whom neither parent earned a college degree, are particularly vulnerable to the stress of being a minority within a majority culture and the marginalization and acculturation that accompany this experience (Mayorga et al., 2018; Stebleton, Soria, & Huesman, 2014). Acculturative stress can have detrimental impacts on both physical and mental health and may lead to an increased risk of developing substance abuse problems (Crockett et al., 2007; Reynolds, Sneva, & Beehler, 2010; Sanchez, Adams, Arango, & Flannigan, 2018; Stebleton, Soria, & Huesman, 2014). Therefore, both racial identity and college going generation status are important demographic variables that should have been considered.

The authors should be commended for investigating this important problem. As they point out in the article, the findings are relevant to the daily functioning and wellbeing of college students. Future research is needed on key sociocultural factors, including race and college going generation status, that may influence substance use and quality of sleep in college students.

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