

FOMO: A PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION INTO THE LINK BETWEEN THE FEAR OF MISSING OUT (FOMO) AND ALCOHOL USE DURING EVENTS

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Introduction and Aims: FoMO (the Fear of Missing Out) is the sense that one is missing out on rewarding experiences. FoMO is an emerging construct and the literature to date has predominantly focused on the relationship between FoMO and unhealthy social networking use. However, FoMO may have implications for other behaviours. In two studies, we aimed to determine whether FoMO was related to alcohol use during a period associated with excessive alcohol use: Orientation Week (O'Week).

Method: In Study 1, we intercepted 436 students outside O'Week events and asked them about their FoMO, drinks, and breathalysed them. In Study 2, we asked 490 students to report their alcohol use before O'Week (pre-university survey) and alcohol use and consequences during O'Week (post-O'Week survey).

Results: In Study 1, we found that FoMO did not predict number of drinks or Breath Alcohol Concentration. However, those who experienced FoMO were more likely to drink than not drink. In Study 2, we used zero-inflated negative binomial regressions and found that FoMO predicted weekly O'Week drinking (IRR=1.10) and harm (IRR=1.15) when controlling for pre-university drinking. FoMO also predicted harm over and above O'Week drinking (IRR=1.16; suggesting that drinking alone may not be driving consequences). Finally, pre-university drinking moderated the link between FoMO and O'Week alcohol use (slightly stronger for lighter pre-university drinkers; IRR=0.99).

Discussions and Conclusions: These findings suggest that FoMO may have implications beyond social networking use and may be a key aim for alcohol interventions during periods of excessive alcohol use.

Disclosure of Interest Statement: *We report no conflicts of interest.*