

# CURRENT AND FORMER U.S. SERVICE MEMBER ALCOHOL USE AND DRINKING MOTIVES

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## BACKGROUND

- U.S. service members report problematic drinking patterns. However, little is known about service member's motives for drinking, a risk factor for hazardous alcohol use.
- This study tested whether a survey tool designed to identify motivations or reasons for drinking alcohol in the civilian population, the Drinking Motives Questionnaire-Revised (DMQ-R), can be useful in military populations as well.

## RESEARCH CONDUCTED

- Current reservists and separated service members were asked to complete a survey regarding their work, health, family, and well-being characteristics.

## RESULTS

- 88% of the sample reported drinking alcohol in the past 30 days and 23% reported problematic drinking – based on an Alcohol Use Disorder Identification Test (AUDIT) score of 8 or more
- Using the DMQ-R, service members reported motives related to drinking to cope with their negative experiences and also to enhance their present mood
- Service members with higher drinking to cope and mood enhancement motives reported drinking more frequently and in higher quantities than those who were less motivated to drink for those reasons
- Taking into account service members' psychological distress and amount of alcohol consumed, drinking to cope motives were related to alcohol-related problems
- Drinking to cope motives were identified as one way in which service members' psychological distress may contribute to alcohol use and problems.
- The DMQ-R tool identifies reliable and important risk factors for drinking in current and former service members

## IMPORTANCE

- Hazardous drinking rates in military populations is considered a public health problem.
- Identifying drinking motives, particularly drinking to cope motives, may improve screening for alcohol-related problems and help address this public health issue.



Summary based on the following paper:

Mohr, C. D., McCabe, C. T., Haverly, S. N., Hammer, L. B., & Carlson, K. F. (2018). Drinking motives and alcohol use: the SERVe Study of US current and former service members. *Journal of studies on alcohol and drugs*, 79(1), 79-87.