For teen girls, depression may predict subsequent alcohol use

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(HealthDay)—For adolescent girls, depression, but not anxiety, predicts

future alcohol use, according to a study published online Nov. 25 in *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*.

Jessica L. Schleider, Ph.D., from the Stony Brook University in New York, and colleagues examined reciprocal correlations between anxiety severity, depression severity, and alcohol use among 2,100 female adolescents. Participants were assessed annually between ages of 13 and 17 years. They reported depression severity, anxiety severity, and frequency of alcohol use in the previous year.

The researchers found that higher depression severity modestly predicted an increased likelihood of subsequent alcohol use from ages 13 to 17 years. For the reverse pathway, the relations were inconsistent. When girls were aged 14 and 16 years old, alcohol use modestly predicted decreased depression severity; in other lagged associations, the correlations were not significant. There was no consistent association between anxiety severity and alcohol use.

"Results raise the possibility that depression prevention programs might yield secondary benefits for adolescent alcohol use," the authors write. "Examining alcohol use trajectories in randomized depression prevention trials will help assess this strategy's potential to reduce problematic drinking, during and beyond adolescence."

More information: Abstract/Full Text (subscription or payment may be required)

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