

# Self-medicating with alcohol linked to later dependence

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Use of alcohol to self-medicate mood symptoms correlates with increased odds of subsequent alcohol dependence and persistence of dependence, according to a study published online May 1 in *JAMA Psychiatry*.

(HealthDay)—Use of alcohol to self-medicate mood symptoms correlates with increased odds of subsequent alcohol dependence and persistence of dependence, according to a study published online May 1 in *JAMA Psychiatry*.

Rosa M. Crum, M.D., M.H.S., from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, and colleagues conducted a prospective study using face-to-face interviews among 43,093 adults surveyed in 2001 and 2002, 34,653 of whom were re-interviewed in 2004 and 2005. The authors sought to examine whether self-medication of mood symptoms with alcohol correlated with the probability of subsequent onset and persistence of

## [alcohol dependence.](#)

The researchers found that alcohol self-medication of mood symptoms correlated with increased odds of incident alcohol dependence and persistence of dependence at follow-up (adjusted odds ratio, 3.10 and 3.45, respectively). The population-attributable fractions were 11.9 and 30.6 percent, respectively, for incident dependence and persistent dependence. Analyses were stratified by age, sex, race/ethnicity, severity of mood symptoms, and treatment history for mood symptoms.

"Drinking to alleviate mood symptoms is associated with the development of alcohol dependence and its [persistence](#) once dependence develops," the authors write. "Drinking to self-medicate [mood symptoms](#) may be a potential target for prevention and [early intervention](#) efforts aimed at reducing the occurrence of alcohol dependence."

**More information:** [Abstract](#)

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