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Significance of a behavioral economic index of reward value in predicting drinkin problem resolution

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Abstrak

This study investigated whether a behavioral economic index of the value of rewards available over different time horizons improved prediction of drinking outcomes beyond established biopsychosocial predictors. Preferences for immediate drinking versus more delayed rewards made possible by saving money were determined from expenditures prior to resolution attempts by problem drinkers with different help-seeking experiences (N = 144). As hypothesized, stable resolutions over a 2-year follow-up were associated with proportionally more preresolution discretionary expenditures on savings and less on alcohol compared with unstable resolutions. The relationship held regardless of help-seeking history, and preresolution drinking practices, problems, and income were similar across outcomes. The findings extend experimental work on behavioral economics and indicate that measuring monetary allocation improves prediction of outcomes.