



Ecological Momentary Assessment of daily savoring, substance use, and problems in a clinical sample of young adults

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Background & Aims



Though the link between substance use and problems is intuitive, meta-analyses suggest that less than 20% of the variance in experienced problems is explained by alcohol use (Prince et al., 2018) cannabis use (Pearson, 2019), respectively.

This suggests that there are other factors, **besides substance use**, that are contributing to problems.



Positive affective is an emerging facilitating factor for substance use in young people (Emery & Simons, 2020, Emery et al., 2023). Trait positive affect and savoring (the ability to increase the intensity/duration of positive emotions) are inversely related with drinking and problems (Emery et al., 2023).



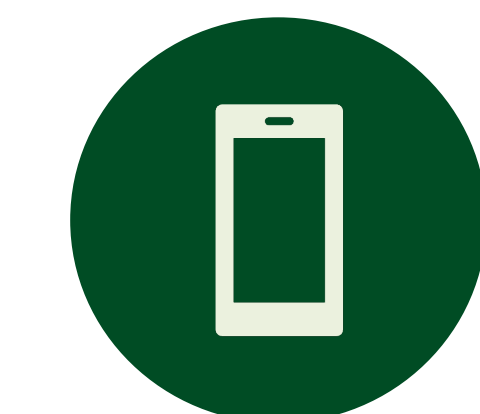
Savoring has previously been shown to cross-sectionally be positively associated with cannabis use frequency and inversely related to cannabis-related consequences (Trinh et al., 2023).

We examined the impact of trait and **daily savoring** and positive affect on momentary substance use and problems.

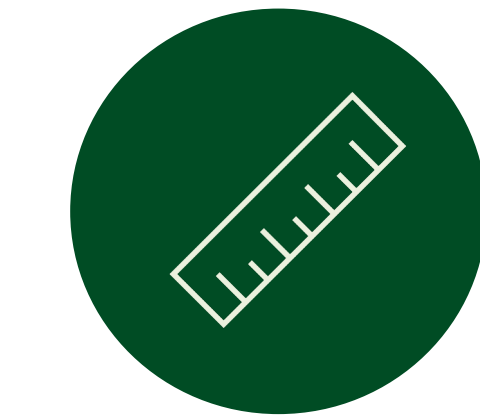
Methods



N = 132 (78% female) college students meeting criteria for AUD (*n* = 45, 31%), CUD (*n* = 46, 35%) or both (*n* = 41, 31%)
k = 429 use moments, 4,063 total observations



2-week EMA protocol through mEMA Sense
1 morning survey (9:00am – 12:00pm)
5 random surveys (9:00am – midnight) every 3 hours



Problems were measured moment-to-moment including impaired control items (e.g., “Fount it difficult to limit use”, “Used more than expected”)



Multilevel Mixed Effects Logistic Regression
Moments (L1) nested within days (L2) nested within people (L3)



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Results

Effect on problems	OR	SE	95% CI		p
			LL	UL	
Cannabis use (previous moment)	1.52	0.35	0.97	2.39	.069
Daily savoring	0.87	0.04	0.81	0.95	.001***
Cannabis use x Daily savoring	1.22	0.17	0.93	1.61	.157
Daily positive affect	0.77	0.05	0.67	0.88	.000***
Alcohol use (previous moment)	1.45	0.38	0.86	2.43	.162
Alcohol use x Daily savoring	0.97	0.15	0.71	1.31	.821
Trait savoring (person mean savoring)	0.77	0.08	0.63	.95	.013*
Cannabis use x Trait savoring					
Alcohol use x Trait savoring	0.85	0.18	0.57	1.28	.446
Trait positive affect (person mean PA)	0.83	0.09	0.67	1.04	.107

Note. All effects are controlling for sex, day of the week, and day in the study. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit
* significance at .05
** significance at .01
*** significance at .001

Discussion

Daily positive affect functioning and savoring were protective against problems related to substance use, including **SUD symptoms**. There were no significant interactions between savoring and substance use.

A non-significant main effect of cannabis and alcohol use suggests that individuals with SUD **are not experiencing more problems solely due to substance use** – antithetical to colloquial beliefs about people with a SUD and replicating previous effects.

Results suggest that increasing savoring abilities are a possible avenue for intervention to help treat SUD that is not related to substance use.

Future research should examine:

- How these effects translate into the **moment level** – does momentary savoring predict less problems?
- The role of **substance use motives** – are certain substance use motives (e.g., enhancement) associated with greater savoring?
- Exploring the protective effects of savoring in types of problems experienced – is savoring protective in the context of certain types of problems more than others?