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Theories of Causes of Problem Drinking

I.   **Public Health Model**

II. **Psychological Theories**

III. **Sociological Theories**

I. Public Health Model

1. Agent
2. Host
3. Environment
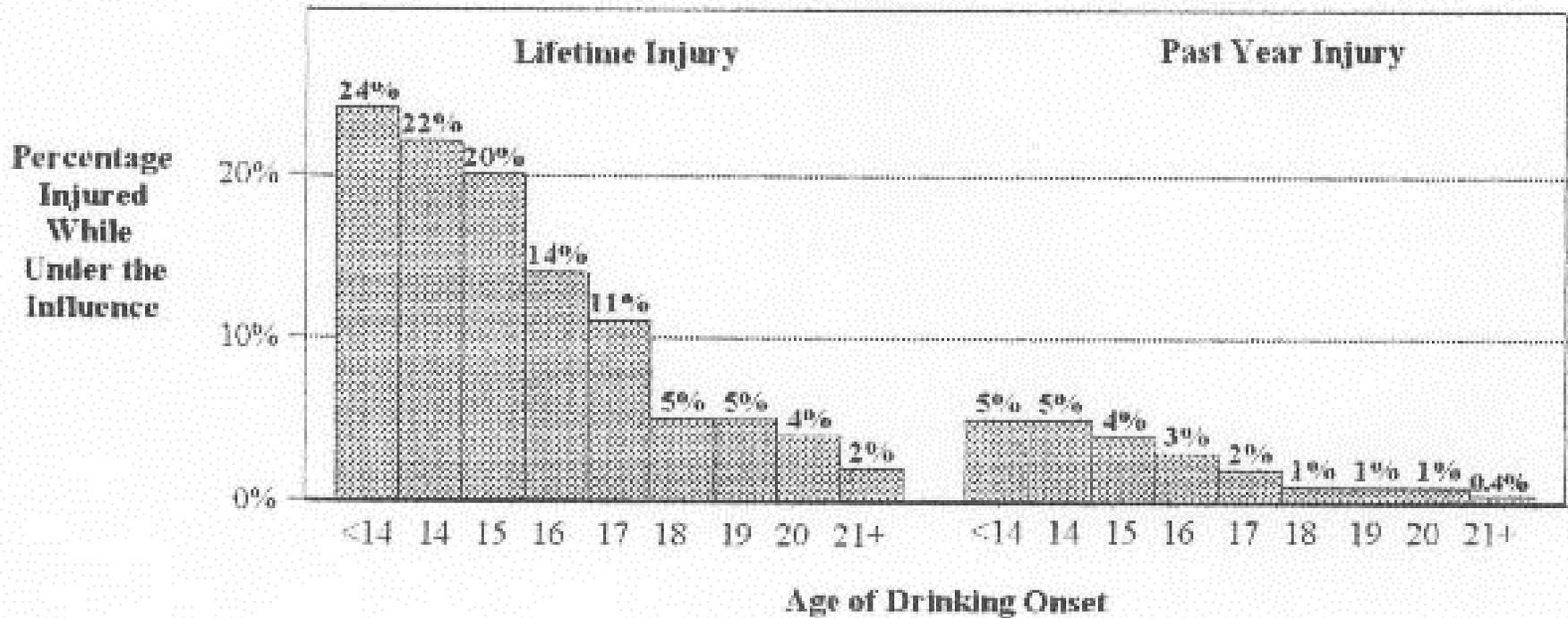
II. Psychological Theories

- Social learning (reward, modeling)
- Stress response dampening
- Tension Reduction
- Self Awareness Reduction
- Self derogation
- Alcohol myopia
- Alcohol expectancy
- Sensation seeking
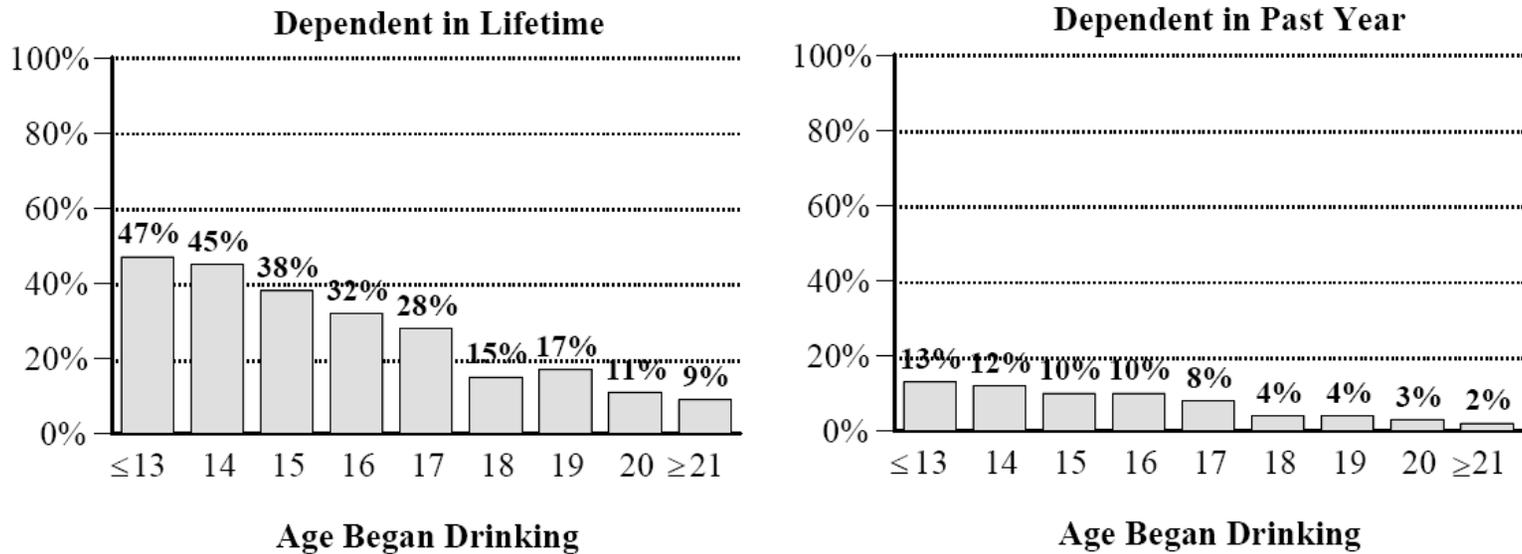
III. Sociological Theories

- **Problem prone behavior (labels and lifestyles)**
- **Gateway drugs and early onset**

Percentage of People Injured in Their Lifetime and in the Past Year While Under the Influence, by Age of Drinking Onset

(N=26,797)

Lifetime Injury   Past Year Injury

Percentage Injured While Under the Influence

Lifetime Injury: 24%, 22%, 20%, 14%, 11%, 5%, 5%, 4%, 2%

Past Year Injury: 5%, 5%, 4%, 3%, 2%, 1%, 1%, 1%, 0.4%

Age of Drinking Onset: <14 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21+

Age of Drinking Onset

Percentage of U.S. Adults Aged 18 and Older Dependent on Alcohol, By Age of Drinking Onset

Dependent in Lifetime

Dependent in Past Year

47% 45% 38% 32% 28% 15% 17% 11% 9%

≤13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 ≥21

Age Began Drinking

13% 12% 10% 10% 8% 4% 4% 3% 2%

≤13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 ≥21
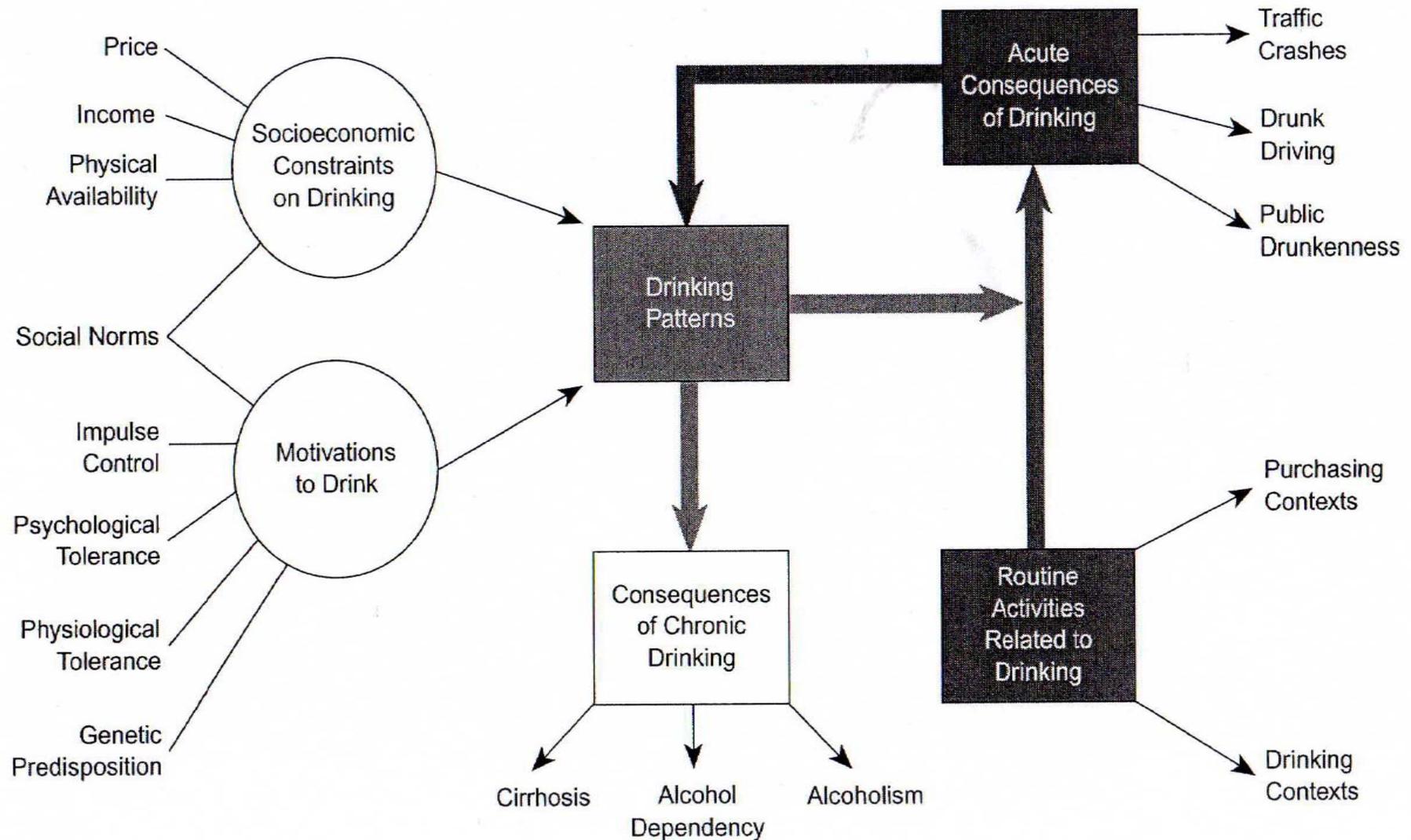
Age Began Drinking

NOTES: The NESARC was a face-to-face survey of a multistage probability sample of 43,093 adults age 18 years and older conducted in 2001–2002. Data in the figure are based on the 26,829 respondents who reported ever drinking alcohol.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Hingson, R.W., Heeren, T., and Winter, M.R. "Age at Drinking Onset and Alcohol Dependence," *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine* 160(7):739-746, 2006. Available online at http://archpedi.ama-assn.org/cgi/reprint/160/7/739. For more information, contact Dr. Ralph Hingson at rhingson@mail.nih.gov.

III. Sociological Theories

- Problem prone behavior (labels and lifestyles)
- Gateway drugs and early onset
- Peer associations, peer norms, and role modeling
- Social control (family, schools, economic, legal)

An ecological model of drinking behavior

Source: Gruenewald, P. J., et al. Alcohol availability and the ecology of drinking behavior. *Alcohol Health & Research World* 17(1):39–45, 1993.

III. Sociological Theories

- Problem prone behavior (labels and lifestyles)
- Gateway drugs and early onset
- Peer associations, peer norms, and role modeling
- Social control (family, schools, economic, legal)
- Religion and ethnicity

MEANS/PERCENTAGES FOR ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG MEASURES BY RELIGIOUS BACKGROUNDS

Alcohol Indexes	Protestant (N=596)	Catholic (N=482	Jewish (N=248)	None (N=101)	Significance Level
Consumption[a]	6.2	6.5	5.4	5.9	p <.001
Negative Consequences[b]	2.9	3.3	2.0	2.9	p <.001
Family Problem	20%	22%	8%	26%	p <.0001
Mother's Social Drinking[c]	2.5*	2.5	1.6	2.4	p <.0001
Father's Social Drinking[c]	3.4	3.9	2.5	3.2	p <.0001
Personal Attitude[d]	3.1*	3.2	3.1	3.1	p <.05
Perceived Mother's Attitude[d]	2.2*	2.2	2.1	2.4	n.s.[g]
Perceived Father's Attitude[d]	2.5	2.5	2.4	2.5	n.s.
Perceived Friends' Norm[d]	3.4	3.5	3.3	3.4	n.s.
Perceived High School Norm[d]	3.3	3.2	3.3	3.3	n.s.
Perceived Campus Norm[d]	3.9	3.8	3.9	3.9	n.s.
Other Drug Indexes					
Drug Use[e]	5.1	5.1	5.6	5.3	n.s.
Personal Attitude[f]	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.4	n.s.
Perceived Campus Norm[f]	4.7	4.4	4.6	4.5	n.s.

Source: Perkins, H. Wesley. "Religious Traditions, Parents, and Peers as Determinants of Alcohol and Drug Use among College Students." *Review of Religious Research*, Vol. 27, No. 1, pp. 15-31.

[a]Index range is 0 (no consumption) to 15.6 (highest consumption score).

[b]Index range is 0 (no consequences) to 20 (consistent multiple consequences).

[c]Index range is 0 (no drinking) to 12 (most drinks).

[d]Index range is 1 (most conservative) to 5 (most liberal).

[e]Index range is 0 (no drug use) to 18 (most drug use).

[f]Index range is 0 (most conservative) to 9 (most liberal).

[g]Differences among religious background categories are not significant ($p \geq .05$) based upon analysis of variance.

*Significant differences ($p < .05$) exist among Protestant denominational groupings.

MEAN ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION SCORES FOR PROTESTANT, CATHOLIC, AND JEWISH COLLEGE STUDENTS BY CLASS YEAR.[a]

Class Year	Protestant	Catholic	Jewish	Significance of Religious Background[b]
1st Year	5.9 (164)	6.2 (128)	4.8 (69)	$p < .05$
2nd Year	6.5 (137)	7.2 (114)	5.1 (62)	$p < .001$
3rd Year	6.3 (144)	6.5 (114)	5.4 (42)	n.s.
4th Year	6.2 (120)	6.3 (90)	6.4 (55)	n.s.
Significance of Class Year[b]	n.s.	n.s.	$p < .05$	

[a]The N of cases for each cell is noted in parentheses.

[b]Analysis of variance among categories.

III. Sociological Theories

- **Problem prone behavior (labels and lifestyles)**
- **Gateway drugs and early onset**
- **Peer associations, peer norms, and role modeling**
- **Social control (family, schools, economic, legal)**
- **Religion and ethnicity**
- **Mass media influence and role modeling**