

Why Zoom ‘Happy Hour’ Falls Flat

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Results from a study published in [Clinical Psychological Science](#) suggest combining alcohol and virtual social interaction had negative effects compared to in-person gatherings.

In the study, participants video called either a friend or a stranger seated in a separate room. Researchers gave some participants alcoholic drinks and others nonalcoholic drinks.

As the call took place, researchers tracked participants’ [eye movements](#), or “gaze behavior.”

The study showed that participants who consumed alcohol before conducting the video chat spent more time watching themselves during the conversation instead of their partners. They also felt more negative after the virtual exchange than the people who didn’t drink.

Additionally, the mood-enhancing properties of alcohol seen in in-person interactions weren’t seen in the virtual interactions, says coauthor Michael Sayette, a professor of psychology at the University of Pittsburgh.

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