

Agreement of Alcohol Use Among Roommates

March 15, 2012

In case you missed it, the cameras were rolling at the APS 23rd Annual Convention in Washington, DC. Watch Grace Jackson from New York University present her poster session research on “Agreement of Alcohol Use: A Year-Long Study of College Roommates.”

Grace Jackson is interested in researching how relationships progress over time. Jackson and coauthors Sean P. Lane (New York University), Gertraud Stadler (Columbia University), Niall Bolger (Columbia University), and Patrick E. Shrout (New York University) studied 293 pairs of undergraduate roommates (N = 586).

They found that roommates are generally pretty good at reporting trait-level, a.k.a. general, information, such as whether their roommate is a drinker or not. Yet when the roommates were asked to provide more specific information, such as the number of drinks the other roommate typically consumes, they weren't as accurate. “But,” says Jackson “Behavioral information can be enhanced by roommates who spend a lot of time together.” Roommates have a certain level of interaction because they share housing, but living together doesn't necessarily mean they're getting to know each other. Jackson found that roommates who spent more time together, such as taking a road trip, have a better understanding of each other and have interactions that are beyond the average level.

Jackson, G. L., Lane, S. P., Bolger, N., & Shrout, P. E. (2011). Agreement of Alcohol Use: A Year Long Study of College Roommates. *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research* *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*, 55 (s1)