

PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON ALCOHOL USE AMONG YOUNG ADOLESCENTS
Mental health and personality

The main aim of this doctoral thesis was to investigate how mental health and personality traits are related to alcohol use and inebriation in early adolescence. The studies applied a gender perspective to enhance understanding of factors contributing to alcohol use in girls and boys. Participants in all three studies constitute a community population sample recruited through the Swedish multidisciplinary *Longitudinal Research program on Development In Adolescence* (LoRDIA). Roughly the same adolescents were followed from early to middle adolescence (from approximately age 12 to 15). The first study examines the relation between mental health problems (i.e., patterns of self-reported internalizing and externalizing problems), mental well-being, and alcohol experience among girls and boys aged 12 to 13 years. The second investigates the psychometric properties of a Swedish version of the Junior Temperament and Character Inventory (JTIC), a personality measurement for children and adolescents, and the congruence between self and caregiver ratings. The third study aimed to predict alcohol inebriation and potential gender-specific patterns at 13 to 15 years by using the JTIC and a two-continua model of mental health (mental health problems plus mental well-being).

Findings from this thesis improve our knowledge of how mental health (both positive and negative aspects) relate to early alcohol use, and how personality traits (i.e., temperament and character) function as important underlying factors in both mental health and alcohol use. Gender-specific considerations are suggested when developing and conducting preventative interventions targeting psychological risks and protective factors against early alcohol use among young adolescents.



Karin Boson is a registered clinical psychologist. She earned her PhD at the Department of Psychology, University of Gothenburg, Sweden.

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