



# Maternal HIV, Substance Use Role Modeling, and Adolescent Girls' Alcohol Use

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*Parental role modeling has a major influence on adolescent alcohol use. Our study examined maternal factors associated with daughters' alcohol use among inner-city racial minority adolescents of HIV-infected and HIV-uninfected mothers. A nonprobability sample of 176 mothers (37% with HIV) and their adolescent daughters completed self-administered surveys. Between- and within-group analyses were conducted using hierarchical multivariate logistic regressions. Findings showed that in the full sample, difficulty talking with daughters about alcohol was positively associated with alcohol use among daughters, whereas maternal report of importance of religion was negatively associated with alcohol use among daughters. Within-group analysis of participants by maternal HIV status revealed that maternal beliefs that drinking alcohol in front of their daughters was normative were associated with higher odds of adolescent alcohol use in households with HIV-infected mothers. These preliminary findings highlight the potential increased vulnerability of racial minority adolescent girls living in households with HIV-infected mothers.*

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Adolescent use of alcohol and other drugs is a leading public health issue in the United States; of particular concern are increasing rates of substance use among girls (Schinke, Fang, & Cole, 2009). By the 12th grade, most adolescents have tried alcohol at least once. Nationwide, 70.8% of adolescents reported having consumed alcohol, with 38.7% consuming alcohol during the previous 30 days (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012). Among eighth and tenth graders, girls drank more, were more likely to start using substances at younger ages, and were more likely to become dependent on substances relative to boys (Schinke et al., 2009). While rates of drinking by sex are well studied, less work has focused specifically on teenage girls (Dauber, Hogue, Paulson, & Leiferman, 2009). What is known is that once girls start abusing substances, they are more likely to become dependent,

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making alcohol use initiation and use among girls important to understand. Furthermore, alcohol use by girls is associated with risky sexual behavior, including unintended pregnancy, mental health problems, accidents, and delinquency (Dauber et al., 2009; Schinke et al., 2009).

Although there are common precipitators of adolescent alcohol use for both boys and girls, parental role modeling regarding alcohol and drugs has been shown to be more salient for girls than boys (Choquet, Hassler, Morin, Falissard, & Chau, 2008). Furthermore, maternal influence on adolescent substance use behaviors seems to be more significant than paternal influence (Schinke et al., 2009); this is likely attributable to the difference in parent-child relationships and roles (Killoren, Updegraff, Christopher, & Umaña-Taylor, 2011). However, maternal health (e.g., HIV serostatus) may influence this relationship. Children of an HIV-infected parent may take on the role of caregiver (Keigher, Zabler, Robinson, Fernandez, & Stevens, 2005), and stressors related to this role shift may influence engagement in alcohol use behaviors (Mellins, Brackis-Cott, Dolezal, & Meyer-Bahlburg, 2005). Structured routines related to household management (e.g., roles and duties) and family engagement (e.g., family meals together) in HIV-infected families may mitigate engagement in risk behaviors by youth (Murphy, Marelich, Herbeck, & Payne, 2009).

It has been well established that maternal role-modeling behaviors influence children's beliefs and behaviors, particularly in stressful environments. Maternal communication about risk behaviors is also critically important, especially for children living in high-stress environments, which increase exposure and access to drugs (Miller-Day, 2002). Qualities influencing these parenting behaviors continue to be elucidated. It is important to explore the association between maternal risk and protective factors and daughters' alcohol use in inner-city environments, especially among daughters facing the added stressors of having an HIV-infected parent. In this work, we explore, among both HIV-infected and HIV-uninfected mothers, maternal role modeling and its influence on the alcohol behaviors of Black and Hispanic adolescent girls.

## Background

### Maternal Alcohol Use Role Modeling and Daughters' Alcohol Use

The extant literature has demonstrated the powerful influence of parental substance use on the substance abuse of girls. Consistent with social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), parents serve as behavioral role models, with youths likely to mimic both positive and negative parental behavior (e.g., if parents drink, their children are more likely to drink; Latendresse et al., 2008). In a meta-analysis, delayed alcohol initiation and reduced levels of later drinking were predicted by a number of factors, including parental role modeling of alcohol use (Brook, Balka, et al., 2010; Mares, Van Der Vorst, Engels, & Lichtwarck-Aschoff, 2011). Negative adult influence on substance use behaviors has been found for Black youth (Brook, Balka, et al., 2010). Specifically, research suggests that the effect of alcohol-specific role-modeling behaviors might vary as a function of the parent-child gender; however, these findings have been mixed (Coffelt et al., 2006). For example, McGue, Iacono, Legrand, and Elkins (2001), along with their finding that early use of alcohol by mothers was associated with a significant increase in the risk of alcohol use by sons and daughters by age 14 years, noted that while genetic factors seem to have a strong effect on whether boys engage in early alcohol use, environmental factors seem to be more pertinent in understanding early alcohol use among girls. However, other studies (Zhang, Welte, & Wiczorek, 1999) found no such effects. The inconsistent findings have been attributed to reliance of clinical samples and insufficient studies focusing on larger samples of women (Coffelt et al., 2006). Researchers have, therefore, called for additional research incorporating community samples of women in order to clarify these inconsistent findings.

### Maternal Communication About Alcohol and Daughters' Alcohol Use

Beyond the modeling of behaviors (Latendresse et al., 2008), parents also influence their children's behaviors by communicating expectations about

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