

## **COGA Family History of Alcohol & Other Substance Disorders**

Grade 12 / Year 13

Fast Track Project Technical Report

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### **Citation**

Instrument

Begleiter, H. (1995). *The Collaborative Study on the Genetics of Alcoholism*. Alcohol Health and Research World, 19(3) 228-236

Report

Lamb, R. (2010). *COGA Family History of Alcohol & Other Substance Disorders, Year 13* (Fast Track Project Technical Report). Available from the Fast Track Project Web site, <http://www.fasttrackproject.org>

### **Data Sources**

Raw: P13AM1

Scored: FHA13SP1

### **I. Survey Description**

The Collaborative Studies on Genetics of Alcoholism (COGA) was funded in 1989 by the National Institutes of Health, with the goal of identifying the specific genes underlying the vulnerability to alcoholism. The COGA Family History of Alcohol and Other Substance Disorders measure is a 70 questions survey. The series of questions are designed to measure the multiple aspects of familial alcohol and substance disorders. The original scoring method was established by a consortium of researchers at the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism as part of the large scale Collaborative Study on the Genetics of Alcoholism designed to gather information about alcohol consumption and the presence of psychiatric disorders. This measure was added to the Fast Track protocol in year 13 (2003).

The COGA Family History of Alcohol and Other Substance Disorders used in the Fast Track Project is a 70 item, computer survey, measuring aspects of aspects of familial alcohol and substance disorders. The questions start with questions designed to establish from the respondent his/her relationship to the Target Child (TC). The respondent then is asked questions that apply to him/her and followed by questions related to the biological mother or father of the TC. Questions use a format of three potential answers (2 = No, 1 = Yes and 9 = Uncertain) and dichotomous response formats (2 = No and 1 = Yes).

### **II. Report Sample**

These analyses were conducted on the first cohort on the high-risk Control sample (n = 155) and the Normative sample (n = 387, N = 463 with overlap) for the thirteenth year of the study. One hundred thirty records were missing for the complete measure. Fifty-eight records from the Control sample (8 from

Durham, 20 from Nashville, 12 from Pennsylvania and 18 from Washington) and 113 records were missing from the Normative sample (16 from Durham, 43 from Nashville, 22 from Pennsylvania and 32 from Washington).

### III. Frequency Tables

Table 1 summarizes the initial questions used to establish the respondents' drug and alcohol use and the respondents' reporting of the biological mother/father's use. The vast majority of respondents in the Control and Normative samples reported no problems associated with alcohol or drugs. Responses indicate that the fathers show a higher propensity towards alcohol and drug use.

Table 1. *Summary of index question responses.*

Question	Control		Normative	
	No	Some	No	Some
Did drinking ever cause you to have problems with health, family, job or police?	86	9	225	8
Did drinking ever cause the TCs biological father to have problems with health, family, job or police?	49	26	139	45
Did drinking ever cause the TCs biological mother to have problems with health, family, job or police?	4	2	12	6
Did drug use (excluding smoking) ever cause you to have problems with health, family, job or police?	88	7	224	9
Did drug use ever cause the TCs biological father to have problems with health, family, job or police?	51	23	149	35
Did drug use ever cause the TCs biological mother to have problems with health, family, job or police?	4	2	12	8

Tables 2, 3 and 4 summarize the TCs biological mother/father's at-risk drinking and drug use behaviors as reported by the respondent.

Table 2. *Summary of TCs biological mother/father's at-risk drinking behaviors.*

Question Stem: Because of drinking, did TCs biological mother/father ever have problems, such as:	Control		Normative	
	No	Yes	No	Yes
Using alcohol in larger amounts or over a longer period than intended?	6	15	10	34
Being unable to stop or cut down on drinking?	7	14	12	31
Spending a lot of time drinking or being hung over?	7	12	11	33
Being unable to work, go to school, or take care of household responsibilities?	7	12	21	24
Being high from drinking when he/she could get hurt?	12	9	15	27
Having accidental injuries?	10	10	28	15
Reducing or giving up important activities?	17	3	23	19
Getting objections from family or friends, or objections at work or school?	11	9	17	26
Having legal problems (DWIs, arrests)?	8	14	14	31
Having blackouts?	9	12	28	12
Going on binges or benders, drinking 2 or more days without sobering up?	12	5	26	15
Having physical health problems (liver problems, pancreatitis)?	12	5	28	14
Having emotional or psychological problems (uninterested, depressed, suspicious/paranoid, having strange ideas)?	14	4	30	12
Having withdrawal symptoms (shakes, seizures/convulsions, DTs)?	10	8	27	14
Needing to drink great deal more in order to gain effect, or finding that he/she could no longer get drunk on the amount he/she used to drink?	14	1	25	16
Receiving any kind of treatment or hospitalization?	7	9	24	15
Making rules to control drinking (never drink alone, never drink before 5pm), drink before breakfast, or drink a non-beverage alcohol?	13	5	20	10
Having trouble at work or school or getting into fights with drinking?	13	2	26	17
Losing friends because of his/her drinking, considering himself and excessive drinker, or feeling guilty about his/her drinking?	14	3	23	20

Table 3. Summary of TCs biological mother/father illicit drug use behaviors.

Question Stem: Because of drugs, did TCs biological mother/father ever have problems, such as:	Control		Normative	
	No	Yes	No	Yes
Using drugs in larger amounts or over a longer period than intended?	8	7	10	17
Being unable to stop or cut down on drugs?	5	8	10	19
Spending a lot of time using drugs or recovering from the effects?	5	9	7	20
Being unable to work, go to school, or take care of household responsibilities?	6	8	9	18
Being high from drugs when he/she could get hurt?	5	7	9	19
Having accidental injuries?	8	5	16	10
Reducing or giving up important activities?	5	9	8	19
Having problems with family or friends, or at work or school?	2	12	5	24
Having legal problems (arrests for possessing, selling or stealing drugs)?	5	7	13	16
Having physical health problems (hepatitis, overdose)?	9	4	19	11
Having emotional or psychological problems (uninterested depressed, suspicious/paranoid, having strange ideas)?	6	6	14	14
Having withdrawal symptoms?	5	5	13	11
Needing larger amounts of drug(s) to get an effect, or finding that you could no longer get high on the amount you used to use?	5	7	11	10
Receiving any kind of treatment or hospitalization?	9	4	17	11

Table 4. Summary of drug types used by the TCs biological mother/father.

Question Stem: Which of these drugs has TCs biological mother/father had problems with:	Control		Normative	
	No	Yes	No	Yes
Cocaine	2	4	3	6
Marijuana	4	2	7	2
Stimulants	6	0	9	0
Sedatives	5	1	7	2
Opiates	5	1	8	1
Hallucinogens	6	0	7	2
Inhalants	6	0	9	0
PCP	6	0	9	0

## VI. Recommendations for Use

The COGA Family History of Alcohol & Other Substance Disorders Survey allows researchers to assess alcohol and drug use of the target child's biological parents. The proportion associated with alcohol and drug use of the biological mothers or fathers of the target child, as reported by the respondent, is small. The user must bear in mind that for Year 13, the alcohol and drug use disorders in parents is skewed to low values.