COGNITIVE BIAS IN SOCIAL ALCOHOL CONSUMERS: DO STIMULI MATTER?
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Introduction
Incentive–sensitization theory suggests that individuals consuming drugs on a regular basis will display cognitive bias towards drug-related cues. Research in social alcohol consumers has yet to examine the role of stimulus characteristics on alcohol-related cognitive biases. The following studies therefore examined whether the presence of cognitive biases in social alcohol consumers is stimulus-specific.

Methods
In study 1, \( n = 72 \) (50% male) healthy light and heavy alcohol consumers completed a lexical and pictorial version of the modified alcohol Stroop task. In study 2, \( n = 72 \) (50% male) healthy light and heavy alcohol consumers completed a lexical and pictorial version of the visual probe task. Lexical reaction time data were analyzed within a 2 x 2 mixed model ANOVA, with cuetype / validity (alcohol, neutral) as a within-subjects factor, and drinking status (light, heavy) as a between-subjects factor. Pictorial reaction time data were analyzed within a 2 x 2 x 2 mixed model ANOVA, with cuetype / validity (alcohol, neutral) and stimulus set (active, passive) as within-subjects factors, and drinking status (light, heavy) as a between-subjects factor.

Results
In study 1, lexical Stroop data, indicated no significant main effect of cuetype \((p = .90)\), while pictorial Stroop data indicated no significant main effect of cuetype \((p = .18)\) or stimulus set \((p = .76)\). A significant interaction between cuetype and stimulus set was observed \((F[1,70] = 9.12, p = .004)\), indicating slower reaction times towards alcohol-related pictorial cues in the passive stimulus set, irrespective of drinking status. No further significant interactions were observed \((ps > .30)\). In study 2, lexical visual probe data indicated no significant main effect of validity \((p = .48)\), while pictorial visual probe data, indicated no significant main effect of validity \((p = .68)\) or stimulus set \((p = .10)\). No further significant interactions were observed \((ps > .51)\).

Discussion
Neither stimulus type (lexical, pictorial) nor stimulus set (active, passive) appears to influence the presence of attentional bias on a visual probe task. Within the modified alcohol Stroop task, selective processing towards alcohol-related cues was observed among a pictorial version within a particular stimulus set (passive). Results indicate the potential role of stimulus characteristics on the presence of cognitive bias.