

Reviewer comment-1

This manuscript offers a comprehensive and thoughtful exploration of the relationship between financial stress, depressive symptoms, and alcohol use in Indigenous communities. The literature review is robust, providing a detailed analysis of how financial hardship and alcohol consumption are linked to mental health in these communities. The connection between alcohol use and mental health is well-documented, which provides a strong foundation for the study's exploration of these issues in Indigenous populations. However, there is room for improvement in the structure of the literature review. Specifically, I recommend discussing the literature on alcohol use and mental health before introducing the literature gap. By doing so, the gap in the literature can be more effectively framed within the broader context, highlighting the significance of the research in addressing this gap.

Additionally, the manuscript would benefit from further exploration of culturally specific factors and support mechanisms within Indigenous communities. Incorporating these elements would not only deepen the discussion but also provide important context to the findings. By highlighting how cultural beliefs, traditions, and community-based support systems influence mental health outcomes, the manuscript could offer a more holistic view of the challenges faced by Indigenous communities and the resources available to them.

Conceptual Model:

The conceptual model presented in the article is clear and coherent, effectively illustrating the connections between financial hardship, alcohol consumption, and depressive symptoms. The theoretical model chosen for this study is well-justified, and the rationale for focusing specifically on women participants is clearly explained. This adds a valuable perspective to the research, particularly considering the unique challenges faced by Indigenous women in these contexts.

However, it is important to note that this study focuses specifically on Indigenous communities in the United States. Given that there are Indigenous populations worldwide, with varying experiences and cultural practices, it would be beneficial for the manuscript to more explicitly state that the study's focus is on U.S.-based Indigenous communities. This clarification would provide greater context for readers unfamiliar with the specific experiences of Indigenous populations in the United States. Additionally, since the Northern Plains region is mentioned in the methods section, some readers may not be familiar with this area. Providing a brief explanation of this region would help contextualize the study's findings for a broader audience.

In the discussion section, it would be valuable to explore whether the results align with findings from other Indigenous communities globally. This would offer a more comprehensive understanding of the broader applicability of the study's findings and help identify potential

cultural similarities and differences in alcohol use, mental health, and financial stress across diverse Indigenous populations.

Methodology and Measures:

The methods section is well-explained, offering a clear understanding of the analysis strategy and the measures used in the study. However, I suggest incorporating additional questionnaires on alcohol use that would allow for a more nuanced understanding of alcohol consumption patterns. Currently, the measure only categorizes individuals based on whether they drink or not, which overlooks the variability in drinking behaviors. For example, there is a significant difference between those who consume alcohol daily and those who drink only on rare occasions. Including a more detailed measure of alcohol use, such as frequency or quantity of consumption, could provide richer insights into the severity and patterns of alcohol use in the studied population.

Suggestions for Improvement:

The study provides several practical suggestions for future research, which are highly relevant and useful. Incorporating mixed-methods approaches, such as focus groups, would be an excellent way to gather richer qualitative data and capture the lived experiences of participants. Qualitative insights could provide a deeper understanding of the cultural, social, and emotional factors that influence alcohol consumption and mental health in Indigenous communities.

Furthermore, utilizing a different questionnaire to gain a more detailed understanding of alcohol consumption, including the underlying reasons for drinking, would enhance the depth of the study's findings. This could help identify key psychosocial factors contributing to alcohol use and provide more actionable recommendations for mental health interventions in Indigenous communities.

Quality of Communication:

The manuscript is written with clarity and precision, and the overall quality of communication is excellent. The structure is logical, and the arguments are well-supported by the data and literature. However, a few minor edits would help improve the flow of the paper and ensure consistency throughout. These revisions are relatively minor and should not detract from the overall strength of the manuscript.

Conclusion:

Overall, this is a well-researched and insightful manuscript that addresses an important issue in Indigenous communities. With some revisions, particularly in terms of restructuring the literature review, clarifying the cultural context, and refining the methodology to capture more detailed data on alcohol use, this paper has the potential to make a significant contribution to the field. I believe the manuscript would benefit from a few minor revisions to enhance its clarity and impact.