Suicidality Linked to Alcohol, Partner Abuse

BY SHERRY BOSCHERT

SAN FRANCISCO — A study of female undergraduates found significant correlations among three problems: psychological aggression by an intimate partner, alcohol-related problems, and proneness to suicide.

College counseling centers should assess women who are suspected of being at risk for suicide or health-harming behaviors for partner violence victimization and alcohol-related problems, Dorian Lamis said at the annual meeting of the American Society of Suicidology.

The study of 713 women found that psychological aggression by an intimate partner was significantly correlated with alcohol-related problems, and alcohol-related problems were significantly correlated with suicide proneness. Alcohol-related problems emerged as a significant mediator between the experience of psychological abuse and subsequent suicide proneness, reported Mr. Lamis of the University of South Carolina, Columbia, and his associates.

The women volunteered for the study and received extra academic credit for completing the Revised Conflict Tactics Scales (a psychological aggression subscale), the Rutgers Alcohol Problems Index (assessing problems related to alcohol use within the previous year), and the Life Attitudes Schedule-Short Form (assessing current suicide proneness).

The findings were limited by the homogeneous sample of subjects, who were all female, 76% European American, and mostly freshmen or sophomores.

The data were self-reported and cross-sectional, which might also have limited the significance of the findings. ■