

**Title:** Comparison of prosocial behavior among adults with and without substance dependency.

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**Summary:**

Although research has clearly demonstrated the physical and mental health benefits derived from helping others, its impact on substance dependent (SD) individuals is not yet fully understood. Emerging research suggests that SD adolescents participate less frequently in prosocial behaviors and thus may receive fewer benefits (Pagano, Carter, Johnson, and Exline, 2010). This study aims to replicate prior findings that substance dependency is associated with reduced levels of prosocial behavior involvement with SD adults. Using a matched pair design, 43 adults admitted into an intensive outpatient treatment for SD were compared to 43 normative adults from the annual General Social Survey. Prosocial behaviors were assessed with the six-item General Social Survey (GSS) altruism module: (i) donating blood, (ii) giving food or money to a homeless person, (iii) volunteering, (iv) giving money to a charity, (v) looking after a neighbor's home, and (vi) carrying a stranger's belongings. With reference to the past year, items were rated from 1 = "more than once a week" to 6 "not at all in the past year." Approximately half (51.2%) of the clinical sample were female (n = 22), 43 years of age (M=42.77) on average, 68.29% were alcohol dependent, and 70.73% were substance dependent at the time of treatment admission. Across samples, most participants rarely or never donated blood in the past year (94.19%), approximately half had not cared for a neighbor's property (58.14%) or volunteered (59.30%), and one out of three rarely or never gave money to the homeless (30.23%) or charity (29.07%). When matched by age and gender to a normative adult sample, SD adults had significantly lower prosocial behaviors in three domains: (i) giving money to the homeless,  $F(1,85) = 13.89, p < 0.0001$ , (ii) giving money to charity,  $F(1,85) = 11.43, p < 0.0001$ , and (iii) volunteering,  $F(1,85) = 13.10, p < 0.0001$ . The results of this study are consistent with prior research with SD adolescents. SD adults, like SD youth, appear to give less money to the homeless and charity. SD adults also volunteered less than normative adults. These findings of lower monetary giving and volunteerism lend empirical support to the often observed lack of other oriented regard among addicts/alcoholics. Replication of these findings in a larger, randomized controlled trial is warranted to explore the causal link between prosocial behaviors and alcohol/drug outcomes.

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