

## Abstract

The present study aimed at exploring the gender differences of risk and protective factors for Chinese young drug users aged between 18-30 years old. Tang, Lu, and Wong's study (1997) provides the first data set for the present study. At the end of 1997, a second data set which consisted of interviews of one hundred and ninety five Chinese young male drug users (age 18-30) was collected. Comparisons were made between these two sets of data and significant gender differences were found on participants' drug taking histories, family interactions, coping strategies and general health conditions whereas, few gender differences were shown on participants' personality characteristics. Structural models which based on a subset of variables, namely, personality characteristics, coping strategies, family interactions and general health in relation to participants' drug use behaviors, was derived from the data. Specifically, family interactions were found to be mediated by participants' general health which directly predicted their drug use behavior. On the other hand, personality characteristics were found to exert direct effects on drug use behaviors. Both conceptual and practical implications of these findings were discussed.