

Under what conditions? Counselor and client characteristics moderate the role of change talk in brief motivational intervention

Jacques Gaume, Molly Magill, Richard Longabaugh, Nicolas Bertholet, Gerhard Gmel,
Jean-Bernard Daeppen

Center for Alcohol and Addiction Studies, Brown University, Providence RI, USA

Alcohol Treatment Center, Lausanne University Hospital, Lausanne, Switzerland

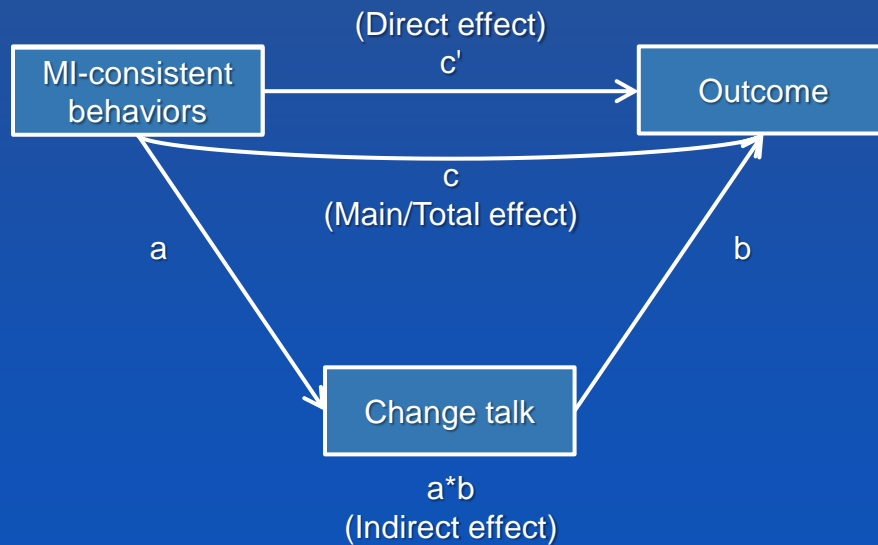
Background

Change talk (i.e. client language expressed in favor of a specified behavior change)

- proposed as a **mechanism of change** in motivational interviewing (MI)
- **mediating** the association between therapist MI-consistent behaviors and client behavioral outcomes

(Miller & Rose 2009)

Mediation model



Aim

- To test **under what circumstances** this generic MI conceptualization was supported
- in the context of a **brief motivational intervention** for **heavy drinking** among **non-treatment seeking young men** (age 20)

Parent trial

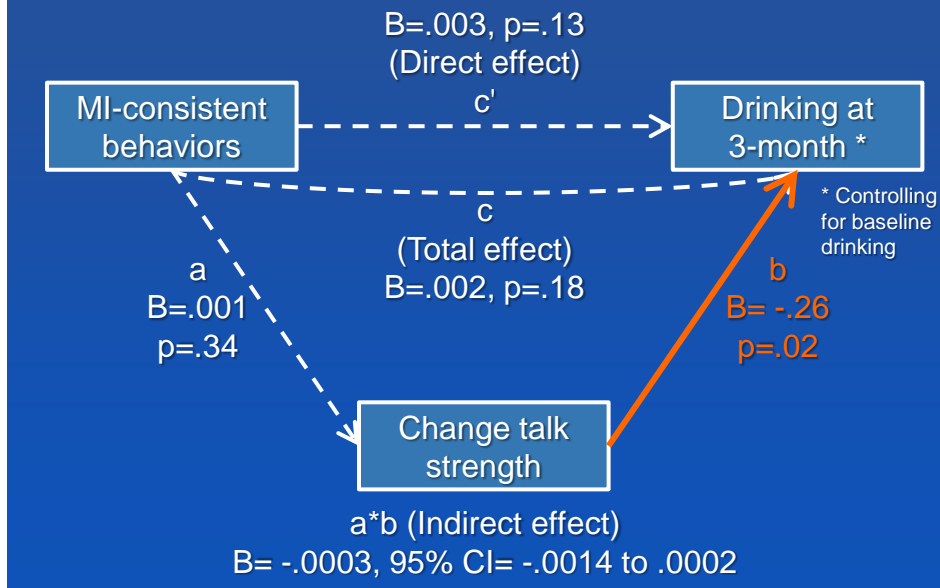
- Brief motivational intervention randomized controlled trial
 - Single BMI (N=180 @ 3-month follow-up)
 - Control (N=182 @ 3-month follow-up)
 - **BMI resulted in significant reduction in alcohol use** (effect size of $d = .22$)

Gaume et al. *submitted*

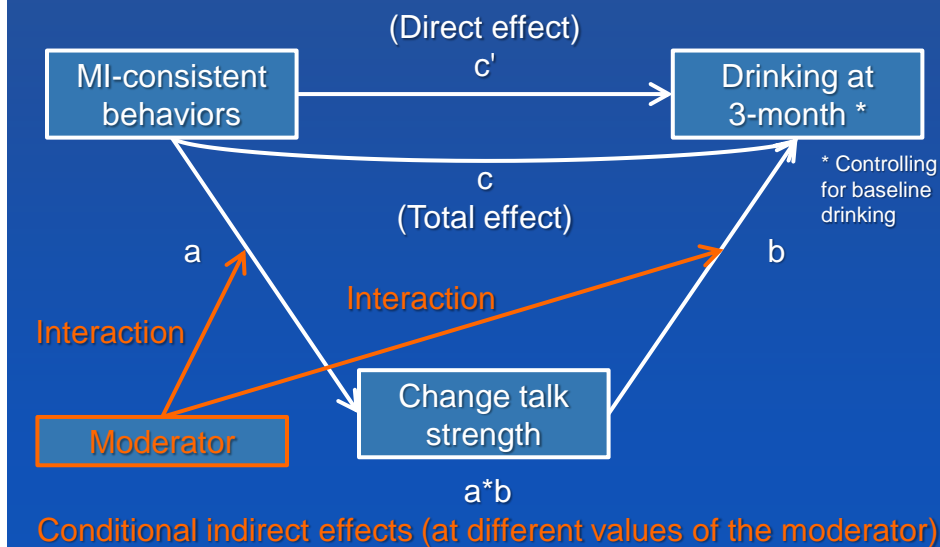
BMI sessions coding

- Psycholinguistic coding using the MI skill code (**MISC**) 2.1 (Miller et al. 2008)
- 2 measures used
 - **Frequency** of therapist **MI-consistent** behaviors
 - e.g. reflection, open questions, affirming, emphasize control
 - Averaged **strength of** young men **change talk**
 - each utterance given a strength from -3 strongly against change to +3 strongly toward change, then averaged

Mediation model - Results



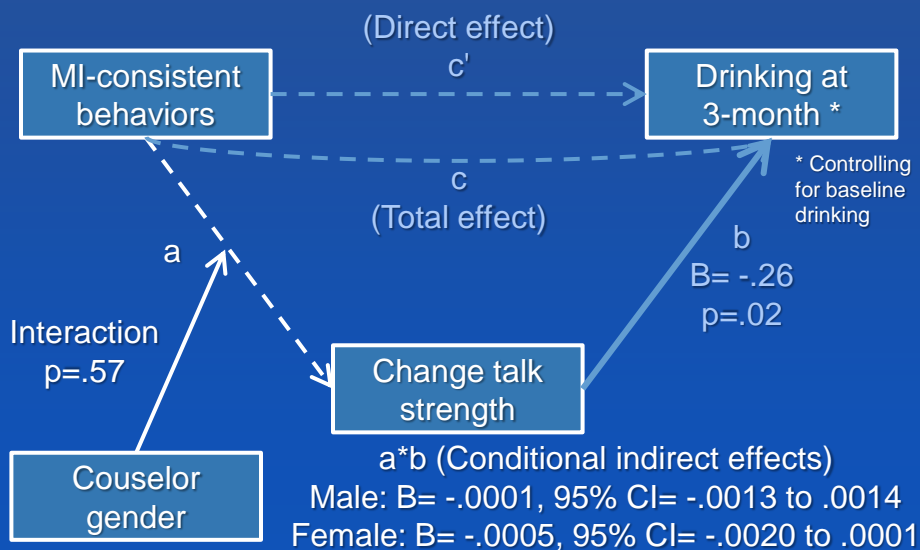
Moderated mediation model



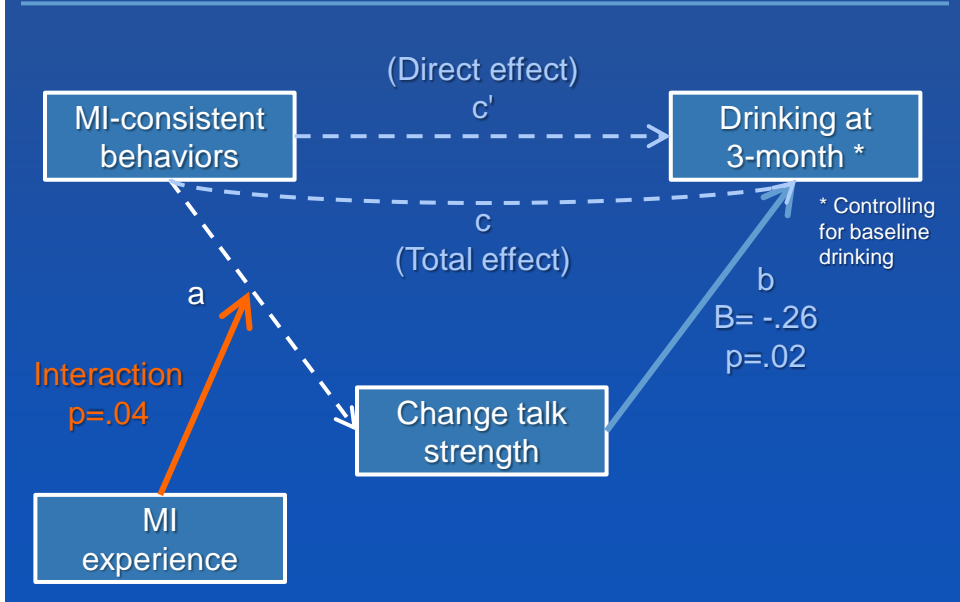
Moderators

- Counselor characteristics:
 - Gender
 - MI experience (0-2 years vs. 3+)
- Young men characteristics:
 - Readiness to change (URICA -5 to 1.3 vs. 1.3+)
 - Severity of alcohol problems (AUDIT 4-8 vs. 9+)

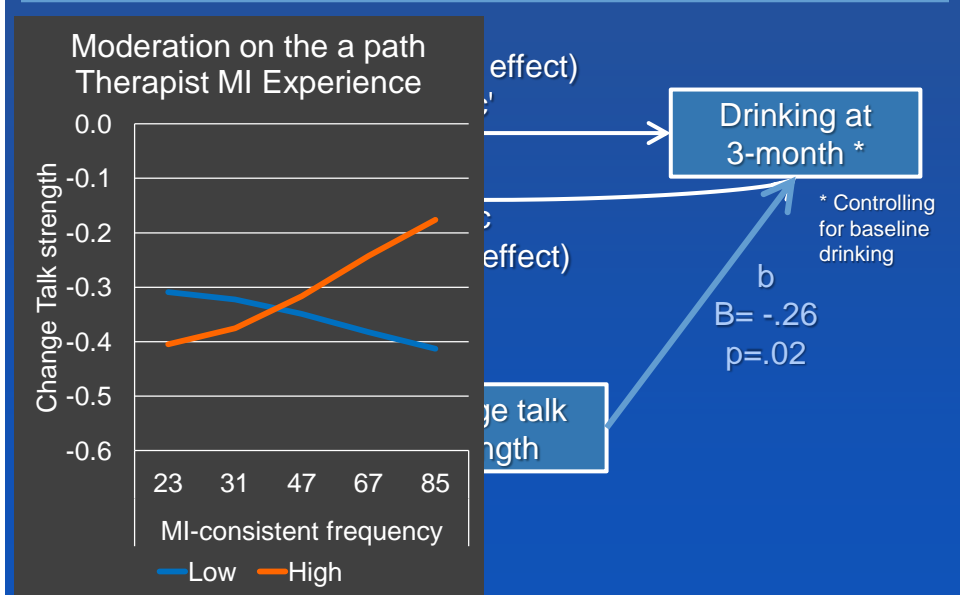
Moderated mediation model



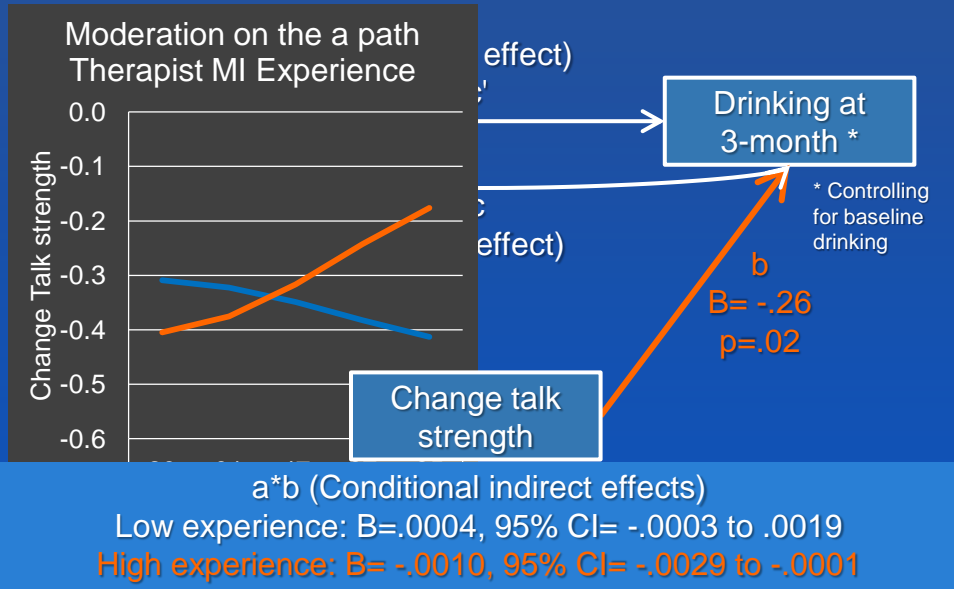
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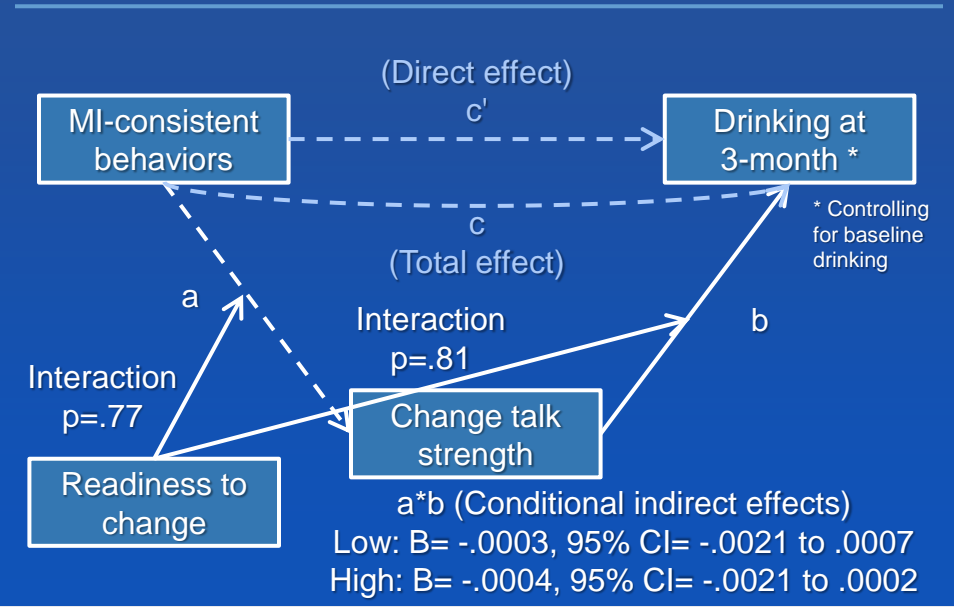
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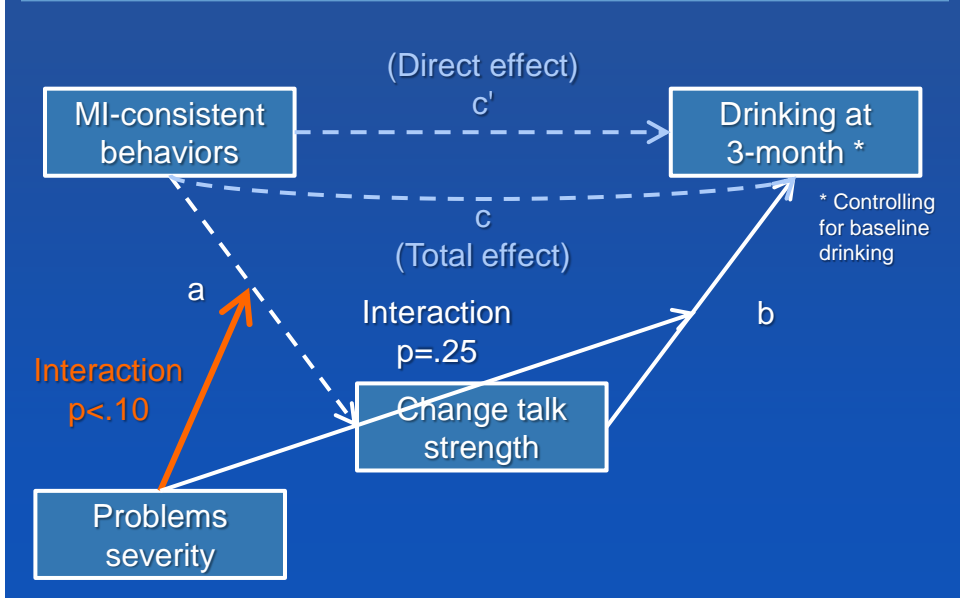
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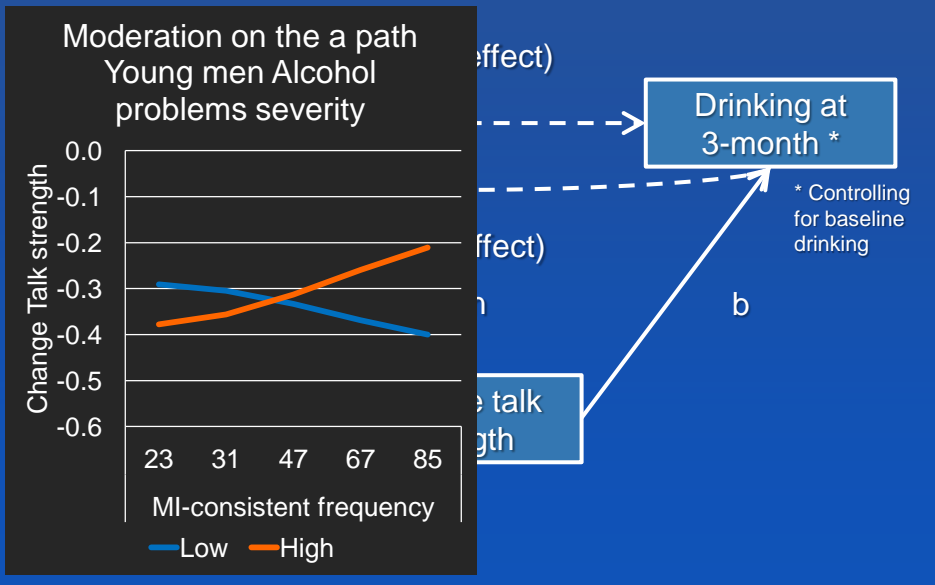
Moderated mediation model



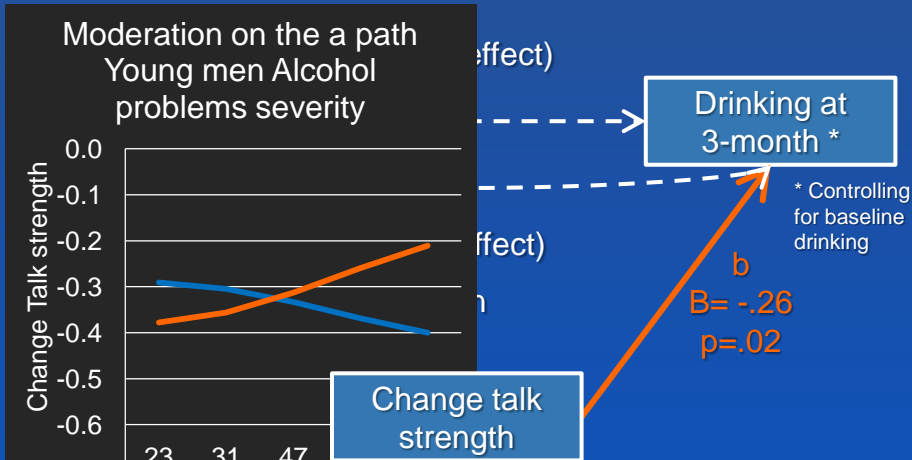
Moderated mediation model



Moderated mediation model

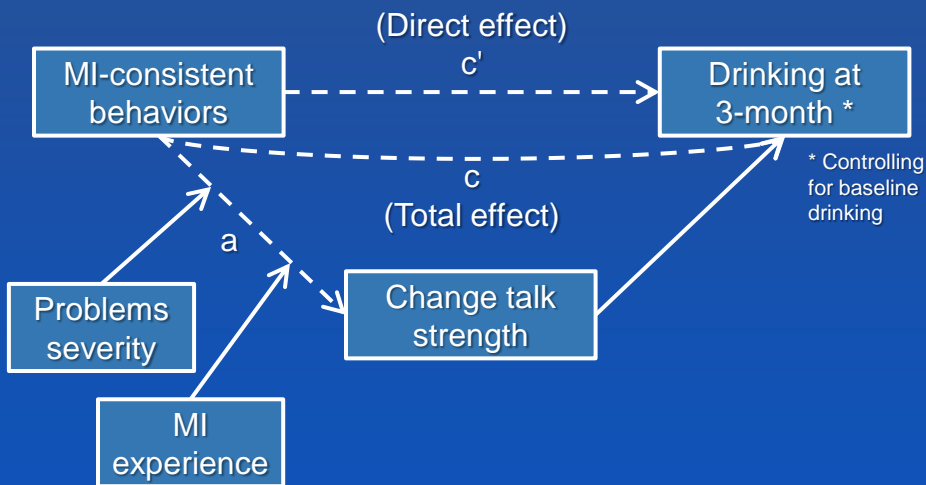


Moderated mediation model

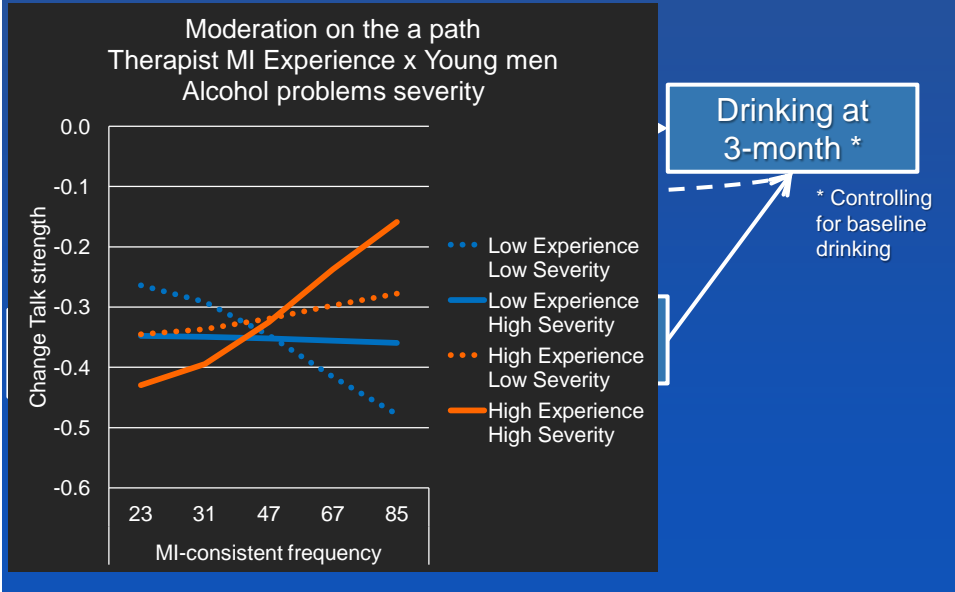


a*b (Conditional indirect effects)
 Low severity: B=.0001, 95% CI= -.0005 to .0016
 High severity: B= -.0009, 95% CI= -.0029 to .0000

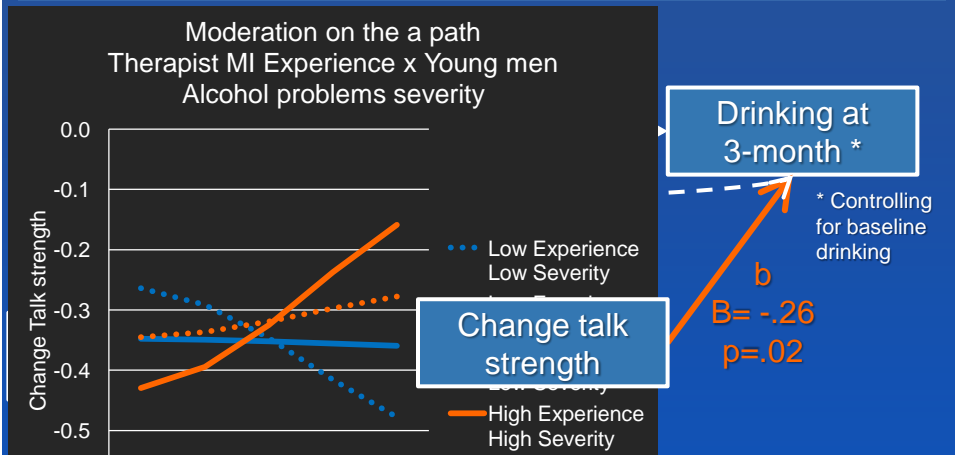
Moderated mediation model



Moderated mediation model



Moderated mediation model



Conditional indirect effects: Low/Low: $B = .0009$, 95% CI = $.0000$ to $.0029$
 Low/High: $B = -.0003$, 95% CI = $-.0019$ to $.0010$
 High/Low: $B = .0000$, 95% CI = $-.0013$ to $.0014$
 High/High: $B = -.0011$, 95% CI = $-.0032$ to $-.0001$

Findings

- Mechanism of change hypothesized by MI theory (Miller & Rose 2009) was operative in our BMI with heavy drinking non-treatment seeking young men, **but only under particular conditions:**
 - Counselors should be **experienced** in MI (3+ years)
 - Young men should have a certain level of alcohol **problems severity** (AUDIT 9+)

Implications

Findings provide several caveats regarding BMI dissemination:

- Counselor **selection / training / supervision** until they reach a certain level of competence
- BMI might not be appropriate for heavy drinkers drinking at lower level of risk (thus just over threshold limits) and not seeking for treatment
 - **alternative prevention measures** should be explored

Implications

- When less experienced counselors met young men with lower severity :
more MICO → lower change talk → increase in drinking
 - Potential **iatrogenic effects** of MI skills under specific circumstances
 - Observed in other research with inexperienced MI therapists
- (Tollison et al. 2008; 2013)
- Further research needed!

Thank you for your attention!

contact: jacques.gaume@chuv.ch