



Kenneth J. Sher, Ph.D. is Chancellor's Professor and Curators' Distinguished Professor of Psychological Sciences Emeritus at the University of Missouri. He received his undergraduate degree from Antioch College (1975), his Ph.D. in clinical psychology from Indiana University (1980), and his clinical internship training at Brown University (1981). His primary areas of research focus on etiological processes in the development of alcohol dependence, characterizing pharmacological and psychosocial factors that affect the course of drinking and alcohol use disorders throughout adulthood, longitudinal research methodology, psychiatric comorbidity, defining the "core" of addiction, and diagnosis and nosology.

Over the course of his career, Dr. Sher and his colleagues and trainees have studied a wide range of topics contributing substantially to our understanding of the development of alcohol and other substance misuse. He has examined risk mechanisms that influence AUD onset and progression, premorbid predictors of future AUD (e.g., cognitive mechanisms and individual differences in the psychopharmacological responses to alcohol), and the involvement of family history of alcoholism in multiple etiological pathways to AUDs. His diverse research interests include: personality, including developmental changes in personality, as both predictors and consequences of alcohol misuse and AUD; gene-environment interactions in the development of AUD; and predictors and consequences of binge drinking and alcohol misuse among college students (including 21st birthday drinking and other extreme drinking occasions). Dr. Sher's research team has also investigated the phenomenon of "maturing out" of alcohol problems, demonstrating that maturing out is associated with differences in age-related personality changes that are accompanied by decreased impulsivity and neuroticism and is not merely a consequence of constrained drinking opportunities imposed by the assumption of adult roles.

Over the course of his career, Dr. Sher's research has involved both controlled experimental studies as well as observational studies and methodologies including psychophysiology, behavioral pharmacology, genetics, survey research, diagnostic interviewing, neuropsychological assessments, and ecological momentary assessments. Dr. Sher led two major ongoing longitudinal cohort studies that followed individuals beginning in their freshman year of college and into adulthood. In addition to the development of AUD, this research tracks drug use and comorbid psychiatric disorders to provide a contextualized view of the role of alcohol in adulthood.

A major focus of his current work is the critical evaluation of existing diagnostic approaches and development of empirically-based criteria and algorithms for AUD diagnosis. This research holds promise for improving AUD diagnosis in clinical practice, and advancing research on the causes, correlates, and treatment of AUD.

Dr. Sher has been continually funded by NIAAA for more than 35 years and he has directed the predoctoral and postdoctoral training program in alcohol studies at the University of Missouri for the past 20. A Fellow of the *American Association for Advancement of Science*, the *Association for Psychological Science*, and the *American Psychological Association*, his research contributions have been recognized by professional societies including the *Research Society on Alcoholism* (where he was awarded the Young Investigator Award, the Distinguished Researcher Award, the G. Alan Marlatt Mentoring Award, and the Seixas Service Award), the *American Psychological Association* (the Distinguished Scientific Contribution Award and Education and Training Award from the Division on Addictions and a Presidential Citation), as well as by the University of Missouri (the Chancellor's Award for Research and Creativity and the President's Award for Research and Creativity, SEC Professor of the Year) and the National Institutes of Health (a MERIT Award and a Senior Scientist and Mentoring Award). Throughout his career he has been heavily involved in service to professional societies (e.g., he served as president of the *Research Society on Alcoholism* and served on the *American Psychological Association's* Policy and Planning Board, Board of Scientific Affairs, and Council of Representatives). He also has a long history of service to scholarly publications serving as the Acting Editor of *Clinical Psychological Science* and associate/field editor for both disciplinary journals (*Clinical Psychological Science*, *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, *Psychological Bulletin*), and specialty journals (*the Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, and *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*). His work has been featured in leading media including the *New York Times* and the *Today Show*.

See <https://psychology.missouri.edu/people/sher> for a list of selected publications.