

Shared genetic risk between eating disorder- and substance-use-related phenotypes: Evidence from genome-wide association studies

Melissa A. Munn-Chernoff¹  | Emma C. Johnson² | Yi-Ling Chou² | Jonathan R.I. Coleman^{3,4} | Laura M. Thornton¹ | Raymond K. Walters^{5,6} | Zeynep Yilmaz^{1,7} | Jessica H. Baker¹ | Christopher Hübel^{3,4,8} | Scott Gordon⁹ | Sarah E. Medland⁹ | Hunna J. Watson^{1,10,11} | Héléna A. Gaspar^{3,4} | Julien Bryois⁸ | Anke Hinney¹² | Virpi M. Leppä⁸ | Manuel Mattheisen^{13,14,15,16} | Stephan Ripke^{5,6,17} | Shuyang Yao⁸ | Paola Giusti-Rodríguez⁷ | Ken B. Hanscombe¹⁸ | Roger A.H. Adan^{19,20,21} | Lars Alfredsson²² | Tetsuya Ando²³ | Ole A. Andreassen²⁴ | Wade H. Berrettini²⁵ | Ilka Boehm²⁶ | Claudette Boni²⁷ | Vesna Boraska Perica^{28,29} | Katharina Buehren³⁰ | Roland Burghardt³¹ | Matteo Cassina³² | Sven Cichon^{33,34,35} | Maurizio Clementi³² | Roger D. Cone³⁶ | Philippe Courtet³⁷ | Scott Crow³⁸ | James J. Crowley^{7,14} | Unna N. Danner³⁹ | Oliver S.P. Davis^{40,41} | Martina de Zwaan⁴² | George Dedoussis⁴³ | Daniela Degortes⁴⁴ | Janiece E. DeSocio⁴⁵ | Danielle M. Dick^{46,47,48} | Dimitris Dikeos⁴⁹ | Christian Dina⁵⁰ | Monika Dmitrzak-Weglaz⁵¹ | Elisa Docampo^{52,53,54} | Laramie E. Duncan⁵⁵ | Karin Egberts⁵⁶ | Stefan Ehrlich²⁶ | Geòrgia Escaramís^{52,53,54} | Tõnu Esko^{57,58} | Xavier Estivill^{52,53,54,59} | Anne Farmer³ | Angela Favaro⁴⁴ | Fernando Fernández-Aranda^{60,61} | Manfred M. Fichter^{62,63} | Krista Fischer⁵⁷ | Manuel Föcker⁶⁴ | Lenka Foretova⁶⁵ | Andreas J. Forstner^{34,66,67,68} | Monica Forzan³² | Christopher S. Franklin²⁸ | Steven Gallinger⁶⁹ | Ina Giegling⁷⁰ | Johanna Giuranna¹² | Fragiskos Gonidakis⁷¹ | Philip Gorwood^{72,73} | Monica Gratacos Mayora^{52,53,54} | Sébastien Guillaume³⁷ | Yiran Guo⁷⁴ | Hakon Hakonarson^{74,75} | Konstantinos Hatzikotoulas^{28,76} | Joanna Hauser⁷⁷ | Johannes Hebebrand¹² | Sietske G. Helder^{3,78} | Stefan Herms^{33,34} | Beate Herpertz-Dahlmann³⁰ | Wolfgang Herzog⁷⁹ | Laura M. Huckins^{28,80} | James I. Hudson⁸¹ | Hartmut Imgart⁸² | Hidetoshi Inoko⁸³ | Vladimir Janout⁸⁴ | Susana Jiménez-Murcia^{60,61} | Antonio Julià⁸⁵ | Gursharan Kalsi³ | Deborah Kaminská⁸⁶ | Leila Karhunen⁸⁷ |

Cynthia M. Bulik and Arpana Agrawal joint last authors

Andreas Karwautz⁸⁸ | Martien J.H. Kas^{19,89} | James L. Kennedy^{90,91,92} |
 Anna Keski-Rahkonen⁹³ | Kirsty Kiezebrink⁹⁴ | Youl-Ri Kim⁹⁵ | Kelly L. Klump⁹⁶ |
 Gun Peggy S. Knudsen⁹⁷ | Maria C. La Via¹ | Stephanie Le Hellard^{98,99,100} |
 Robert D. Levitan^{90,91,92} | Dong Li⁷⁴ | Lisa Lilienfeld¹⁰¹ | Bochao Danae Lin¹⁹ |
 Jolanta Lissowska¹⁰² | Jurjen Luykx¹⁹ | Pierre J. Magistretti^{103,104} |
 Mario Maj¹⁰⁵ | Katrin Mannik^{57,106} | Sara Marsal⁸⁵ | Christian R. Marshall¹⁰⁷ |
 Morten Mattingsdal¹⁰⁸ | Sara McDevitt^{109,110} | Peter McGuffin³ |
 Andres Metspalu^{57,111} | Ingrid Meulenbelt¹¹² | Nadia Micali^{113,114} |
 Karen Mitchell^{115,116} | Alessio Maria Monteleone¹⁰⁵ | Palmiero Monteleone¹¹⁷ |
 Benedetta Nacmias¹¹⁸ | Marie Navratilova⁶⁵ | Ioanna Ntalla⁴³ |
 Julie K. O'Toole¹¹⁹ | Roel A. Ophoff^{120,121} | Leonid Padyukov¹²² |
 Aarno Palotie^{58,123,124} | Jacques Pantel²⁷ | Hana Papezova⁸⁶ | Dalila Pinto⁸⁰ |
 Raquel Rabionet^{125,126,127} | Anu Raevuori⁹³ | Nicolas Ramoz⁷² |
 Ted Reichborn-Kjennerud^{97,128} | Valdo Ricca¹²⁹ | Samuli Ripatti¹³⁰ |
 Franziska Ritschel^{26,131} | Marion Roberts³ | Alessandro Rotondo¹³² |
 Dan Rujescu⁷⁰ | Filip Rybakowski¹³³ | Paolo Santonastaso¹³⁴ | André Scherag¹³⁵ |
 Stephen W. Scherer^{136,137} | Ulrike Schmidt¹³⁸ | Nicholas J. Schork¹³⁹ |
 Alexandra Schosser¹⁴⁰ | Jochen Seitz³⁰ | Lenka Slachtova¹⁴¹ |
 P. Eline Slagboom¹⁴² | Margarita C.T. Slof-Op't Landt^{143,144} | Agnieszka Slopian¹⁴⁵ |
 Sandro Sorbi^{118,146} | Beata Świątkowska¹⁴⁷ | Jin P. Szatkiewicz⁷ |
 Ioanna Tachmazidou²⁸ | Elena Tenconi⁴⁴ | Alfonso Tortorella^{148,149} |
 Federica Tozzi¹⁵⁰ | Janet Treasure¹³⁸ | Artemis Tsitsika¹⁵¹ |
 Marta Tyszkiewicz-Nwafor¹⁴⁵ | Konstantinos Tziouvas¹⁵² |
 Annemarie A. van Elburg^{20,153} | Eric F. van Furth^{143,144} | Gudrun Wagner⁸⁸ |
 Esther Walton²⁶ | Elisabeth Widen¹²³ | Eleftheria Zeggini^{28,76} |
 Stephanie Zerwas¹ | Stephan Zipfel¹⁵⁴ | Andrew W. Bergen^{155,156} |
 Joseph M. Boden¹⁵⁷ | Harry Brandt¹⁵⁸ | Steven Crawford¹⁵⁸ |
 Katherine A. Halmi¹⁵⁹ | L. John Horwood¹⁵⁷ | Craig Johnson¹⁶⁰ |
 Allan S. Kaplan^{90,91,92} | Walter H. Kaye¹⁶¹ | James Mitchell¹⁶² |
 Catherine M. Olsen¹⁶³ | John F. Pearson¹⁶⁴ | Nancy L. Pedersen⁸ |
 Michael Strober^{165,166} | Thomas Werge¹⁶⁷ | David C. Whiteman¹⁶³ |
 D. Blake Woodside^{91,92,168,169} | Jakob Grove^{13,170,171,172} | Anjali K. Henders¹⁷³ |
 Janne T. Larsen^{170,174,175} | Richard Parker⁹ | Liselotte V. Petersen^{170,174,175} |
 Jennifer Jordan^{176,177} | Martin A. Kennedy¹⁷⁸ | Andreas Birgegård^{8,14,15} |
 Paul Lichtenstein⁸ | Claes Norring^{14,15} | Mikael Landén^{8,179} |
 Preben Bo Mortensen^{170,174,175} | Renato Polimanti^{180,181} |
 Jeanette N. McClintick¹⁸² | Amy E. Adkins^{46,47} | Fazil Aliev^{46,183} |

Silviu-Alin Bacanu^{184,185,186} | Anthony Batzler¹⁸⁷ | Sarah Bertelsen¹⁸⁸ |
 Joanna M. Biernacka^{189,190} | Tim B. Bigdeli¹⁹¹ | Li-Shiun Chen² |
 Toni-Kim Clarke¹⁹² | Franziska Degenhardt¹⁹³ | Anna R. Docherty¹⁹⁴ |
 Alexis C. Edwards^{185,186} | Jerome C. Foo¹⁹⁵ | Louis Fox² | Josef Frank¹⁹⁵ |
 Laura M. Hack⁵⁵ | Annette M. Hartmann⁷⁰ | Sarah M. Hartz² |
 Stefanie Heilmann-Heimbach¹⁹³ | Colin Hodgkinson¹⁹⁶ | Per Hoffmann^{33,67,197} |
 Jouke-Jan Hottenga¹⁹⁸ | Bettina Konte⁷⁰ | Jari Lahti¹⁹⁹ |
 Marius Lahti-Pulkkinen²⁰⁰ | Dongbing Lai²⁰¹ | Lannie Ligthart¹⁹⁸ |
 Anu Loukola¹²³ | Brion S. Maher²⁰² | Hamdi Mbarek¹⁹⁸ |
 Andrew M. McIntosh²⁰³ | Matthew B. McQueen²⁰⁴ | Jacquelyn L. Meyers²⁰⁵ |
 Yuri Milaneschi²⁰⁶ | Teemu Palviainen¹²³ | Roseann E. Peterson^{185,186} |
 Euijung Ryu¹⁸⁹ | Nancy L. Saccone²⁰⁷ | Jessica E. Salvatore^{46,185,186} |
 Sandra Sanchez-Roige¹⁶¹ | Melanie Schwandt²⁰⁸ | Richard Sherva²⁰⁹ |
 Fabian Streit¹⁹⁵ | Jana Strohmaier¹⁹⁵ | Nathaniel Thomas^{46,47} |
 Jen-Chyong Wang¹⁸⁸ | Bradley T. Webb^{184,185,186} | Robbee Wedow^{5,6,210,211} |
 Leah Wetherill²⁰¹ | Amanda G. Wills²¹² | Hang Zhou^{180,181} |
 Jason D. Boardman^{213,214} | Danfeng Chen⁶ | Doo-Sup Choi²¹⁵ |
 William E. Copeland²¹⁶ | Robert C. Culverhouse²¹⁷ | Norbert Dahmen²¹⁸ |
 Louisa Degenhardt²¹⁹ | Benjamin W. Domingue²²⁰ | Mark A. Frye¹⁹⁰ |
 Wolfgang Gäebel²²¹ | Caroline Hayward²²² | Marcus Ising²²³ |
 Margaret Keyes²²⁴ | Falk Kiefer²²⁵ | Gabriele Koller²²⁶ | John Kramer²²⁷ |
 Samuel Kuperman²²⁷ | Susanne Lucae²²³ | Michael T. Lynskey²²⁸ |
 Wolfgang Maier²²⁹ | Karl Mann²²⁵ | Satu Männistö²³⁰ |
 Bertram Müller-Myhsok²³¹ | Alison D. Murray²³² | John I. Nurnberger^{201,233} |
 Ulrich Preuss^{234,235} | Katri Räikkönen²⁰⁰ | Maureen D. Reynolds²³⁶ |
 Monika Ridinger²³⁷ | Norbert Scherbaum²³⁸ | Marc A. Schuckit¹⁶¹ |
 Michael Soyka^{239,240} | Jens Treutlein¹⁹⁵ | Stephanie H. Witt¹⁹⁵ |
 Norbert Wodarz²⁴¹ | Peter Zill²⁴² | Daniel E. Adkins^{194,243} |
 Dorret I. Boomsma¹⁹⁸ | Laura J. Bierut² | Sandra A. Brown^{161,244} |
 Kathleen K. Bucholz² | E. Jane Costello²⁴⁵ | Harriet de Wit²⁴⁶ |
 Nancy Diazgranados²⁴⁷ | Johan G. Eriksson^{248,249} |
 Lindsay A. Farrer^{209,250,251,252,253} | Tatiana M. Foroud²⁰¹ | Nathan A. Gillespie¹⁸⁵ |
 Alison M. Goate¹⁸⁸ | David Goldman^{196,254} | Richard A. Grucza² |
 Dana B. Hancock²⁵⁵ | Kathleen Mullan Harris^{256,257} | Victor Hesselbrock²⁵⁸ |
 John K. Hewitt²⁵⁹ | Christian J. Hopfer²⁶⁰ | William G. Iacono²²⁴ |
 Eric O. Johnson^{255,261} | Victor M. Karpyak¹⁹⁰ | Kenneth S. Kendler^{185,186} |
 Henry R. Kranzler^{262,263} | Kenneth Krauter²⁶⁴ | Penelope A. Lind⁹ |

Matt McGue²²⁴ | **James MacKillop**^{265,266} | **Pamela A.F. Madden**² |
Hermine H. Maes¹⁸⁵ | **Patrik K.E. Magnusson**⁸ | **Elliot C. Nelson**² |
Markus M. Nöthen¹⁹³ | **Abraham A. Palmer**^{161,267} | **Brenda W.J.H. Penninx**²⁶⁸ |
Bernice Porjesz²⁰⁵ | **John P. Rice**² | **Marcella Rietschel**¹⁹⁵ |
Brien P. Riley^{184,185,186} | **Richard J. Rose**²⁶⁹ | **Pei-Hong Shen**¹⁹⁶ |
Judy Silberg^{185,186} | **Michael C. Stallings**²⁵⁹ | **Ralph E. Tarter**²³⁶ |
Michael M. Vanyukov²³⁶ | **Scott Vrieze**²²⁴ | **Tamara L. Wall**¹⁶¹ |
John B. Whitfield⁹ | **Hongyu Zhao**²⁷⁰ | **Benjamin M. Neale**^{5,6} |
Tracey D. Wade²⁷¹ | **Andrew C. Heath**² | **Grant W. Montgomery**^{9,173,272} |
Nicholas G. Martin⁹ | **Patrick F. Sullivan**^{1,7,8} | **Jaakko Kaprio**^{93,123} |
Gerome Breen^{3,4} | **Joel Gelernter**^{180,181,273,274} | **Howard J. Edenberg**^{182,201} |
Cynthia M. Bulik^{1,8,275} | **Arpana Agrawal**²

¹Department of Psychiatry, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA

²Department of Psychiatry, Washington University School of Medicine, Saint Louis, Missouri, USA

³Social, Genetic and Developmental Psychiatry (SGDP) Centre, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience, King's College London, London, UK

⁴National Institute for Health Research Biomedical Research Centre, King's College London and South London and Maudsley National Health Service Trust, London, UK

⁵Analytic and Translational Genetics Unit, Department of Medicine, Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School, Boston, Massachusetts, USA

⁶Stanley Center for Psychiatric Research, Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA

⁷Department of Genetics, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA

⁸Department of Medical Epidemiology and Biostatistics, Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm, Sweden

⁹QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

¹⁰School of Psychology, Curtin University, Perth, Western Australia, Australia

¹¹School of Paediatrics and Child Health, University of Western Australia, Perth, Western Australia, Australia

¹²Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, University Hospital Essen, University of Duisburg-Essen, Essen, Germany

¹³Department of Biomedicine, Aarhus University, Aarhus, Denmark

¹⁴Department of Clinical Neuroscience, Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm, Sweden

¹⁵Center for Psychiatry Research, Stockholm Health Care Services, Stockholm County Council, Stockholm, Sweden

¹⁶Department of Psychiatry, Psychosomatics and Psychotherapy, University of Würzburg, Germany

¹⁷Department of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy, Charité - Universitätsmedizin, Berlin, Germany

¹⁸Department of Medical and Molecular Genetics, King's College London, Guy's Hospital, London, UK

¹⁹Department of Translational Neuroscience, Brain Center Rudolf Magnus, University Medical Center Utrecht, Utrecht, The Netherlands

²⁰Center for Eating Disorders Rintveld, Altrecht Mental Health Institute, Zeist, The Netherlands

²¹Sahlgrenska Academy, University of Gothenburg, Gothenburg, Sweden

²²Institute of Environmental Medicine, Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm, Sweden

²³Department of Behavioral Medicine, National Institute of Mental Health, National Center of Neurology and Psychiatry, Kodaira, Tokyo, Japan

²⁴NORMENT Centre, Division of Mental Health and Addiction, NORMENT Centre, University of Oslo, Oslo University Hospital, Oslo, Norway

²⁵Department of Psychiatry, Center for Neurobiology and Behavior, University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

²⁶Division of Psychological and Social Medicine and Developmental Neurosciences, Faculty of Medicine, Technische Universität Dresden, Dresden, Germany

²⁷Centre of Psychiatry and Neuroscience, INSERM U894, Paris, France

²⁸Wellcome Sanger Institute, Wellcome Genome Campus, Hinxton, Cambridge, UK

²⁹Department of Medical Biology, School of Medicine, University of Split, Split, Croatia

³⁰Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Psychosomatics and Psychotherapy, RWTH Aachen University, Aachen, Germany

³¹Klinikum Frankfurt/Oder, Frankfurt, Germany

³²Clinical Genetics Unit, Department of Woman and Child Health, University of Padova, Italy

- ³³Institute of Medical Genetics and Pathology, University Hospital Basel, Basel, Switzerland
- ³⁴Department of Biomedicine, University of Basel, Basel, Switzerland
- ³⁵Institute of Neuroscience and Medicine (INM-1), Research Center Juelich, Germany
- ³⁶Department of Molecular and Integrative Physiology, Life Sciences Institute, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA
- ³⁷Department of Emergency Psychiatry and Post-Acute Care, CHRU Montpellier, University of Montpellier, Montpellier, France
- ³⁸Department of Psychiatry, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA
- ³⁹Altrecht Eating Disorders Rintveld, Altrecht Mental Health Institute, Zeist, The Netherlands
- ⁴⁰MRC Integrative Epidemiology Unit, University of Bristol, Bristol, UK
- ⁴¹School of Social and Community Medicine, University of Bristol, Bristol, UK
- ⁴²Department of Psychosomatic Medicine and Psychotherapy, Hannover Medical School, Hannover, Germany
- ⁴³Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, Harokopio University, Athens, Greece
- ⁴⁴Department of Neurosciences, University of Padova, Padova, Italy
- ⁴⁵College of Nursing, Seattle University, Seattle, Washington, USA
- ⁴⁶Department of Psychology, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia, USA
- ⁴⁷College Behavioral and Emotional Health Institute, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia, USA
- ⁴⁸Department of Human & Molecular Genetics, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia, USA
- ⁴⁹Department of Psychiatry, Athens University Medical School, Athens University, Athens, Greece
- ⁵⁰institut du thorax, INSERM, CNRS, Univ Nantes, Nantes, France
- ⁵¹Department of Psychiatric Genetics, Poznan University of Medical Sciences, Poznan, Poland
- ⁵²Barcelona Institute of Science and Technology, Barcelona, Spain
- ⁵³Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona, Spain
- ⁵⁴Centro de Investigación Biomédica en Red en Epidemiología y Salud Pública (CIBERESP), Barcelona, Spain
- ⁵⁵Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Stanford University, Stanford, California, USA
- ⁵⁶Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Psychosomatics and Psychotherapy, Centre for Mental Health, University Hospital of Würzburg, Würzburg, Germany
- ⁵⁷Estonian Genome Center, University of Tartu, Tartu, Estonia
- ⁵⁸Program in Medical and Population Genetics, Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA
- ⁵⁹Genomics and Disease, Bioinformatics and Genomics Programme, Centre for Genomic Regulation, Barcelona, Spain
- ⁶⁰Department of Psychiatry, University Hospital of Bellvitge -IDIBELL and CIBERobn, Barcelona, Spain
- ⁶¹Department of Clinical Sciences, School of Medicine, University of Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain
- ⁶²Department of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy, Ludwig-Maximilians-University, Munich, Germany
- ⁶³Schön Klinik Rosenneck affiliated with the Medical Faculty of the University of Munich, Munich, Germany
- ⁶⁴Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, University of Münster, Münster, Germany
- ⁶⁵Department of Cancer, Epidemiology and Genetics, Masaryk Memorial Cancer Institute, Brno, Czech Republic
- ⁶⁶Centre for Human Genetics, University of Marburg, Marburg, Germany
- ⁶⁷Institute of Human Genetics, School of Medicine & University Hospital Bonn, University of Bonn, Bonn, Germany
- ⁶⁸Department of Psychiatry (UPK), University of Basel, Basel, Switzerland
- ⁶⁹Department of Surgery, Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
- ⁷⁰Department of Psychiatry, Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics, Martin-Luther-University Halle-Wittenberg, Halle (Saale), Germany
- ⁷¹1st Psychiatric Department, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Medical School, Eginition Hospital, Athens, Greece
- ⁷²Institute of Psychiatry and Neuroscience of Paris, INSERM U1266, Paris, France
- ⁷³CMME (GHU Paris Psychiatrie et Neurosciences), Paris Descartes University, Paris, France
- ⁷⁴Center for Applied Genomics, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA
- ⁷⁵Department of Pediatrics, University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA
- ⁷⁶Institute of Translational Genomics, Helmholtz Zentrum München - German Research Centre for Environmental Health, Neuherberg, Germany
- ⁷⁷Department of Adult Psychiatry, Poznan University of Medical Sciences, Poznan, Poland
- ⁷⁸Zorg op Orde, Delft, The Netherlands
- ⁷⁹Department of General Internal Medicine and Psychosomatics, Heidelberg University Hospital, Heidelberg University, Heidelberg, Germany

- ⁸⁰Department of Psychiatry, and Genetics and Genomics Sciences, Division of Psychiatric Genomics, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, New York, New York, USA
- ⁸¹Biological Psychiatry Laboratory, McLean Hospital/Harvard Medical School, Boston, Massachusetts, USA
- ⁸²Eating Disorders Unit, Parklandklinik, Bad Wildungen, Germany
- ⁸³Department of Molecular Life Science, Division of Basic Medical Science and Molecular Medicine, School of Medicine, Tokai University, Isehara, Japan
- ⁸⁴Faculty of Health Sciences, Palacky University, Olomouc, Czech Republic
- ⁸⁵Rheumatology Research Group, Vall d'Hebron Research Institute, Barcelona, Spain
- ⁸⁶Department of Psychiatry, First Faculty of Medicine, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic
- ⁸⁷Department of Clinical Nutrition, Institute of Public Health and Clinical Nutrition, University of Eastern Finland, Kuopio, Finland
- ⁸⁸Eating Disorders Unit, Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Medical University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria
- ⁸⁹Groningen Institute for Evolutionary Life Sciences, University of Groningen, Groningen, The Netherlands
- ⁹⁰Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
- ⁹¹Institute of Medical Science, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
- ⁹²Department of Psychiatry, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
- ⁹³Department of Public Health, University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland
- ⁹⁴Institute of Applied Health Sciences, School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition, University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, UK
- ⁹⁵Department of Psychiatry, Seoul Paik Hospital, Inje University, Seoul, Korea
- ⁹⁶Department of Psychology, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, USA
- ⁹⁷Department of Mental Disorders, Norwegian Institute of Public Health, Oslo, Norway
- ⁹⁸Department of Clinical Science, Norwegian Centre for Mental Disorders Research (NORMENT), University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway
- ⁹⁹Dr. Einar Martens Research Group for Biological Psychiatry, Center for Medical Genetics and Molecular Medicine, Haukeland University Hospital, Bergen, Norway
- ¹⁰⁰Department of Clinical Medicine, Laboratory Building, Haukeland University Hospital, Bergen, Norway
- ¹⁰¹The Chicago School of Professional Psychology, Washington DC Campus, Washington, District of Columbia, USA
- ¹⁰²Department of Cancer Epidemiology and Prevention, M Skłodowska-Curie Cancer Center - Oncology Center, Warsaw, Poland
- ¹⁰³BESE Division, King Abdullah University of Science and Technology, Thuwal, Saudi Arabia
- ¹⁰⁴Department of Psychiatry, University of Lausanne-University Hospital of Lausanne (UNIL-CHUV), Lausanne, Switzerland
- ¹⁰⁵Department of Psychiatry, University of Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli", Naples, Italy
- ¹⁰⁶Center for Integrative Genomics, University of Lausanne, Lausanne, Switzerland
- ¹⁰⁷Department of Paediatric Laboratory Medicine, Division of Genome Diagnostics, The Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
- ¹⁰⁸NORMENT KG Jebsen Centre, Division of Mental Health and Addiction, University of Oslo, Oslo University Hospital, Oslo, Norway
- ¹⁰⁹Department of Psychiatry, University College Cork, Cork, Ireland
- ¹¹⁰Eist Linn Adolescent Unit, Bessborough, Health Service Executive South, Cork, Ireland
- ¹¹¹Institute of Molecular and Cell Biology, University of Tartu, Tartu, Estonia
- ¹¹²Molecular Epidemiology Section (Department of Biomedical Datasciences), Leiden University Medical Centre, Leiden, The Netherlands
- ¹¹³Department of Psychiatry, Faculty of Medicine, University of Geneva, Geneva, Switzerland
- ¹¹⁴Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Geneva University Hospital, Geneva, Switzerland
- ¹¹⁵National Center for PTSD, VA Boston Healthcare System, Boston, Massachusetts, USA
- ¹¹⁶Department of Psychiatry, Boston University School of Medicine, Boston, Massachusetts, USA
- ¹¹⁷Department of Medicine, Surgery and Dentistry "Scuola Medica Salernitana", University of Salerno, Salerno, Italy
- ¹¹⁸Department of Neuroscience, Psychology, Drug Research and Child Health (NEUROFARBA), University of Florence, Florence, Italy
- ¹¹⁹Kartini Clinic, Portland, Oregon, USA
- ¹²⁰Center for Neurobehavioral Genetics, Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior, University of California Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California, USA
- ¹²¹Department of Psychiatry, Erasmus MC, University Medical Center Rotterdam, Rotterdam, The Netherlands
- ¹²²Department of Medicine, Center for Molecular Medicine, Division of Rheumatology, Karolinska Institutet and Karolinska University Hospital, Stockholm, Sweden
- ¹²³Institute for Molecular Medicine FIMM, HiLIFE, University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland
- ¹²⁴Center for Human Genome Research, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, Massachusetts, USA
- ¹²⁵Saint Joan de Déu Research Institute, Saint Joan de Déu Barcelona Children's Hospital, Barcelona, Spain
- ¹²⁶Institute of Biomedicine (IBUB), University of Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain
- ¹²⁷Department of Genetics, Microbiology and Statistics, University of Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain

- ¹²⁸Institute of Clinical Medicine, University of Oslo, Oslo, Norway
- ¹²⁹Department of Health Science, University of Florence, Florence, Italy
- ¹³⁰Department of Biometry, University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland
- ¹³¹Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Faculty of Medicine, Eating Disorders Research and Treatment Center, Technische Universität Dresden, Dresden, Germany
- ¹³²Department of Psychiatry, Neurobiology, Pharmacology, and Biotechnologies, University of Pisa, Pisa, Italy
- ¹³³Department of Psychiatry, Poznan University of Medical Sciences, Poznan, Poland
- ¹³⁴Department of Neurosciences, Padua Neuroscience Center, University of Padova, Padova, Italy
- ¹³⁵Institute of Medical Statistics, Computer and Data Sciences, Jena University Hospital, Jena, Germany
- ¹³⁶Department of Genetics and Genomic Biology, The Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
- ¹³⁷McLaughlin Centre, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
- ¹³⁸Department of Psychological Medicine, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience, King's College London, London, UK
- ¹³⁹J. Craig Venter Institute (JCVI), La Jolla, California, USA
- ¹⁴⁰Department of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy, Medical University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria
- ¹⁴¹Department of Pediatrics and Center of Applied Genomics, First Faculty of Medicine, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic
- ¹⁴²Molecular Epidemiology Section (Department of Medical Statistics), Leiden University Medical Centre, Leiden, The Netherlands
- ¹⁴³Center for Eating Disorders Ursula, Rivierduinen, Leiden, The Netherlands
- ¹⁴⁴Department of Psychiatry, Leiden University Medical Centre, Leiden, The Netherlands
- ¹⁴⁵Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Poznan University of Medical Sciences, Poznan, Poland
- ¹⁴⁶IRCCS Fondazione Don Carlo Gnocchi, Florence, Italy
- ¹⁴⁷Department of Environmental Epidemiology, Nofer Institute of Occupational Medicine, Lodz, Poland
- ¹⁴⁸Department of Psychiatry, University of Naples SUN, Naples, Italy
- ¹⁴⁹Department of Psychiatry, University of Perugia, Perugia, Italy
- ¹⁵⁰Brain Sciences Department, Stremble Ventures, Limassol, Cyprus
- ¹⁵¹Adolescent Health Unit, Second Department of Pediatrics, "P. & A. Kyriakou" Children's Hospital, University of Athens, Athens, Greece
- ¹⁵²Pediatric Intensive Care Unit, "P. & A. Kyriakou" Children's Hospital, University of Athens, Athens, Greece
- ¹⁵³Faculty of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Utrecht University, Utrecht, The Netherlands
- ¹⁵⁴Department of Internal Medicine VI, Psychosomatic Medicine and Psychotherapy, University Medical Hospital Tuebingen, Tuebingen, Germany
- ¹⁵⁵BioRealm, LLC, Walnut, California, USA
- ¹⁵⁶Oregon Research Institute, Eugene, Oregon, USA
- ¹⁵⁷Christchurch Health and Development Study, University of Otago, Christchurch, New Zealand
- ¹⁵⁸The Center for Eating Disorders at Sheppard Pratt, Baltimore, Maryland, USA
- ¹⁵⁹Department of Psychiatry, Weill Cornell Medical College, New York, New York, USA
- ¹⁶⁰Eating Recovery Center, Denver, Colorado, USA
- ¹⁶¹Department of Psychiatry, University of California San Diego, La Jolla, California, USA
- ¹⁶²Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Science, University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences, Fargo, North Dakota, USA
- ¹⁶³Population Health Department, QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia
- ¹⁶⁴Biostatistics and Computational Biology Unit, University of Otago, Christchurch, New Zealand
- ¹⁶⁵Department of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Science, Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior, University of California Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California, USA
- ¹⁶⁶David Geffen School of Medicine, University of California Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California, USA
- ¹⁶⁷Department of Clinical Medicine, University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark
- ¹⁶⁸Centre for Mental Health, University Health Network, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
- ¹⁶⁹Program for Eating Disorders, University Health Network, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
- ¹⁷⁰The Lundbeck Foundation Initiative for Integrative Psychiatric Research (iPSYCH), Aarhus, Denmark
- ¹⁷¹Centre for Integrative Sequencing, iSEQ, Aarhus University, Aarhus, Denmark
- ¹⁷²Bioinformatics Research Centre, Aarhus University, Aarhus, Denmark
- ¹⁷³Institute for Molecular Bioscience, University of Queensland, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia
- ¹⁷⁴National Centre for Register-Based Research, Aarhus BSS, Aarhus University, Aarhus, Denmark

- ¹⁷⁵Centre for Integrated Register-based Research (CIRRAU), Aarhus University, Aarhus, Denmark
- ¹⁷⁶Department of Psychological Medicine, University of Otago, Christchurch, New Zealand
- ¹⁷⁷Canterbury District Health Board, Christchurch, New Zealand
- ¹⁷⁸Department of Pathology and Biomedical Science, University of Otago, Christchurch, New Zealand
- ¹⁷⁹Department of Psychiatry and Neurochemistry, Institute of Neuroscience and Physiology, The Sahlgrenska Academy at the University of Gothenburg, Gothenburg, Sweden
- ¹⁸⁰Department of Psychiatry, Division of Human Genetics, Yale School of Medicine, New Haven, Connecticut, USA
- ¹⁸¹Veterans Affairs Connecticut Healthcare System, West Haven, Connecticut, USA
- ¹⁸²Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Indiana University School of Medicine, Indianapolis, Indiana, USA
- ¹⁸³Faculty of Business, Karabuk University, Karabuk, Turkey
- ¹⁸⁴Virginia Commonwealth University Alcohol Research Center, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia, USA
- ¹⁸⁵Virginia Institute for Psychiatric and Behavioral Genetics, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia, USA
- ¹⁸⁶Department of Psychiatry, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia, USA
- ¹⁸⁷Psychiatric Genomics and Pharmacogenomics Program, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota, USA
- ¹⁸⁸Department of Neuroscience, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, New York, New York, USA
- ¹⁸⁹Department of Health Sciences Research, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota, USA
- ¹⁹⁰Department of Psychiatry and Psychology, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota, USA
- ¹⁹¹Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, State University of New York Downstate Medical Center, Brooklyn, New York, USA
- ¹⁹²Division of Psychiatry, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, UK
- ¹⁹³Institute of Human Genetics, University of Bonn School of Medicine & University Hospital Bonn, Bonn, Germany
- ¹⁹⁴Department of Psychiatry, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah, USA
- ¹⁹⁵Department of Genetic Epidemiology in Psychiatry, Central Institute of Mental Health, Medical Faculty Mannheim, Heidelberg University, Mannheim, Germany
- ¹⁹⁶Laboratory of Neurogenetics, NIH/NIAAA, Bethesda, Maryland, USA
- ¹⁹⁷Human Genomics Research Group, Department of Biomedicine, University of Basel, Basel, Switzerland
- ¹⁹⁸Department of Biological Psychology, Amsterdam Public Health Research Institute, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- ¹⁹⁹Turku Institute for Advanced Studies, University of Turku, Turku, Finland
- ²⁰⁰Department of Psychology and Logopedics, University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland
- ²⁰¹Department of Medical and Molecular Genetics, Indiana University School of Medicine, Indianapolis, Indiana, USA
- ²⁰²Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Baltimore, Maryland, USA
- ²⁰³Division of Psychiatry, Centre for Cognitive Ageing and Cognitive Epidemiology, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, UK
- ²⁰⁴Department of Integrative Physiology, University of Colorado Boulder, Boulder, Colorado, USA
- ²⁰⁵Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Henri Begleiter Neurodynamics Laboratory, SUNY Downstate Medical Center, Brooklyn, New York, USA
- ²⁰⁶Department of Psychiatry, Amsterdam Public Health Research Institute, VU University Medical Center/GGz inGeest, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- ²⁰⁷Department of Genetics, Washington University School of Medicine, Saint Louis, Missouri, USA
- ²⁰⁸Office of the Clinical Director, NIH/NIAAA, Bethesda, Maryland, USA
- ²⁰⁹Department of Medicine (Biomedical Genetics), Boston University School of Medicine, Boston, Massachusetts, USA
- ²¹⁰Department of Epidemiology, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA
- ²¹¹Department of Sociology, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA
- ²¹²Department of Pharmacology, University of Colorado School of Medicine, Aurora, Colorado, USA
- ²¹³Institute of Behavioral Science, University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado, USA
- ²¹⁴Department of Sociology, University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado, USA
- ²¹⁵Department of Molecular Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota, USA
- ²¹⁶Department of Psychiatry, University of Vermont Medical Center, Burlington, Vermont, USA
- ²¹⁷Department of Medicine, Division of Biostatistics, Washington University School of Medicine, Saint Louis, Missouri, USA
- ²¹⁸Department of Psychiatry, University of Mainz, Mainz, Germany
- ²¹⁹National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, University of New South Wales, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia
- ²²⁰Stanford University Graduate School of Education, Stanford University, Stanford, California, USA
- ²²¹Department of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy, University of Düsseldorf, Düsseldorf, Germany
- ²²²MRC Human Genetics Unit, Institute of Genetics and Molecular Medicine, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, UK

- ²²³Max-Planck-Institute of Psychiatry, Munich, Germany
- ²²⁴Department of Psychology, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA
- ²²⁵Department of Addictive Behavior and Addiction Medicine, Central Institute of Mental Health, Medical Faculty Mannheim, Heidelberg University, Mannheim, Germany
- ²²⁶Department of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy, University Hospital, LMU Munich, Munich, Germany
- ²²⁷Department of Psychiatry, University of Iowa Roy J and Lucille A Carver College of Medicine, Iowa City, Iowa, USA
- ²²⁸Addictions Department, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience, King's College London, London, UK
- ²²⁹Department of Psychiatry, University of Bonn, Bonn, Germany
- ²³⁰Department of Public Health Solutions, National Institute for Health and Welfare, Helsinki, Finland
- ²³¹Department of Statistical Genetics, Max-Planck-Institute of Psychiatry, München, Germany
- ²³²Aberdeen Biomedical Imaging Centre, School of Medicine, Medical Sciences & Nutrition, University of Aberdeen, Foresterhill, Aberdeen, UK
- ²³³Department of Psychiatry, Indiana University School of Medicine, Indianapolis, Indiana, USA
- ²³⁴Department of Psychiatry, Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics, Martin-Luther-University Halle-Wittenberg, Herborn, Germany
- ²³⁵Department of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy, Vitos Hospital Herborn, Herborn, Germany
- ²³⁶School of Pharmacy, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA
- ²³⁷Department of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy, University of Regensburg Psychiatric Health Care Aargau, Regensburg, Germany
- ²³⁸Department of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy and Department of Addictive Behaviour and Addiction Medicine, Medical Faculty, LVR-Hospital Essen, University of Duisburg-Essen, Essen, Germany
- ²³⁹Medical Park Chiemseeblick in Bernau-Felden, Ludwig-Maximilians-University, Bernau am Chiemsee, Germany
- ²⁴⁰Psychiatric Hospital, Ludwig-Maximilians-University, Bernau am Chiemsee, Germany
- ²⁴¹Department of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy, University of Regensburg, Regensburg, Germany
- ²⁴²Department of Psychiatry, Psychiatric Hospital, Ludwig-Maximilians-University, Munich, Germany
- ²⁴³Department of Sociology, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah, USA
- ²⁴⁴Department of Psychology, University of California San Diego, La Jolla, California, USA
- ²⁴⁵Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Duke University Medical Center, Durham, North Carolina, USA
- ²⁴⁶Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Neuroscience, University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, USA
- ²⁴⁷NIAAA Intramural Research Program, Bethesda, Maryland, USA
- ²⁴⁸Department of General Practice and Primary Health Care, University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland
- ²⁴⁹National Institute for Health and Welfare, Helsinki, Finland
- ²⁵⁰Department of Neurology, Boston University School of Medicine, Boston, Massachusetts, USA
- ²⁵¹Department of Ophthalmology, Boston University School of Medicine, Boston, Massachusetts, USA
- ²⁵²Department of Epidemiology, School of Public Health, Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts, USA
- ²⁵³Department of Biostatistics, School of Public Health, Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts, USA
- ²⁵⁴Office of the Clinical Director, NIH/NIAAA, Bethesda, Maryland, USA
- ²⁵⁵Center for Omics Discovery and Epidemiology, Behavioral Health Research Division, RTI International, Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, USA
- ²⁵⁶Department of Sociology, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA
- ²⁵⁷Carolina Population Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA
- ²⁵⁸Department of Psychiatry, University of Connecticut School of Medicine, Farmington, Connecticut, USA
- ²⁵⁹Institute for Behavioral Genetics, University of Colorado Boulder, Boulder, Colorado, USA
- ²⁶⁰Department of Psychiatry, University of Colorado Denver, Aurora, Colorado, USA
- ²⁶¹Fellow Program, RTI International, Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, USA
- ²⁶²Center for Studies of Addiction, University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA
- ²⁶³VISN 4 MIRECC, Crescenz VAMC, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA
- ²⁶⁴Department of Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology, University of Colorado Boulder, Boulder, Colorado, USA
- ²⁶⁵Peter Boris Centre for Addictions Research, McMaster University/St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
- ²⁶⁶Michael G. DeGroote Centre for Medicinal Cannabis Research, McMaster University/St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
- ²⁶⁷Institute for Genomic Medicine, University of California San Diego, La Jolla, California, USA
- ²⁶⁸Department of Psychiatry, Amsterdam UMC, VU University and GGZinGeest, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- ²⁶⁹Department of Psychological & Brain Sciences, Indiana University Bloomington, Bloomington, Indiana, USA

²⁷⁰Department of Biostatistics, Yale School of Public Health, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, USA

²⁷¹School of Psychology, Flinders University, Adelaide, South Australia, Australia

²⁷²Queensland Brain Institute, University of Queensland, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

²⁷³Department of Genetics, Yale School of Medicine, New Haven, Connecticut, USA

²⁷⁴Department of Neuroscience, Yale School of Medicine, New Haven, Connecticut, USA

²⁷⁵Department of Nutrition, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA

Correspondence

Melissa A. Munn-Chernoff, Department of Psychiatry, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 101 Manning Drive, Campus Box 7160, Chapel Hill, NC 27599.

Email: melissa_chernoff@med.unc.edu

Abstract

Eating disorders and substance use disorders frequently co-occur. Twin studies reveal shared genetic variance between liabilities to eating disorders and substance use, with the strongest associations between symptoms of bulimia nervosa and problem alcohol use (genetic correlation [r_g], twin-based = 0.23–0.53). We estimated the genetic correlation between eating disorder and substance use and disorder phenotypes using data from genome-wide association studies (GWAS). Four eating disorder phenotypes (anorexia nervosa [AN], AN *with* binge eating, AN *without* binge eating, and a bulimia nervosa factor score), and eight substance-use-related phenotypes (drinks per week, alcohol use disorder [AUD], smoking initiation, current smoking, cigarettes per day, nicotine dependence, cannabis initiation, and cannabis use disorder) from eight studies were included. Significant genetic correlations were adjusted for variants associated with major depressive disorder and schizophrenia. Total study sample sizes per phenotype ranged from ~2400 to ~537 000 individuals. We used linkage disequilibrium score regression to calculate single nucleotide polymorphism-based genetic correlations between eating disorder- and substance-use-related phenotypes. Significant positive genetic associations emerged between AUD and AN ($r_g = 0.18$; false discovery rate $q = 0.0006$), cannabis initiation and AN ($r_g = 0.23$; $q < 0.0001$), and cannabis initiation and AN *with* binge eating ($r_g = 0.27$; $q = 0.0016$). Conversely, significant negative genetic correlations were observed between three non-diagnostic smoking phenotypes (smoking initiation, current smoking, and cigarettes per day) and AN *without* binge eating ($r_{gs} = -0.19$ to -0.23 ; $q_s < 0.04$). The genetic correlation between AUD and AN was no longer significant after co-varying for major depressive disorder loci. The patterns of association between eating disorder- and substance-use-related phenotypes highlights the potentially complex and substance-specific relationships among these behaviors.

KEYWORDS

eating disorders, genetic correlation, substance use

1 | INTRODUCTION

Well-established phenotypic associations exist between eating disorder and substance use phenotypes, with evidence for specific relations between particular types of eating disorders and substance use disorders. The prevalence of an alcohol use disorder (AUD) is greater among individuals with bulimia nervosa and binge-eating disorder than individuals with anorexia nervosa (AN) or healthy controls.^{1,2}

Similarly, individuals with bulimia nervosa or binge-eating disorder are at increased risk for smoking, nicotine dependence,^{3,4} and cannabis use,^{4,5} compared with individuals with AN or healthy controls, though these results are not consistent.¹ Importantly, women with the binge-eating/purging subtype of AN report a higher prevalence of AUD, smoking, nicotine dependence, and cannabis use than women with the restricting subtype of AN.^{1,5,6} Thus, binge eating—a trans-diagnostic symptom defined as eating a large amount of food in a

short period of time while experiencing loss of control—may be a key component of the observed association.

However, prior research has only partially addressed whether binge eating is the critical eating disorder symptom in the comorbidity, especially across different milestones of substance use (ie, initiation through substance use disorder) and across a variety of substances (ie, alcohol, nicotine, and cannabis). Elucidating shared sources for these associations is crucial because of the increased morbidity and mortality associated with comorbid presentations^{7,8} and because improvements in one disorder may exacerbate (or weaken) symptoms of the other disorder.⁹ Refining our understanding of these associations could improve prevention and treatment approaches for these debilitating disorders, their comorbidity, and their sequelae.

Accumulating findings from twin studies implicate shared genetic factors between eating disorder- and substance-use-related phenotypes. The strongest reported association is between bulimia nervosa symptoms (including binge eating) and problem alcohol use, with a genetic correlation (r_g) ranging from 0.23 to 0.53.¹⁰ Although there has been less focus on genetic associations between bulimia nervosa symptoms and regular smoking and bulimia nervosa symptoms and illicit drug use disorder, twin-based r_{gs} of 0.35 and approximately 0.38, respectively, have been reported.^{11,12} Limited information exists regarding whether less problematic aspects of substance use exhibit a significant r_g with eating disorder phenotypes. The impact of genetic factors influencing this comorbidity may significantly increase once an individual has progressed to problematic alcohol use, as genetic effects are more prominent in problem substance use, such as abuse and dependence, than with the initiation and general use of substances.^{13–16} No study has comprehensively examined a range of eating disorder- and substance-use-related phenotypes to determine whether the r_g varies with different aspects of substance use and whether the r_g varies depending on the eating disorder and substance examined.

Recent advances in genomic methods allow for an assessment of r_g using existing genome-wide association study (GWAS) summary statistics. Unlike twin studies, these genome-wide methods allow for use of unrelated cases and controls, typically yielding sample sizes in the tens to hundreds of thousands. One such method, linkage disequilibrium score regression (LDSC),^{17,18} estimates single nucleotide polymorphism (SNP)-based heritability and r_g between phenotypes. Of particular relevance to low prevalence phenotypes, such as AN, estimation of SNP-based r_g does not require both phenotypes to be measured in the same individual; thus, independent studies assessing only one phenotype can be jointly examined.

The current study estimated SNP-based genetic correlations (r_{gs}) between eating disorder- and substance-use-related phenotypes based upon summary statistics from the largest published eating disorder GWAS and existing GWAS encompassing a range of substance-use-related phenotypes (ie, alcohol, nicotine, and cannabis), using robust data from twin studies to shape our three hypotheses. First, we hypothesized that the strongest SNP-based r_g would be between eating disorder phenotypes that have binge eating as a core symptom and alcohol use phenotypes, rather than between eating disorder

phenotypes and nicotine and cannabis use-related phenotypes.¹⁰ Second, we hypothesized that for binge eating-related phenotypes, the SNP-based r_g would be higher when assessing AUD than typical alcohol consumption,¹⁰ because we expected that two problem behaviors are more likely to share genetic risk than a problem behavior (eg, binge eating) and a normative pattern (eg, alcohol consumption). Because we have less information from twin studies about genetic associations between liabilities to eating disorders and tobacco (nicotine) and cannabis use-related phenotypes, we do not forward specific hypotheses for these substances. Finally, prior studies document robust genetic associations for major depressive disorder and schizophrenia with both eating disorders and substance-use-related phenotypes.^{19–21} We hypothesized that r_{gs} between eating disorders and substance use and disorder would be attenuated when accounting for variants associated with major depressive disorder and schizophrenia. Findings from this study will yield important information about the role of genetics in this clinically challenging pattern of comorbidity.²²

2 | METHOD

2.1 | Participants

We included summary statistics from two existing GWAS of eating disorder phenotypes where participants were primarily of European ancestry^{21,23} and data from individuals of European ancestry from six existing GWAS of substance-use-related phenotypes.^{19,20,24–27} The eating disorder phenotypes (Table 1) included a diagnosis of AN (which was further parsed into AN *with* binge eating or AN *without* binge eating) and a bulimia nervosa factor score derived from the Eating Disorder Examination,²⁸ a well-established structured clinical interview for eating disorders. We did not examine bulimia nervosa or binge-eating disorder because there are currently no published GWAS for either disorder; thus, the bulimia nervosa factor score represents the closest to a GWAS of bulimia nervosa available. Substance-use-related phenotypes ranged from typical use (eg, drinks per week, smoking initiation, and cannabis initiation) to substance use disorder (ie, AUD, nicotine dependence, and cannabis use disorder). Sample sizes for the phenotypes ranged from 2442 (bulimia nervosa factor score) to 537 349 (drinks per week) individuals. Table 2 provides individual study details.

2.2 | Statistical analysis

We used LDSC^{17,18} to evaluate SNP-based genetic correlations (r_g) between samples. This method uses the linkage disequilibrium (LD) structure of the genome to estimate the distribution of effect sizes for individual SNPs as a function of their LD score. Under a polygenic model, causal SNPs are likely to be overrepresented in higher LD score bins (ie, including additional SNPs in high LD), such that associations with SNPs in these LD bins will make stronger

contributions to the phenotypic variation under study. This polygenic distribution of effect sizes across LD score bins provides an estimate of SNP-based heritability, that is, the proportion of phenotypic variance that is attributable to the aggregate effects of genome-wide SNPs. The correlation of effect sizes across LD bins between two phenotypes then provides an estimate of SNP-based r_g .

Genetic correlations range from -1 to $+1$, where the sign indicates that the same genetic factors are contributing to variation in the target traits in *opposite* or *same* directions, respectively. The LDSC intercept for the genetic covariance provides evidence about sample overlap across two traits. SNPs (MAF > 0.01) found in the HapMap3 EUR population were used to calculate LD scores. We used the false discovery rate²⁹ to correct for multiple testing ($n = 66$ tests; $q < 0.05$). Finally, post hoc analyses examined whether significant differences between two r_g s existed, using the jackknife procedure implemented through LDSC.¹⁷

We used GNOVA³⁰ to stratify significant r_g s between the eating disorder- and substance-use-related phenotypes into both tissue-specific (for seven broadly defined tissue classes: brain, cardiovascular, epithelial, gastrointestinal, immune-related, muscular, and “other”) and nontissue-specific functional regions of the genome. GenoCanyon³¹ and GenoSkyline^{32,33} annotation methods, which integrate transcriptomic and epigenomic data from ENCODE³⁴ and the Roadmap Epigenomics Project,³⁵ were used to define functional regions of the genome.

Finally, for significant r_g s detected in LDSC, multitrait-based conditional and joint analysis using GWAS summary data (mtCOJO)³⁶ was used to condition both input GWAS (eg, AN and AUD) for variants associated with major depressive disorder³⁷ at $P < 5 \times 10^{-7}$ and schizophrenia³⁸ at $P < 5 \times 10^{-8}$. Because fewer genome-wide significant SNPs were identified for major depressive disorder than schizophrenia, we chose a more lenient P value threshold for major depressive disorder to capture a comparable number of SNPs. LDSC was used to compute r_g s using the resulting genome-wide summary statistics for each trait after separately adjusting for major depressive disorder or schizophrenia variants to examine whether conditioning on either disorder would affect the observed genetic relationships.

3 | RESULTS

The overall SNP-based heritability for the eating disorder phenotypes ranged from 0.20 to 0.39, whereas the corresponding heritabilities for the substance-use-related phenotypes ranged from 0.03 to 0.35 (Table S1). Figure 1 and Table S1 show the genetic correlations (r_g s) between all four eating disorder phenotypes and eight substance-use-related phenotypes. Broadly speaking, there were significant r_g s across substance-use-related phenotypes, ranging from 0.21 (AUD and cigarettes per day) to 0.70 (drinks per week and AUD). Cannabis initiation risk was not significantly genetically correlated with cigarettes per day or nicotine dependence. For the remaining results, we focus on previously unexplored associations of interest in this study—correlations between eating disorder- and substance-use-related phenotypes. For these associations, the genetic covariance intercepts

TABLE 1 Eating disorder-related phenotype descriptions

Phenotype	Definitions
Anorexia nervosa (AN) ^a	Diagnostic criteria included the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Body mass index less than minimally expected 2. Intense fear of gaining weight 3. Weight or shape disturbance, undue influence of weight or shape, or denial of the seriousness of the disorder
AN with binge eating ^b	Individuals with AN who also engaged in binge-eating episodes, defined as eating a large amount of food in a short period of time while having a sense of loss of control over the eating episode.
AN without binge eating ^b	Individuals with AN who did not engage in binge-eating episodes.
Bulimia nervosa (BN) ^c factor	Derived from a factor analysis that included the following items: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reporting self-induced vomiting to control body weight 2. Reporting suffering from or being treated for binge eating 3. Reporting suffering from or being treated for bulimia

^aA fourth diagnostic criterion for AN includes amenorrhea. However, amenorrhea was excluded as a required criterion for cases in the Psychiatric Genomics Consortium datasets because it is no longer a diagnostic criterion in the DSM-5.

^bThe DSM and ICD include two subtypes of anorexia nervosa (AN)—a binge-eating/purging subtype and a restricting subtype. Although it would have been ideal to examine differences between the AN binge-eating/purging subtype and AN restricting subtype, this was not possible with current Psychiatric Genomics Consortium data. However, there was sufficient information about presence or absence of binge eating, which resulted in creating the AN with binge-eating and AN without binge-eating subtypes.

^cBulimia nervosa is defined as (a) recurrent episodes of binge eating, (b) recurrent inappropriate compensatory behaviors (eg, self-induced vomiting or laxative use) to prevent weight gain, (c) the binge eating and inappropriate compensatory behaviors occurring an average of twice a week for 3 mo, (d) having undue influence of body weight and shape, and (e) disturbance not occurring during AN.

ranged from -0.03 (standard error [SE] = 0.01; AN and cannabis initiation) to 0.01 (SE = 0.01; AN and cannabis use disorder), indicating some sample overlap (or low-level confounding) existed,³⁹ although the LDSC approach parses this overlap from the r_g estimation.

Significant positive r_g s were observed for alcohol- and cannabis use-related phenotypes. First, the r_g was significant between AN and AUD ($r_g = 0.18$; SE = 0.05; $q = 0.0006$) but not between AN and drinks per week ($r_g = 0.01$; SE = 0.03; $q = 0.91$), suggesting that genetic factors that increase risk for AN also increase risk for AUD, but little evidence exists for shared genetic risk between AN and typical alcohol consumption. These two correlations significantly differed from each other (z-score = 3.51, $P = 0.0005$). Intriguingly, there was a significant difference in r_g s for AN and AUD versus AN without binge eating and AUD (z-score = 2.28, $P = 0.02$) but not for AN and AUD versus AN with binge eating and AUD (z-score = 0.23, $P = 0.82$). The genetic

covariance estimates between AN and AUD were significant in both functional (corrected $\rho_g = 0.01$; corrected $r = 0.23$; corrected $q = 0.007$) and nonfunctional categories (corrected $\rho_g = 0.01$; corrected $r = 0.19$; corrected $q = 0.002$; Table S2) but not in any specific tissue type. No significant association between the bulimia nervosa factor score, which included items pertaining to both binge eating and compensatory behaviors, and either alcohol-use-related phenotype was observed.

Second, the significant r_g between AN and cannabis initiation was 0.23 (SE = 0.04, $q < 0.0001$) and the significant r_g between AN with binge eating and cannabis initiation was 0.27 (SE = 0.08, $q = 0.0017$), indicating that genetic factors that increase the risk for AN may also increase risk for cannabis initiation. However, cannabis initiation was not significantly correlated with the bulimia nervosa factor score ($r_g = 0.15$, SE = 0.18, $q = 0.57$) or with AN without binge eating ($r_g = 0.10$, SE = 0.08, $q = 0.31$). No significant associations

were observed between any eating disorder phenotype and cannabis use disorder ($r_{gs} = -0.08$ – 0.23 ; SEs = 0.01; $q_s \leq 0.57$). Post hoc analyses revealed significant differences in the r_{gs} for AN and cannabis initiation versus AN and cannabis use disorder (z-score = 2.70, $P = 0.01$). However, the r_g between AN with binge eating and cannabis initiation, while significant, was statistically different from the r_g between AN with binge eating and cannabis use disorder. The genetic covariance estimate between AN with binge eating and cannabis initiation was significant in both functional (corrected $\rho_g = 0.01$; corrected $r = 0.60$; corrected $q < 0.0001$) and nonfunctional categories (corrected $\rho_g = 0.01$; corrected $r = 0.30$; corrected $q = 0.004$; Table S3) but not in any specific tissue type. The genetic covariance estimate between AN without binge eating and cannabis initiation was only significant in nonfunctional categories (corrected $\rho_g = 0.01$; corrected $r = 0.27$; corrected $q = 0.004$; Table S4).

TABLE 2 Details of samples included in analyses

Study	Sample/Consortium	Phenotype(s)	Definition	Sample Size (cases/controls if binary)	Number of SNPs in Summary Statistics File
Eating disorder phenotype					
Watson et al (2019)	PGC-ED	1. Anorexia nervosa	DSM-III-R, DSM-IV, ICD-8, ICD-9, ICD-10, or self-reported anorexia nervosa	16 992/55 525	8 219 102
		2. Anorexia nervosa with binge eating		2381/10 249	8 982 440
		3. Anorexia nervosa without binge eating		2262/10 254	8 671 192
Wade et al (2013)	Australian Twin Registry	Bulimia nervosa factor	Eating Disorder Examination	151/2291	6 150 213
Substance use-related phenotype					
Kranzler et al (2019)	MVP	Alcohol use disorder	ICD-9 or ICD-10	34 658/167 346	6 895 251
Walters et al (2018)	PGC-SUD	Alcohol dependence	DSM-IV	8485/20 272	9 271 145
Liu et al (2019)	GSCAN	1. Drinks per week ^a	Average number of drinks each week	537 349	11 916 707
		2. Smoking initiation	Ever vs never regular smoker	311 629/321 173	11 733 344
		3. Current smoking ^c	Current vs former smokers	92 573/220 248	12 197 133
		4. Cigarettes per day ^a	Average number of cigarettes smoked per day	263 954	12 003 613
Hancock et al (2017)	14 samples	Nicotine dependence ^b	Mild (FTND score 0-3)Moderate (FTND score 4-6)Sever (FTND score 7-10)	14 184 (Mild) 9206 (Moderate) 5287 (Severe)	10 622 668
Pasman et al (2018)	ICC UK Biobank	Cannabis initiation	Lifetime cannabis use	43 380/118 702	11 733 371
Demontis et al (2019)	iPSYCH	Cannabis use disorder	ICD-10	2387/48 985	8 969 939

Abbreviations: DSM, Diagnostic and Statistical Manual; FTND, Fagerström Test of Nicotine Dependence; GSCAN, GWAS & Sequencing Consortium of Alcohol and Nicotine use; ICC, International Cannabis Consortium; ICD, International Classification of Diseases; iPSYCH, Lundbeck Foundation Initiative for Integrative Psychiatric Research; MVP, Million Veteran Program; PGC-ED, Eating Disorders Working Group of the Psychiatric Genomics Consortium; PGC-SUD, Substance Use Disorders Working Group of the Psychiatric Genomics Consortium; SNPs, single nucleotide polymorphisms.

^aTreated as a continuous phenotype.

^bTreated as an ordinal phenotype.

^cIn Lui et al (2019), the phenotype is labeled as “smoking cessation.” It was renamed as “current smoking” to reflect the coding scheme and for ease in comparing across all smoking phenotypes.

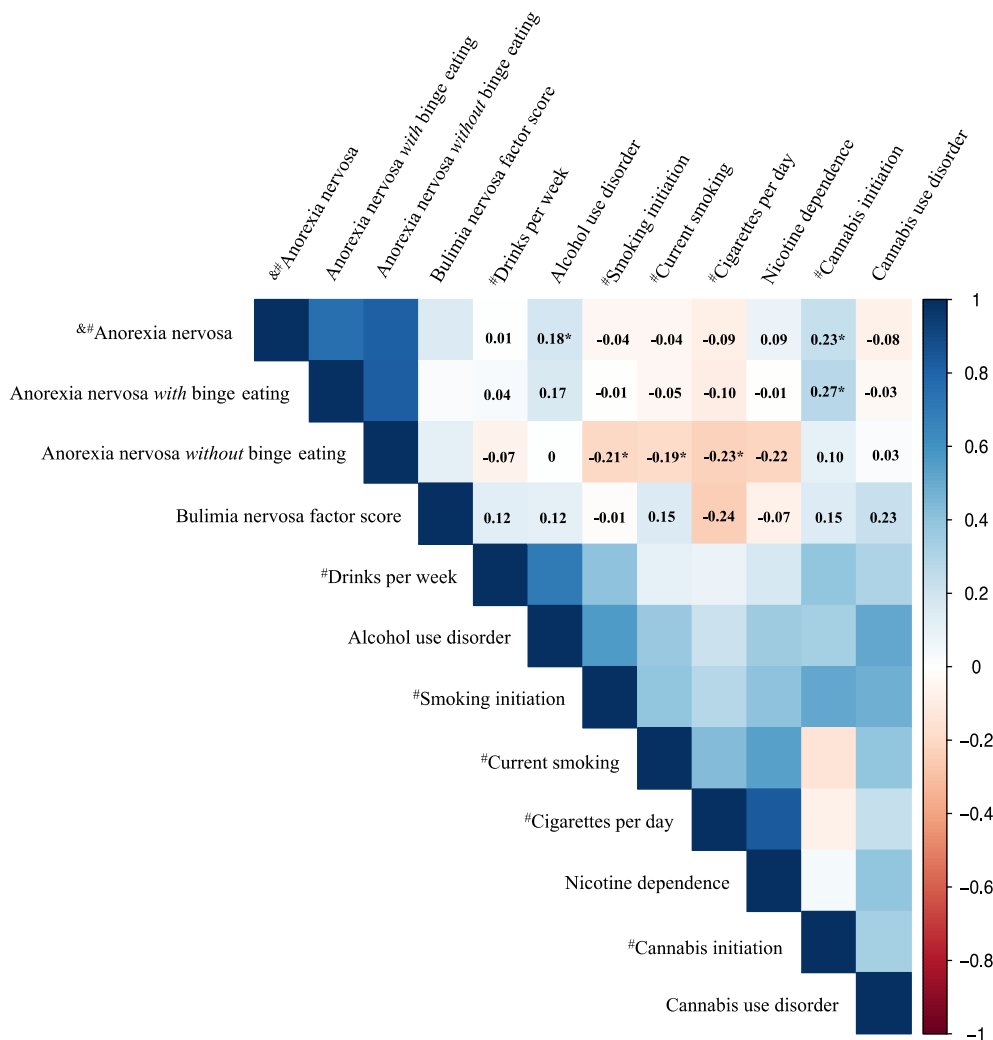


FIGURE 1 Genetic correlations between eating disorder subtypes and substance-use-related phenotypes. Note. # indicates known or potential sample overlap with UK Biobank, and & indicates known sample overlap with iPSYCH. Starred values denote significant genetic correlations after correcting for multiple comparisons using False Discovery Rate (n tests = 66; $q < 0.05$) [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

Conversely, for smoking phenotypes, significant correlations were only observed for the AN *without* binge eating subtype. Smoking initiation ($r_g = -0.21$, SE = 0.06, $q = 0.0006$), current smoking (referred to as smoking cessation in Liu et al.²⁰) ($r_g = -0.19$, SE = 0.08, $q = 0.03$), and cigarettes per day ($r_g = -0.23$, SE = 0.07, $q = 0.003$) were significantly and negatively associated with AN *without* binge eating. Although the correlation between nicotine dependence and AN *without* binge eating was in the same direction as the other smoking phenotypes, it was not significant ($r_g = -0.22$, SE = 0.12, $q = 0.14$). The r_g s for AN diagnosis and each of the three nondiagnostic smoking traits versus AN *without* binge eating and these same smoking traits all differed significantly from each other (z-scores ranged from -3.22 to -2.11 ; P values ≤ 0.04). The genetic covariance estimate between AN *without* binge eating and smoking initiation was only significant in the nonfunctional category (corrected $\rho_g = -0.01$; corrected $r = -0.17$; corrected $q = 0.007$; Table S5). For AN *without* binge eating

and current smoking, the genetic covariance estimate was significant in both functional (corrected $\rho_g = -0.01$; corrected $r = -0.32$; corrected $q = 0.01$) and nonfunctional categories (corrected $\rho_g = -0.01$; corrected $r = -0.21$; corrected $q = 0.03$; Table S6). Finally, the genetic covariance estimate between AN *without* binge eating and cigarettes per day was only significant in the nonfunctional category (corrected $\rho_g = -0.02$; corrected $r = -0.35$; corrected $q = 0.003$; Table S7).

After conditioning the AN and AUD GWAS summary statistics for loci associated with major depressive disorder, the positive r_g between AN and AUD was attenuated ($r_g = 0.07$; SE = 0.05, $q = 0.125$; Table S8) and significantly lower than the unadjusted r_g (z-score = 2.48, $P = 0.01$). In contrast, after conditioning the AN *with* binge eating and cannabis initiation GWAS for major depressive disorder, the resulting r_g was marginally smaller but remained significant after correction for multiple tests ($r_g = 0.21$, SE = 0.08, $q = 0.016$). After conditioning for the major depressive disorder GWAS, r_g s between AN *without* binge eating and smoking initiation, current smoking, and cigarettes per day remained significant and modestly increased in magnitude (r_g s = -0.27 to -0.31 ; SEs = 0.05 to 0.09; q s < 0.0009). All r_g s

*In Liu et al (2019), the phenotype is noted as "smoking cessation," where current smokers were coded as 2 and former smokers were coded as 1. Because the comparison group is "current smokers," we have renamed this phenotype as "current smoking" for clarification and ease of interpretation across all smoking phenotypes.

remained significant after conditioning the AN and substance-use-related phenotypes for schizophrenia (r_g s = -0.20 to 0.27 ; SEs = 0.04 to 0.08 ; q s < 0.03 ; Table S9).

4 | DISCUSSION

Using existing GWAS data, we investigated genetic associations between liabilities to four eating disorder- and eight substance-use-related phenotypes spanning initiation and typical use to substance use disorder. We found differential patterns of association between AN *with* and *without* binge eating and substance-use-related traits, which may point toward substance-specific genetic relationships. Additionally, there may be some degree of symptom overlap contributing to these associations.

Three main patterns emerged. First, in line with prior twin studies, we observed a positive genetic correlation (r_g) between problem alcohol use (ie, AUD) and AN diagnosis. Second, we observed positive, significant r_g s between cannabis initiation and AN diagnosis, as well as cannabis initiation and the AN *with* binge eating subtype. This is a novel finding not previously examined in twin research. The positive genetic associations suggest that some genetic loci may be influencing these traits in the same direction. Finally, negative r_g s emerged between the three nondiagnostic smoking phenotypes and AN *without* binge eating but not with the other three eating disorder phenotypes. These negative r_g s indicate that some of the loci influencing liability to these eating disorder and smoking phenotypes might be shared but are affecting the liability to these traits in opposite directions. Indeed, r_g s cannot identify specific loci or underlying mechanisms that contribute to the shared risk. Nevertheless, the results provide initial evidence for differential genetic associations between the liability to varying eating disorder- and substance-use-related phenotypes.

Based on findings from twin studies, we hypothesized that (a) the strongest SNP-based r_g would be between eating disorder phenotypes that have binge eating as a core symptom and alcohol use phenotypes and (b) a significant positive r_g between eating disorder phenotypes with binge eating as a key symptom and AUD would emerge. In line with these hypotheses, we found a significant genetic association between AUD and AN diagnosis but not between typical alcohol consumption (ie, drinks per week) and AN. No twin study has examined genetic associations between AN and alcohol-use-related phenotypes, and previous studies^{21,26} using LDSC have not reported significant r_g s between these traits. That we found a significant association most likely reflects the larger AN sample size in our study (from 3495 cases and 10 982 controls to 16 992 cases and 55 525 controls), as well as combining two large existing GWAS of AUD, emphasizing the importance of increasing sample sizes for GWAS.

Importantly, the r_g s between the eating disorder- and substance-use-related phenotypes were robust to conditioning on schizophrenia loci. However, the r_g between AN and AUD was not robust to the adjustment for major depressive disorder-associated variants. Major depressive disorder is among the most prominent comorbidities in

individuals with AN and AUD,⁴⁰ and GWAS for both traits document strong r_g s between major depressive disorder and these disorders.^{19,21,26} Our results indicate that the three disorders share genetic underpinnings. We cannot discount the possibility of a genetic relationship between AN and AUD that is distinct from major depressive disorder; however, much larger sample sizes may be required to detect such an association.

Intriguingly, although we did not detect a significant r_g for AN *with* binge eating with AUD, the point estimate for the r_g between AUD and AN *with* binge eating was similar to that for AUD and AN diagnosis (0.17 vs 0.18 , respectively) and higher than that for AUD and AN *without* binge eating (0.01). Sample sizes for these AN subtypes were smaller than for AN diagnosis; however, the two subtypes included approximately equal numbers of cases and controls. Indeed, binge eating was assessed in such a way that we were unable to tease apart purging behaviors, and AN diagnosis is heterogenous even within subtypes. Therefore, binge eating may be one plausible key component of the observed genetic association. For example, binge eating has been shown to activate brain reward circuitry in a similar manner to substances,^{41,42} and administration of naltrexone, an opioid antagonist approved by the US Food and Drug Administration for the treatment of AUD,⁴³ has been shown to reduce the frequency of binge eating episodes among individuals with an eating disorder.^{44,45} We did not detect a significant r_g with the bulimia nervosa factor score, although that GWAS was relatively underpowered. Thus, our findings highlight the importance of expanding GWAS to include bulimia nervosa and binge-eating disorder, where a core symptom of both disorders is binge eating, to elucidate whether binge eating is a critical eating disorder symptom in the comorbidity with AUD and to home in on relevant shared mechanisms.

The significant genetic associations between cannabis initiation and AN are novel, yet consistent with the negative genetic association between cannabis use and body mass index, and with observational²⁵ and experimental^{46,47} studies regarding the role of endocannabinoids in appetite regulation, energy expenditure, stress, and reward. One of the principal psychoactive agents of cannabis, delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), a partial agonist of the endogenous cannabinoid 1 (CB1) receptor, is presumed to be orexigenic and may acutely increase appetite and food intake, contributing to its potential role as an appetite stimulant in patients with an anorexia or cachexia syndrome⁴⁸ due to a disease (eg, HIV or AIDS) or in response to treatment (eg, chemotherapy). An antagonist of the CB1 receptor was previously tested as a highly promising anti-obesity medication (Rimonabant, SR141716), which is particularly relevant because some genes may influence AN and obesity in opposite directions.²¹ Further, the endocannabinoid anandamide has been shown to be elevated in individuals with acute AN,⁴⁹ indicating disruption in food-related reward and eating behavior regulation. Animal and human studies have also provided initial evidence for the therapeutic effectiveness of cannabinoid agonists in treating eating disorders.^{50,51} It is also likely that individuals with high genetic liability to AN are less likely to experiment with a substance that has a documented hyperphagia component. Thus, there is evidence of a complex

biological relationship between cannabis use and eating disorders, as well as body mass index.

Finally, the significant negative r_g s between three tobacco-smoking phenotypes—smoking initiation, current smoking, and cigarettes per day—and AN *without* binge eating are intriguing, suggesting that AN *without* binge eating and tobacco-smoking behaviors are alternate expressions of shared mechanisms. Phenotypic studies are inconsistent about the association between the restricting subtype of AN and smoking. Some studies suggest that individuals with restricting AN have a higher prevalence of various smoking phenotypes than controls,⁵ whereas other studies indicate no significant difference between the two groups.⁶ A recent meta-analysis did not find differences in the odds of lifetime smoking between individuals with AN and healthy controls,³ yet the authors did not assess differences by AN subtype. Individuals with AN may smoke as a way to control or lose weight,⁵² and temporary weight gain does occur with smoking cessation.⁵³ However, a positive phenotypic correlation need not be accompanied by a r_g in the same direction (or genetic contributors to the phenotypic association at all). Still, there is plausible support for the negative r_g . Although not significant, a negative r_g between smoking and AN has been reported.^{18,21} Notably, our study includes individuals from these earlier reports and extends findings by including larger sample sizes for both AN and smoking phenotypes. Unfortunately, there are no twin studies of AN or AN-like traits and smoking with which to compare findings.

One explanation for the negative genetic association is that it is due to a third, underlying variable influencing both AN *without* binge eating and smoking. We tested for the potential role of variants associated with major depressive disorder and schizophrenia and found the r_g s to be robust to those adjustments. In the largest GWAS of smoking phenotypes, positive r_g s were also observed between smoking initiation and cigarettes per day with multiple cardiometabolic traits, including type 2 diabetes and fasting glucose.²⁰ These same metabolic traits were negatively genetically correlated with AN.^{21,54} Thus, the patterns of r_g s might point to metabolic, rather than psychiatric, factors in influencing the apparent genetic association between smoking phenotypes and AN. However, the associations could also reflect adoption of unhealthy lifestyles that promote obesity and are correlated with smoking. In addition, the r_g s between smoking and body mass index, as well as AN and body mass index, may reflect underlying disinhibitory pathways, as variants associated with body mass index show enrichment in the central nervous system.⁵⁵ The current approach is not designed to disentangle these putative etiological mechanisms, but our findings do encourage careful study of the specific relationships between eating and substance use disorders.

Substance use and substance use disorders are partially distinct, and although excessive substance use is a necessary component of substance use disorders, the latter is associated with psychological and physiological impairment related to excess use and aspects of loss of control over the behavior. Consistent with our findings for alcohol, accumulating evidence suggests that genetic liability to other

psychiatric traits (eg, schizophrenia) is strongly correlated with liability to substance use disorders (eg, AUD) but not substance use (eg, alcohol consumption).^{19–21} Genetic liability to alcohol use has also been correlated with liabilities to psychiatric disorders (eg, major depressive disorder) in opposite directions depending on level of involvement.¹⁹ However, we did not find similar elevations in r_g s when contrasting ever smoking and nicotine dependence nor comparing cannabis initiation to cannabis use disorder. It is possible that the lack of genetic overlap between AN and nicotine dependence, as well as AN and cannabis use disorder, is related to the relatively modest sample size of those discovery GWAS. A similar non-significant r_g was noted for AUD when the Walters et al²⁶ alcohol dependence GWAS was used as the sole source of summary statistics for problem drinking in the current study. Several other explanations for this divergence in findings exist. For instance, for tobacco, the highly addictive nature of nicotine may result in convergence in genomic effects on earlier and later stages of smoking (ie, a much larger proportion of those who ever smoke become dependent compared with the proportion of those who drink alcohol and develop AUD). For cannabis, given its lower addictive potential, we might have expected stronger associations with cannabis use disorder than with cannabis initiation. In addition to the considerably smaller sample size of the cannabis use disorder GWAS, the association with cannabis initiation could also be attributed to the small number of cohorts in that discovery GWAS that included individuals with a high likelihood of cannabis use disorder. It is also possible that the relationship between AN and cannabis use is distinct and that earlier but not later stages of cannabis use are genetically related to liability to AN. Future studies should consider the multistage nature of substance use and misuse when examining cross-trait correlations.

This is the largest and most comprehensive assessment of shared genetic risk between eating disorder- and substance-use-related phenotypes, using existing GWAS data from large cohorts (up to ~537 000 individuals per phenotype). We were able to separately assess approximate AN subtypes (ie, *with* binge eating vs *without* binge eating) to evaluate the extent to which binge eating, in the context of AN, may share genetic risk with substance-use-related phenotypes. Using these large datasets—many of which are publicly available—allows for the rapid development of scientific knowledge regarding the underlying etiology of psychiatric disorder and substance use comorbidity. Nevertheless, some limitations exist. First, sample sizes for the bulimia nervosa factor score and cannabis use disorder GWAS were relatively small compared with the other GWAS, resulting in large standard errors and low power. Second, we were unable to uniformly examine sex differences in these r_g s. Because the prevalence of eating disorders is higher in women than men and the prevalence of substance use disorders is higher in men than women,⁴⁰ it will be important to explore possible sex differences in genetic associations as the GWAS data become available. Notably, we previously did not find evidence for sex differences in the r_g between binge eating and problem alcohol use.⁵⁶ Third, even though we did not detect significant r_g s for all pairs of traits, it is possible that local genetic associations exist for some of these trait

pairs. Such local correlations, for instance, in certain chromosomal regions but not others, particularly when in opposing directions (eg, a positive local correlation at one chromosomal location and a negative local correlation at another) might dilute the overall r_g estimate. Although such a systematic evaluation of each pair of traits is beyond the scope of this report, we did note some support for enrichment of the aggregated genetic covariance in both functional and nonfunctional genomic regions for several of the significant r_g s. Finally, SNP coverage was limited in the earlier GWAS of the bulimia nervosa factor score because that study used older genotyping platforms and imputation panels that included fewer SNPs than current imputation panels. The Eating Disorders and Substance Use Disorders Working Groups of the Psychiatric Genomics Consortium are continuously adding samples and releasing data freezes with incrementally larger sample sizes, while collecting information on multiple substances (eg, opioids). In coming years, the statistical power is expected to increase for AN (including the *with* and *without* binge eating subtypes), bulimia nervosa, and binge-eating disorder, as well as AUD, nicotine dependence, and cannabis use disorder, from within and outside the Psychiatric Genomics Consortium. This will allow for a more refined assessment of specific eating disorder symptoms, including binge eating, in relation to substance-use-related phenotypes.

In conclusion, findings from this study suggest that the shared sources of variation in liabilities to eating disorder- and substance-use-related phenotypes are not consistent across traits or levels of substance involvement, extending results from twin studies to a genome-wide SNP approach. Despite the typically high co-occurrence of alcohol, tobacco, and cannabis use and their genetic overlap,²⁵ the differential patterns seen between the eating disorder- and substance-use-related phenotypes highlight the uniqueness and complexity of their shared etiology. Potential clinical implications include watching for the emergence of symptoms of one disorder (eg, AN) while being treated for the other behavior (eg, AUD) and understanding that, for example, women with AN who use nicotine may not be able to quit successfully both because they are afraid of gaining weight and they have high genetic susceptibility for smoking via the shared genetic risk between AN and smoking-related traits. Additional research using contemporary genomic methods, such as cross-disorder association studies, could identify the specific loci contributing to this comorbidity. Future research that combines genome-wide data with measured environmental constructs, such as trauma,⁹ that may increase risk for this comorbidity could enhance the prediction, prevention, and treatment of co-occurring eating disorder- and substance-use-related traits.

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Eating Disorders Working Group of the Psychiatric Genomics Consortium (PGC-ED)

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Substance Use Disorders Working Group of the Psychiatric Genomics Consortium (PGC-SUD)

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DATA ACCESS

This manuscript was a joint collaboration between the Eating Disorders and Substance Use Disorders Working Groups of the Psychiatric Genomics Consortium. These data can be found at <https://www.med.unc.edu/pgc/data-index/>. Additional datasets included in this study were obtained multiple ways. We received summary statistics directly from the first author of the primary GWAS manuscript for the bulimia nervosa factor score (Australian Twin Registry), alcohol use disorder (Million Veteran Program), nicotine dependence (multiple samples), and cannabis initiation (International Cannabis Consortium and UK Biobank). Summary statistics for drinks per week, smoking initiation, smoking cessation, and cigarettes per day (GSCAN) were downloaded from <https://conservancy.umn.edu/handle/11299/201564> on 7 March 2019. Summary statistics for cannabis use disorder (iPSYCH) were downloaded from <https://ipsych.dk/forskning/downloads/> on 27 June 2019.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors report the following potential competing interests. O. Andreassen received a speaker's honorarium from Lundbeck. G. Breen received grant funding and consultancy fees in preclinical genetics from Eli Lilly, consultancy fees from Otsuka, and has received honoraria from Illumina. C. Bulik served on Shire Scientific Advisory Boards, is a consultant for Idorsia, and receives author royalties from Pearson. D. Degortes served as a speaker and on advisory boards and has received consultancy fees for participation in research from various pharmaceutical industry companies including AstraZeneca, Boehringer, Bristol Myers Squibb, Eli Lilly, Genesis Pharma, GlaxoSmithKline, Janssen, Lundbeck, Organon, Sanofi, UniPharma, and Wyeth; he has received unrestricted grants from Lilly and AstraZeneca as director of the Sleep Research Unit of Eginition Hospital (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece). J. Hudson has received grant support from Shire and Sunovion and has received consulting fees from DiaMentis, Shire, and Sunovion. A. Kaplan is a member of the Shire Canadian Binge-Eating Disorder Advisory Board and was on the steering committee for the Shire B/educated Educational Symposium: 15 to 16 June 2018. J. Kennedy served as an unpaid member of the scientific advisory board of AssurexHealth Inc. M. Landén declares that, over the past 36 months, he has received lecture honoraria from Lundbeck and served as scientific consultant for EPID Research Oy. S. Scherer is a member of the scientific advisory board for Deep Genomics. P. Sullivan is on the Lundbeck advisory committee and is a Lundbeck grant recipient; he has served on the scientific advisory board for Pfizer, has received a consultation fee from Element Genomics and a speaker reimbursement fee from Roche. J. Treasure has received an honorarium for participation in an EAP

meeting and has received royalties from several books from Routledge, Wiley, and Oxford University press. T. Werge has acted as a lecturer and scientific advisor to H. Lundbeck A/S. L. Bierut, A. Goate, J. Rice, J.-C. Wang, and the spouse of N. Saccone are listed as inventors on Issued US Patent 8080,371, "Markers for Addiction" covering the use of certain SNPs in determining the diagnosis, prognosis, and treatment of addiction. N. Wodarz has received funding from the German Research Foundation (DFG) and Federal Ministry of Education and Research Germany (BMBF); he has received speaker's honoraria and travel funds from Janssen-Cilag, Mundipharma, and Indivior. He took part in industry-sponsored multicenter randomized trials by D&A Pharma and Lundbeck. M. Ridinger received compensation from Lundbeck Switzerland and Lundbeck institute for advisory boards and expert meetings and from Lundbeck and Lilly Suisse for workshops and presentations. K. Mann received speaker fees from Janssen-Cilag. H. Kranzler is a member of the American Society of Clinical Psychopharmacology's Alcohol Clinical Trials Initiative, which was sponsored in the past 3 years by AbbVie, Alkermes, Amygdala Neurosciences, Arbor Pharmaceuticals, Ethypharm, Indivior, Lilly, Lundbeck, Otsuka, and Pfizer. H. Kranzler and J. Gelernter are named as inventors on PCT patent application #15/878,640, entitled "Genotype-guided dosing of opioid agonists," filed 24 January 2018. J. MacKillop is a principal in BEAM Diagnostics, Inc. D.-S. Choi is a scientific advisory member of Peptron Inc. M. Frye has received grant support from Assurex Health, Mayo Foundation, Myriad, National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, National Institute of Mental Health, and Pfizer; he has been a consultant for Intra-Cellular Therapies, Inc., Janssen, Mitsubishi Tanabe Pharma Corporation, Myriad, Neuralstem Inc., Otsuka American Pharmaceutical, Sunovion, and Teva Pharmaceuticals. H. de Wit has received support from Insys Therapeutics and Indivior for studies unrelated to this project, and she has consulted for Marinus and Jazz Pharmaceuticals, also unrelated to this project. T. Wall has previously received funds from ABMRF. J. Nurnberger is an investigator for Janssen. M. Nöthen has received honoraria from the Lundbeck Foundation and the Robert Bosch Stiftung for membership on advisory boards. N. Scherbaum received honoraria for several activities (advisory boards, lectures, and manuscripts) by the factories Abbvie, Hexal, Janssen-Cilag, MSD, Medice, Mundipharma, Reckitt-Benckiser/Indivior, and Sanofi-Aventis. W. Gäbel has received symposia support from Janssen-Cilag GmbH, Neuss, Lilly Deutschland GmbH, Bad Homburg, and Servier, Munich and is a member of the Faculty of the Lundbeck International Neuroscience Foundation (LINF), Denmark. J. Kaprio has provided consultations on nicotine dependence for Pfizer (Finland) 2012 to 2015. In the past 3 years, L. Degenhardt has received investigator-initiated untied educational grants for studies of opioid medications in Australia from Indivior, Mundipharma, and Seqirus. B. Neale is a member of the scientific advisory board for Deep Genomics and has consulted for Camp4 Therapeutics Corporation, Merck & Co., and Avanir Pharmaceuticals, Inc. A. Agrawal previously received peer-reviewed funding and travel reimbursement from ABMRF for

unrelated research. All other authors have no conflicts of interest, relevant to the contents of this paper, to disclose.

AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

MM-C, CB, and AA were responsible for the study concept and design. MM-C, ECJ, and Y-LD performed the statistical analyses, and JC, RW, and ZY assisted with the data analysis. MM-C, ECJ, Y-LD, JC, LT, RW, ZY, JB, CH, JK, HE, CB, and AA assisted with interpretation of findings. TDW facilitated access to and interpretation of the summary statistics for the bulimia nervosa factor score. HK, JG, and HZ facilitated access to and interpretation of the Million Veteran Program summary statistics for AUD. DH facilitated access to and interpretation of the summary statistics for nicotine dependence. MM-C, ECJ, LT, CB, and AA drafted the manuscript. All remaining authors provided data for this study and consulted on the analytic plan. All authors critically reviewed the content and approved the final version for publication.

ORCID

Melissa A. Munn-Chernoff  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9368-9457>

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional supporting information may be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of this article.

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