

Library Watch on colleges

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The short-term effects and unintended long-term consequences of binge drinking in college: A 10-year follow-up study.

Jennison K. *American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse* 30(3): 659-684, 2004. (78 refs.)

This study addresses binge drinking in college as a risk factor for heavy drinking and alcohol dependence after college. A national probability sample of 1972 college students from the National Longitudinal Surveys of Youth(NLSY79) was interviewed in 1984 and reinterviewed again as adults in 1994. The short-term effects of binge drinking in college were assessed as well as the extent to which experiences of negative effects in college predicted patterns of alcohol use across the transition from college into postcollege years. As expected, college binge drinkers were comparatively more likely than nonbinge drinkers to experience one or more alcohol-related problems while in college. In addition, weighted estimates of DSM-IV-defined diagnostic criteria in logistic regression models indicated that the binge drinking patterns exhibited during the college years, for some former college students of both genders, posed significant risk factors for alcohol dependence and abuse 10 years after the initial interview, in conjunction with evidence of academic attrition, early departure from college and less favorable labor market outcomes. Copyright 2004, Marcel Dekker, Inc. Used with permission.

Drinking on campus: Self-reports and breath tests.

Beirness DJ; Foss RD; Vogel-Sprott M. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol* 65(5): 600-604, 2004. (16 refs.)

Objective: Concern about excessive alcohol consumption by college students has been raised by surveys indicating that more than 40% of students are "heavy" drinkers. This definition is based on students' reports of consuming five or more drinks (four or more for women) on an occasion sometime during the past 2 weeks. The present survey examines the degree to which this 2-week 5+/4+ drink criterion characterizes a student's pattern of alcohol use, and whether a 5+/4+ criterion for a drinking occasion is a valid indicator of high blood alcohol concentration (BAC). Method: Students (N = 856, 70% male) were interviewed as they returned home between 10 PM and 3 AM.

Students reported their drinking of the past 2 weeks and of the night they were interviewed, then provided breath samples to determine their BAC. Results: Among the students in the sample classified as "heavy" drinkers on the basis of self-reports, 49% had zero BAC on the night they were interviewed. Those who reported consuming 5+/4+ drinks the evening of the interview had a mean BAC <0.08%. The distribution of BACs in the entire sample showed 74.4% of students had a BAC of zero and 11.8% had a BAC <0.05%. Very high BACs (i.e., greater than or equal to 0.15%) were rare (1.3%). Conclusions: Self-reports of consuming 5+/4+ drinks on at least one occasion during the previous 2 weeks did not reliably identify a pattern of heavy drinking. Moreover, reports of 5+/4+ drinks on an occasion were not necessarily associated with high BACs. Copyright 2004, Alcohol Research Documentation Inc.

Illicit use of prescription pain medication among college students.

McCabe SE; Teter CJ; Boyd CJ. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence* 77(1): 37-47, 2005. (49 refs.)

This study identifies the prevalence, correlates, and sources associated with the illicit use of prescription pain medication among undergraduate college students. A cross-sectional, web-based survey was self-administered by a large random sample of 9,161 undergraduate students attending a large Midwestern university in the United States. Although undergraduate women were more likely to be prescribed pain medication, men were more likely to be approached to divert their prescription pain medication and report illicit use of prescription pain medication. Multivariate analyses indicated past year illicit use of prescription pain medication was higher among undergraduate students who were previously prescribed pain medication, living in a house or apartment, and earning lower grade point averages. The majority of students obtained prescription pain medication for illicit use from peers and the second leading source was family members. There were several gender differences in the risk factors and sources of illicit use of prescription pain medication. Based on qualitative data, illicit use included recreational use for the purposes of intoxication and

self-medication for pain episodes. Illicit users, who obtained prescription pain medication from peers, reported significantly higher rates of other substance use while those who obtained prescription medications from family members did not. These findings suggest that the illicit use of prescription pain medications may represent a problem among undergraduate students and effective prevention efforts are needed that account for gender differences. Copyright 2005, Elsevier Science Ireland, Ltd.

Do college students drink more than their non-college-attending peers? Evidence from a population-based longitudinal female twin study. Slutske WS; Hunt-Carter EE; Nabors-Oberg RE; Sher KJ; Bucholz KK; Madden PAF et al. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* 113(4): 530-540, 2004. (25 refs.)

The association of college attendance with alcohol use and alcohol use disorders was examined in a population-based young adult female twin sample identified from a systematic search of birth records. College-attending women consumed a larger overall volume of alcohol than did their non-college-attending peers, but they were not more likely to be diagnosed with an alcohol use disorder. Significant associations between college attendance and alcohol involvement were probed using 3 different complementary research designs: multivariate cross-sectional analyses, longitudinal analyses of the precollege and college years, and cotwin-control analyses of twin pairs discordant for attending college. Although demographic and lifestyle characteristics accounted for most or all of the association between college attendance and alcohol involvement, there was 1 aspect of drinking behavior, occasionally consuming large quantities of alcohol, that remained significantly associated with college attendance even after controlling for these characteristics or for genetic and family background factors. These results are consistent with the conclusion that some aspect of the college experience may be an important environmental risk factor for this pattern of drinking among young adults. Copyright 2004, American Psychological Association.

Illicit use of prescribed stimulant medication among college students.

Hall KM; Irwin MM; Bowman KA; Frankenberger W; Jewett DC. *Journal of American College Health* 53(4): 167-174, 2005. (18 refs.)

The authors investigated illicit use of stimulant medications at a midwestern university. They used a questionnaire to (a) examine the extent to which university students illicitly used stimulant medications

prescribed for attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder; (b) determine why college students abused such drugs; and (c) identify the factors that predicted illicit use of prescribed stimulant medication. Findings revealed that 17% of 179 surveyed men and 11% of 202 women reported illicit use of prescribed stimulant medication. Forty-four percent of surveyed students stated that they knew students who used stimulant medication illicitly for both academic and recreational reasons. Students reported they experienced time pressures associated with college life and that stimulants were said to increase alertness and energy. Regression analysis revealed that the factor that predicted men's use was knowing where to get easily acquired stimulant medication, whereas the main predictor for women was whether another student had offered the prescribed stimulants. Copyright 2005, Heldref Publications.

Binge drinking in female college students: The association of physical activity, weight concern, and depressive symptoms.

Vickers KS; Patten CA; Bronars C; Lane K; Stevens SR; Croghan IT et al. *Journal of American College Health* 53(3): 133-140, 2004. (45 refs.)

As an initial step in building gender-specific binge drinking intervention programs, the authors investigated the relation of potentially modifiable factors (physical activity level, weight concern, and depressive symptoms) to binge drinking while controlling for the effects of previously established correlates of binge drinking (tobacco and marijuana use, GPA, and perception of peer alcohol use). Four-hundred-twelve college women completed an in-class survey. Multivariate analyses revealed that tobacco and marijuana use, GPA, and physical activity were significantly associated with binge drinking, whereas tobacco use and perception of peers' alcohol use were associated with more frequent binge drinking. The findings suggested that the variables associated with any binge drinking and frequency of binge drinking may differ and that binge drinking can be associated with positive health behaviors (ie, greater physical activity) as well as risky, health behaviors (eg, tobacco use). Copyright 2004, Helen Dwight Reid Educational Foundation.

Perceptions about cigarette smoking and risks among college students.

Murphy-Hoefer R; Alder S; Higbee C. *Nicotine & Tobacco Research* 6(Supplement 3): 371-374, 2004. (14 refs.)

The objective of the study was to describe how college students perceive the risks of cigarette smoking and addiction to nicotine. Data came from a self-

administered survey of 1,020 college students enrolled in two 4-year liberal arts colleges in the United States. The survey was conducted in the fall of 2001. Smokers and nonsmokers differed markedly in their perceptions about the health risks associated with short-term exposure to smoking. College students in this sample who smoked did not fully comprehend the risks associated with smoking. Smokers were half as likely as nonsmokers to believe that there are health risks from smoking only on weekends or a couple of days a week. Anti-tobacco messages for young adult smokers need to communicate more effectively the concept that each cigarette they smoke is doing them damage. Copyright 2004, Taylor & Francis Ltd.

Progression of college-age cigarette samplers: What influences outcome.

Kenford SL; Wetter DW; Welsch SK; Smith SS; Fiore MC; Baker TB. *Addictive Behaviors* 30(2): 285-294, 2005. (26 refs.)

Experimental and occasional cigarette use among college students is widespread. Little is known about what differentiates the occasional college smoker who becomes a regular smoker from the one who does not. Possible risk factors include peer smoking, lifestyle factors, such as lack of exercise, and health/addiction concerns. The current study investigated the progression of smoking in a cohort of 321 low-level/occasional smokers. Over the course of 4 years, 45% of low-level/occasional users had become nonsmokers, 35% became occasional smokers, and 20% became daily smokers. Baseline exercise patterns, addiction beliefs, and smoking pervasiveness were modestly related to distal smoking outcome. The level of baseline smoking was strongly related to smoking outcome. These results support the wisdom of limiting access and exposure to cigarettes among the college population. Copyright 2005, Elsevier Science Ltd.

Incorporating social anxiety into a model of college student problematic drinking.

Ham LS; Hope DA. *Addictive Behaviors* 30(1): 127-150, 2005. (75 refs.)

College problem drinking and social anxiety are significant public health concerns with highly negative consequences. College students are faced with a variety of novel social situations and situations encouraging alcohol consumption. The current study involved developing a path model of college problem drinking, including social anxiety, in 316 college students referred to an alcohol intervention due to a campus alcohol violation. Contrary to hypotheses, social anxiety generally had an inverse relationship

with problem drinking. As expected, perceived drinking norms had important positive, direct effects on drinking variables. However, the results generally did not support the hypotheses regarding the mediating or moderating function of the valuations of expected effects and provided little support for the mediating function of alcohol expectancies in the relations among social anxiety and alcohol variables. Therefore, it seems that the influence of peers may be more important for college students than alcohol expectancies and valuations of alcohol's effects are. College students appear to be a unique population in respect to social anxiety and problem drinking. The implications of these results for college prevention and intervention programs were discussed. Copyright 2005, Elsevier Science Ltd.

Psychopathology associated with drinking and alcohol use disorders in the college and general adult populations.

Dawson DA; Grant BF; Stinson FS; Chou PS. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence* 77(2): 139-150, 2005. (56 refs.)

This paper examines the associations between past-year drinking status and the prevalence of 15 different past-year anxiety, mood and personality disorders, using a large ($n = 43,093$) nationally representative sample of the U.S. population. The prevalence of these disorders and their associations with drinking are compared for college students 18–29 years of age, other youth 18–29 years of age, and adults 30 years of age and older. After adjusting for sociodemographic characteristics and past-year tobacco and illicit drug use, only drinkers with alcohol dependence experienced an excess risk of a mood or anxiety disorder among college students 18–29 years of age, $OR = 2.4$. In contrast, the excess risk of any mood or anxiety disorder associated with drinking status among non-college youth varied from an OR of 1.8 for non-binge drinkers to 4.7 for drinkers with alcohol dependence. Among persons 30 years of age and older, the degree of excess risk was slightly lower but still higher than those for college students, $OR = 1.5$ – 3.8 . Similarly, the excess odds of any personality disorder associated with drinking varied from 1.6 to 5.0 for the younger, non-college group and from 1.5 to 3.8 for the older adults, with no significant effect observed among college students. Factors that may help explain the weaker association of psychopathology and drinking in the college population include selectivity and greater availability of social and treatment resources that serve as alternatives to self-medicating the symptoms of

psychological distress with alcohol. Copyright 2005, Elsevier Science.

The neurocognitive effects of alcohol on adolescents and college students.

Zeigler DW; Wang CC; Yoast RA; Dickinson BD; McCaffree MA; Robinowitz CB; American Medical Association. *Preventive Medicine* 40(1): 23-32, 2005. (86 refs.)

Background. Adolescents and college students are at high risk for initiating alcohol use and high-risk (or binge) drinking. There is a growing body of literature on neurotoxic and harmful cognitive effects of drinking by young people. On average, youths take their first drink at age 12 years. Methods. MEDLINE search on neurologic and cognitive effects of underage drinking. Results. Problematic alcohol consumption is not a benign condition that resolves with age. Individuals who first use alcohol before age 14 years are at increased risk of developing alcohol use disorders. Underage drinkers are susceptible to immediate consequences of alcohol use, including blackouts, hangovers, and alcohol poisoning and are at elevated risk of neurodegeneration (particularly in regions of the brain responsible for learning and memory), impairments in functional brain activity, and the appearance of neurocognitive deficits. Heavy episodic or binge drinking impairs study habits and erodes the development of transitional skills to adulthood. Conclusions. Underage alcohol use is associated with brain damage and neurocognitive deficits, with implications for learning and intellectual development. Impaired intellectual development may continue to affect individuals into adulthood. It is imperative for policy makers and organized medicine to address the problem of underage drinking. Copyright 2004, Institute For Cancer Prevention.

Beliefs and social norms about ephedra onset and perceived addiction among college male and female athletes.

Peters RJ; Adams LF; Barnes JB; Hines LA; Jones DE; Krebs KMA et al. *Substance Use & Misuse* 40(1): 125-135, 2005. (31 refs.)

In Spring 2003, a qualitative approach was used to investigate relevant beliefs and norms associated with ephedra initiation and perceived addiction to the drug among 43 primarily minority athletes, attending a historically Black university in the southwestern

region of the United States, who self-identified as past users. In general, participants stated that their second ephedra use event occurred on the same day as or the day after initiation. The majority of participants perceived that addiction was established by routine and eccentric behavior. Male athletes stated they used ephedra for improved athletic performance while females stated they used the drug for weight loss. Male participants stated it is difficult to quit ephedra use because of the resulting decrease in athletic performance, sickness, and weight gain. Female athletes were more concerned with their appearance. These findings are important in determining the early extent to which addiction is self-identified. Copyright 2005, Taylor & Francis Inc.

US college students' exposure to tobacco promotions: Prevalence and association with tobacco use.

Rigotti NA; Moran SE; Wechsler H. *American Journal of Public Health* 95(1): 138-144, 2005. (27 refs.)

Objectives. We assessed young adults' exposure to the tobacco industry marketing strategy of sponsoring social events at bars, nightclubs, and college campuses. Methods. We analyzed data from the 2001 Harvard College Alcohol Study, a random sample of 10904 students enrolled in 119 nationally representative 4-year colleges and universities. Results. During the 2000-2001 school year, 8.5% of respondents attended a bar, nightclub, or campus social event where free cigarettes were distributed. Events were reported by students attending 118 of the 119 schools (99.2%). Attendance was associated with a higher student smoking prevalence after we adjusted for demographic factors, alcohol use, and recent bar/nightclub attendance. This association remained for students who did not smoke regularly before 19 years of age but not for students who smoked regularly by 19 years of age. Conclusions. Attendance at a tobacco industry-sponsored event at a bar, nightclub, or campus party was associated with a higher smoking prevalence among college students. Promotional events may encourage the initiation or the progression of tobacco use among college students who are not smoking regularly when they enter college. Copyright 2005, American Public Health Association.