

Library Watch on colleges

www.projectcork.org

Winter 2007

College students' responses to antismoking messages: Denial, defiance, and other boomerang effects.

Wolburg JM. *Journal of Consumer Affairs* 40(2): 294-323, 2006. (64 refs.)

Despite the success of antismoking campaigns that aim to prevent young teens from smoking, this qualitative study provides strong evidence that different initiatives are needed for college students, particularly those who already smoke. When asked for responses to current antismoking messages, nonsmokers generally championed the cause; however, smokers often responded with anger, defiance, denial, and other negative responses. Consumers who respond in this manner are not well served by existing strategies, and money used for such campaigns could be better spent. New strategies are offered in hopes that antismoking campaigns can communicate more effectively with one high-risk group—college student smokers. Copyright 2006, Blackwell Publishing.

Drinking game participation among college students: Gender and ethnic implications.

Pedersen ER; LaBrie J. *Addictive Behaviors* 31(11): 2105-2115, 2006. (30 refs.)

Participation in drinking games by college students has recently sparked research attention. While previous research indicates that women play drinking games at lower frequencies than men, the current study reveals that college women may be playing games at rates similar to college men. In a sample of 105 coed college students, participants completed a 3-month Timeline Followback recording every drinking event and quantity consumed. They then were prompted to identify which drinking events involved drinking games and how much alcohol was consumed during game playing. Both men and women engaged in drinking games at similar rates and consumed more drinks on game playing days than on non-game drinking days. However, drinking game participation was related to alcohol-related consequences in women only. Further, while Caucasian participants played drinking games more often than non-Caucasian participants, an association between game participation and alcohol-related consequences

emerged in non-Caucasian participants. Copyright 2006, Elsevier Science.

A successful social norms campaign to reduce alcohol misuse among college student-athletes.

Perkins HW; Craig DW. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol* 67(6): 880-889, 2006. (35 refs.)

Objective: This study examines the impact of a social norms intervention to reduce alcohol misuse among student-athletes. The intervention was designed to reduce harmful misperceptions of peer norms and, in turn, reduce personal risk. Method: A comprehensive set of interventions communicating accurate local norms regarding alcohol use targeted student-athletes at an undergraduate college. An anonymous survey of all student-athletes was conducted annually for 3 years (2001: n = 414, 86% response; 2002: n = 373, 85% response; and 2003: n = 353, 79% response). A pre/post comparison of student-athletes was conducted separately for new and ongoing athletes at each time point to isolate any general time period effects from intervention effects. A cross-sectional analysis of student-athletes with varying degrees of program exposure was also performed. Results: The intervention substantially reduced misperceptions of frequent alcohol consumption and high-quantity social drinking as the norm among student-athlete peers. During this same time period, frequent personal consumption, high-quantity consumption, high estimated peak blood alcohol concentrations during social drinking, and negative consequences all declined by 30% or more among ongoing student-athletes after program exposure. In contrast, no significant differences across time were seen for new student-athletes each year with low program exposure. Among student-athletes with the highest level of program exposure, indications of personal misuse were at least 50% less likely on each measure when compared with student-athletes with the lowest level of program exposure. Conclusions: This social norms intervention was highly effective in reducing alcohol misuse in this high-risk collegiate subpopulation by intensively delivering data-based messages about actual peer norms through multiple communication venues. Copyright 2006, Alcohol Research Documentation.

Heavy alcohol use compared to alcohol and marijuana use: Do college students experience a difference in substance use problems?

Shillington AM; Clapp JD. *Journal of Drug Education* 36(1): 91-103, 2006. (23 refs.)

This study examines the risk for alcohol and other drug (AOD) problems resulting from alcohol plus marijuana use compared to alcohol-only use. Data are from telephone interviews with 1113 randomly selected college students attending two large urban universities in the southwestern United States. Alcohol and marijuana users (dual users) were more likely to be younger and report a higher mean number of drinks per occasion and experiencing all AOD problems studied compared to alcohol-only users. Multivariate logistic regression analysis findings reveal the relationship between dual-substance use and increased risk for AOD problems remained after controlling for demographics and alcohol use behaviors. Such problems include greater odds of legal problems and riding with or being an intoxicated driver. College students using alcohol and marijuana are at much higher risk for AOD problems than are students who use alcohol only, even when heavy drinking is taken into account. Copyright 2006, Baywood Publishing Co.

Illicit use of specific prescription stimulants among college students: Prevalence, motives, and routes of administration.

Teter CJ; McCabe SE; LaGrange K; Cranford JA; Boyd CJ. *Pharmacotherapy* 26(10): 1501-1510, 2006. (26 refs.)

Objectives. To explore the illicit use of specific prescription stimulants among college students and add to our understanding of reasons (motives) and routes of administration associated with illicit use of these drugs. **Methods.** A random sample of 4580 college students self-administered a Web-based survey. The survey contained a variety of items pertaining to the illicit use of prescription stimulants. An extensive list of prescription stimulants was provided, and students were asked to select all the specific prescription stimulants that they had used illicitly. Items were also included to assess the motives and routes of administration associated with illicit use of prescription stimulants. **Results.** Lifetime and past-year prevalence rates for illicit use of prescription stimulants were 8.3% (382 students) and 5.9% (269 students), respectively. Approximately three fourths (75.8%) of the 269 past-year illicit users of prescription stimulants reported using an amphetamine-dextroamphetamine combination agent (e.g., Adderall) in the past year, and approximately one fourth (24.5%) reported using methylphenidate

(e.g., Ritalin, Concerta, Metadate, Methylin). Past-year illicit use of prescription stimulants was more than 3 times more likely among Caucasians (odds ratio [OR] 3.1, 95% confidence interval [CI] 1.5-76.6) and Hispanics (OR 3.8, 95% CI 1.6-9.3) compared with African-Americans, and more than twice as likely among Caucasians (OR 2.1, 95% CI 1.3-3.4) and Hispanics (OR 2.6, 95% CI 1.4-5.1) compared with Asians. The most commonly reported motives for illicit use were to help with concentration (65.2%), help study (59.8%), and increase alertness (47.5%). Other motives included getting high (31.0%) and experimentation (29.9%). Nearly every illicit user (95.3%) reported oral administration, and 38.1% reported snorting prescription stimulants. **Conclusion.** Illicit use of amphetamine-dextroamphetamine is more prevalent than illicit use of methylphenidate formulations among college students. Copyright 2006, Pharmacotherapy Publications.

Increases in alcohol and marijuana use during the transition out of high school into emerging adulthood: The effects of leaving home, going to college, and high school protective factors.

White HR; McMorris BJ; Catalano RF; Fleming CB; Haggerty KP; Abbott RD. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol* 67(6): 810-822, 2006. (50 refs.)

This study examined the effects of leaving home and going to college on changes in the frequency of alcohol use, heavy episodic drinking, and marijuana use shortly after leaving high school. We also examined how protective factors in late adolescence predict post-high school substance use and moderate the effects of leaving home and going to college. **Method:** Data came from subjects (N = 319; 53% male) interviewed at the end of 12th grade and again approximately 6 months later, as part of the Raising Healthy Children project. **Results:** Leaving home and going to college were significantly related to increases in the frequency of alcohol use and heavy episodic drinking from high school to emerging adulthood but not to changes in marijuana use. Having fewer friends who used each substance protected against increases in the frequency of alcohol use, heavy episodic drinking, and marijuana use. Higher religiosity protected against increases in alcohol- and marijuana-use frequency. Higher parental monitoring protected against increases in heavy episodic drinking and moderated the effect of going to college on marijuana use. Lower sensation seeking lessened the effect of going to college on increases in alcohol use and heavy episodic drinking. **Conclusions:** To prevent increases in substance use in emerging adulthood, interventions should concentrate on strengthening prosocial involvement and parental

monitoring during high school. In addition, youths with high sensation seeking might be targeted for added intervention. Copyright 2006, Alcohol Research Documentation.

Parent misperceptions of incoming student use of alcohol and other drugs.

Shutt MD; Oswalt SB; Cooper DL. *Journal of College Student Development* 47(5): 577-585, 2006. (37 refs.)

College student drinking has long been a concern of college administrators, faculty, staff, and parents of students. The NIAAA reports that alcohol is a contributing factor for the almost one third drop-out rate of first-year students. Although most campuses have established education and intervention programs to address these issues, drinking continues to be a concern especially among first-year students. Some research indicates that student drinking increases after arriving on campus. Others note that there is a continuity of drinking behaviors between high school and college. Parental involvement is changing on many campuses and could assist with this unyielding problem. However, for parents to have a more direct impact on and involvement in their students' alcohol decision, a critical element for parents is that they have an accurate perception of the alcohol use of their student. There is no research looking specifically at parental perceptions of alcohol and other drug use of first-year college students. The purpose of this study is to examine three research questions: How do the perceptions of parents of incoming students compare with the actual use of alcohol and other drugs of first-time first-year students during the previous year?; How do parent perceptions of their student's intent to drink alcohol during the first year on campus compare with their students' intent?; and How do first-time, first-year students and the parents of these incoming students compare in their perceptions of alcohol use on the particular campus. This study concludes that parental perceptions of college student drinking and intent to drink during the first year of college are much different than the actual use and intent to use by first-time, first-year students. Parental perceptions and their students' actual use significantly differed not only regarding alcohol, but also tobacco, marijuana, and other illegal drug use. The results of this study are consistent with previous work that identified inaccurate perceptions of parents regarding the actual alcohol use of their children. In addition, the students and parents differed significantly in their perceptions of current alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other illegal drug use at this university. Parents perceived a lower usage rate for all substances. Likewise, more students than parents perceived the

overall alcohol usage at this university to be more than at other universities. Copyright 2006, Johns Hopkins University Press.

Reducing excessive alcohol consumption at university fraternity parties: A cost-effective incentive/reward intervention.

Glindemann KE; Ehrhart IJ; Drake EA; Geller ES. *Addictive Behaviors* 32(1): 39-48, 2007. (28 refs.)

The impact of an incentive/reward intervention on college students' intoxication from alcohol consumption at fraternity parties was explored using a group-randomized trial. Participants included 702 college students (447 men, 225 women) attending fraternity parties in Blacksburg, VA. Six fraternities were randomly assigned to a control or experimental group, and each of these fraternities hosted two parties. The three fraternities in the experimental group hosted a baseline party first and then hosted an intervention party at which those having a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) level below 0.05 were entered in a \$100 cash lottery. The three fraternities in the control group hosted two control (non-intervention) parties. For the experimental fraternities, mean BAC levels were significantly lower at the intervention parties ($M = 0.079$) than the baseline parties ($M = 0.098$) and the percentage of partygoers with a BAC below 0.08 was significantly higher at intervention parties (40.1%) than at baseline parties (30.6%). This field study supports the efficacy of differential reinforcement in controlling student intoxication at party settings. Copyright 2007, Elsevier Science.

Safety first: A medical amnesty approach to alcohol poisoning at a US university.

Lewis DK; Marchell TC. *International Journal of Drug Policy* 17(4, Special Issue): 329-338, 2006. (13 refs.)

Despite the minimum legal drinking age of 21 in the United States, alcohol consumption among underage college students is widespread. Patterns of consumption among students often include episodes of heavy drinking that contribute to a range of negative consequences, including alcohol poisoning. Although failure to seek medical assistance in cases of alcohol poisoning can lead to fatal outcomes, evidence suggests that the threat of judicial consequences resulting from enforcement of the minimum drinking age or other law or policy violations leads some students to refrain from calling for emergency medical services. Beginning in the fall of 2002, Cornell University attempted to address this dilemma by implementing a Medical Amnesty Protocol (MAP)

designed to: (1) increase the likelihood that students will call for help in alcohol-related medical emergencies; and (2) increase the likelihood that students treated for alcohol-related medical emergencies will receive a brief psycho-educational intervention at the university health centre as a follow-up to their medical treatment. This article provides a case study of the MAP at Cornell University and reviews data from emergency room and health centre records, calls to emergency medical services, and student self-report survey data to evaluate the extent to which the protocol's goals were achieved during the first two years of implementation. Results include consecutive increases in alcohol-related calls for assistance to emergency medical services during the two-year period. Survey results suggest that, following initiation of the MAP, students were less likely to report fear of getting an intoxicated person in trouble as a barrier to calling for help. Furthermore, the percentage of students seen by health centre staff for a brief psycho-educational intervention after an alcohol-related emergency more than doubled (from 22% to 52%) by the end of the second year. In their discussion, the authors explore the inherent tension between the responsibility of colleges and universities to enforce the minimum legal drinking age of 21 as well as other laws and university policies versus the need to motivate underage students to call for assistance when alcohol-related medical emergencies occur. Recommendations to other colleges and universities considering a medical amnesty approach are provided. Copyright 2006, Elsevier Science.

A multisite randomized trial of social norms marketing campaigns to reduce college student drinking.

DeJong W; Schneider SK; Towvim LG; Murphy MJ; Doerr EE; Simonsen NR et al. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol* 67(6): 868-879, 2006. (38 refs.)

Objective: An 18-site randomized trial was conducted to determine the effectiveness of social norms marketing (SNM) campaigns in reducing college student drinking. The SNM campaigns are intended to correct misperceptions of subjective drinking norms and thereby drive down alcohol consumption. Method: Institutions of higher education were randomly assigned to treatment and control groups. At the treatment group institutions, SNM campaigns delivered school-specific, data-driven messages through a mix of campus media venues. Cross-sectional student surveys were conducted by mail at baseline (n = 2,771) and again at post-test 3 years later (n=2,939). Hierarchical linear modeling was applied

to examine multiple drinking outcomes, taking intraclass correlation into account. Results: Controlling for other predictors, having an SNM campaign was significantly associated with lower perceptions of student drinking levels and lower alcohol consumption, as measured by a composite drinking scale, recent maximum consumption, blood alcohol concentration for recent maximum consumption, drinks consumed when partying, and drinks consumed per week. A moderate mediating effect of normative perceptions on student drinking was demonstrated by an attenuation of the Experimental Group x Time interaction, ranging from 16.4% to 39.5% across measures. Additional models that took into account the intensity of SNM campaign activity at the treatment institutions suggested that there was a dose-response relationship. Conclusions: This study is the most rigorous evaluation of SNM campaigns conducted to date. Analysis revealed that students attending institutions that implemented an SNM campaign had a lower relative risk of alcohol consumption than students attending control group institutions. Copyright 2006, Alcohol Research

Spring break trips as a risk factor for heavy alcohol use among first-year college students.

Lee CM; Maggs JL; Rankin LA. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol* 67(6): 911-916, 2006. (18 refs.)

Objective: Many high school and college students are believed to use spring break vacation to travel to destinations with the intent of engaging in extreme party behaviors, including excessive alcohol use. However, the extent to which spring break travelers' behaviors are more risky than their typical behaviors remains unclear. Method: To assess the impact of spring break as a situational risk factor, we analyzed data collected from 176 first-year college students across 10 weeks using weekly telephone interviews. Results: Using multilevel modeling, we found the following: (1) men, participants in fraternity/sorority organizations, students traveling on spring break trips, and those with higher fun-social alcohol expectancies drank more during the regular semester; (2) alcohol use did not increase during spring break week in general; however, (3) spring break travelers increased their alcohol use during spring break. Conclusions: Spring break trips are a risk factor for escalated alcohol use both during the academic semester and during spring break trips, suggesting that some students may seek out opportunities for excessive alcohol use. Results are discussed in terms of niche selection and prevention implications.

Copyright 2006, Alcohol Research Documentation

