

# Library Watch on colleges

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## **Self-reported consequences of intoxication among college students: Implications for harm reduction approaches to high-risk drinking.**

Usdan S; Martin R; Mays D; Cremeens J; Weitzel JA; Bernhardt J. *Journal of Drug Education* 38(4): 377-387, 2008. (16 refs.)

Although large scale national surveys provide extensive data about the nature and frequency of alcohol use among American college students, survey research on alcohol does not provide detailed information on the context of college alcohol consumption that may contribute to drinking-related negative consequences. This research sought to gather specific information on the contexts in which alcohol use occurs among college students through a series of focus groups. Participants described specific incidents of heavy drinking, alcohol consumption patterns, drinking locations and environments, co-drinkers, and associated consequences experienced from drinking. Results indicated that participants often experienced negative consequences from alcohol use if they consumed shots of hard liquor or if they participated in drinking games and/or "pre-gamed." In addition, negative consequences were more common during specific events/special occasions. An implication of these findings is the possibility of reducing negative alcohol-related consequences by tailoring health promotion/harm reduction efforts specifically toward excessive drinking of hard liquor and excessive "pre-gaming." Copyright 2008, Baywood Publishing

## **The effects of binge drinking on college students' next-day academic test-taking performance and mood state.**

Howland J; Rohsenow DJ; Greece JA; Littlefield CA; Almeida A; Heeren T et al. *Addiction* 105(4): 655-665, 2010. (74 refs.)

Aim: To assess the effects of binge drinking on students' next-day academic test-taking performance. Design: A placebo-controlled cross-over design with randomly assigned order of conditions. Participants were randomized to either alcoholic beverage [mean = 0.12 g% breath alcohol concentration (BrAC)] or placebo on the first night and then received the other beverage a week later. The next day, participants were

assessed on test-taking, neurocognitive performance and mood state. Participants: A total of 196 college students ( $\geq$  21 years) recruited from greater Boston. Setting: The trial was conducted at the General Clinical Research Center at the Boston Medical Center. Measurements: The Graduate Record Examinations(C) (GREs) and a quiz on a lecture presented the previous day measured test-taking performance; the Neurobehavioral Evaluation System (NES3) and the Psychomotor Vigilance Test (PVT) measured neurocognitive performance; and the Profile of Mood States (POMS) measured mood. Findings: Test-taking performance was not affected on the morning after alcohol administration, but mood state and attention/reaction-time were affected. Conclusion: Drinking to a level of 0.12 g% BrAC does not affect next-day test-taking performance, but does affect some neurocognitive measures and mood state. Copyright 2010, Society for the Study of Addiction Alcohol & Other Drugs.

## **Social desirability biases in self-reported alcohol consumption and harms.**

Davis CG; Thake J; Vilhena N. *Addictive Behaviors* 35(4): 302-311, 2010. (47 refs.)

Aims: Self-reports remain the most common means of assessing alcohol consumption despite concern for their validity. The objective of this research is to assess the extent to which social desirability biases relate to self-reported consumption, hazardous use, and harms. Methods: In each of two studies presented, undergraduate students (N = 391 and N = 177) who reported that they had consumed alcohol in the past year completed online confidential surveys. Results: Both studies show consistent associations between impression management bias and self-reported consumption such that high impression managers report 20 to 33% less consumption and are about 50% less likely to report risky drinking. No significant correlations involving consumption were found for self-deception bias. Study 2 also indicated that high impression managers report 30-50% fewer acute harms following a drinking episode, and that these effects are maintained after controlling statistically for trait impulsivity/constraint. Conclusions: Impression management bias represents a significant threat to the validity of self-reported alcohol use and harms. Such

bias may lead to misspecification of models and under-estimates of harmful or hazardous use. Copyright 2010, Elsevier Science.

**Whose opinion matters? The relationship between injunctive norms and alcohol consequences in college students.**

LaBrie JW; Hummer JF; Neighbors C; Larimer ME. *Addictive Behaviors* 35(4): 343-349, 2010. (56 refs.)

Harm reduction approaches may benefit from research extending the exploration of predictors of alcohol use per se to those components most directly related to alcohol-related harm. This investigation evaluated the relationship between perceived injunctive norms of alcohol use (level of approval of drinking behaviors in specific situations) and the experience of alcohol-related consequences as a function of typical Student reference groups at increasing levels of similarity to the respondent: based on race, gender, Greek Status, and combinations of these dimensions, as well as parents, close friends, and the Students' own attitudes. Participants were 3753 students (61% female) from two campuses who completed an online survey. Preliminary analyses determined that there were no differences in the relationship between perceived injunctive norms and consequences across the eight student groups of varying specificity, thus all eight levels were combined into one variable of perceived student injunctive norms. However, the relationship between this variable and consequences was weaker than the perceived attitudes of more proximal referents (parents, close friends, as well as their own personal attitudes). Subsequent analyses predicting consequences while controlling for demographic variables and drinking level, revealed that perceived injunctive norms for students, parents, and close friends as well as personal attitudes each significantly predicted consequences. Results suggest an important role for perceived injunctive norms in the experiencing of consequences over and above the amount of consumption and point to types of injunctive norms feedback that might form effective interventions (i.e., incorporating close friend and parent feedback as well as general student feedback). Copyright 2010, Elsevier Science.

**Curiosity killed the cocktail? Curiosity, sensation seeking, and alcohol-related problems in college women.**

Lindgren KP; Mullins PM; Neighbors C; Blayney JA. *Addictive Behaviors* 35(5): 513-516, 2010. (20 refs.)

Curiosity, composed of two factors: exploration and absorption, has been previously associated with life satisfaction, life meaningfulness, and enhanced

positive affect. It also shares some overlap with sensation seeking, which has been linked to alcohol use and other addictive behaviors. The present research explored the association between curiosity and college women's problematic drinking in the context of sensation seeking. Participants (79 women) completed questionnaires measuring curiosity, sensation seeking, alcohol consumption, and consequences related to alcohol consumption. A zero-inflated negative binomial model indicated that curiosity and sensation seeking accounted for unique variance in alcohol-related problems after controlling for drinking. The curiosity factors had opposing relationships to alcohol-related problems: higher scores on absorption were associated with more alcohol-related problems whereas higher scores on exploration were associated with fewer alcohol-related problems. Should findings be replicated, the curiosity factors may represent additional prevention and intervention targets. Future directions for research about curiosity and drinking and for the inclusion of positive psychology constructs in addictive behaviors research are discussed. Copyright 2010, Elsevier Science.

**Sexual risk-taking behaviors, gambling, and heavy drinking among US college athletes.**

Huang JH; Jacobs DF; Derevensky JL. *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 39(3): 706-713, 2010. (36 refs.)

The purpose of this study was to empirically examine the prevalence patterns of sexual risk-taking behaviors (i.e., unprotected sex and having multiple sex partners) in relation to levels of gambling problems and heavy episodic drinking (HED) status among U.S. college athletes. Data from a representative national sample of 20,739 U.S. college athletes were derived from the first National Collegiate Athletic Association national survey of problem gambling and health-risk behaviors. Among college athletes who were sexually active during the past year, males reported significantly higher prevalence of unprotected sex (10.2%) and multiple sex partners (14.6%) than females (7.9% and 9.3%, respectively). Using the DSM-IV Gambling Screen classification, as the level of gambling severity increased, the prevalence of sexual risk-taking behaviors also increased among female athletes, but decreased among male athletes. As regards the effect of heavy drinking, while both male and female HED athletes reported elevated sexual risk-taking, the effect of HED was twice as large in females as in males. It is important to note that the definitions of sexual risk behaviors in this study took into account committed sexual relationship status; hence, the results of this study need to be interpreted with the refined sexual risk measures in mind. Further investigations are

warranted to help us better understand and explicate the interrelationships of sexual risk-taking behaviors, gambling, and heavy drinking among these college athletes. Copyright 2010, Springer.

### **Sustained parenting and college drinking in first-year students.**

Turrisi R; Ray AE. *Developmental Psychobiology* 52(3, Special Issue): 286-294, 2010. (33 refs.)

Research indicates that for many students excessive drinking in college is a continuation of high school drinking tendencies. However, there have been limited theory-driven, systematic interventions targeting students so as to prevent alcohol misuse in their transition to college. Almost all current prevention approaches tend to be focused on younger populations and college-drinking interventions are typically delivered to students when they are already on campus. These analyses draw from a novel program of research involving parents of college freshmen based on the work of Turrisi et al. [Turrisi et al. [2001] *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors*, 15(4), 366-372; Turrisi, et al. [2009] *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 7, 315-326] and focuses on examining: (1) the relationship between parenting and student drinking tendencies during the transitional period between high school and college and into the first year of college, and (2) the mediation process by which sustained parenting throughout the first year is related to college-drinking outcomes and consequences so as to inform future intervention efforts. The empirical evidence from this study suggests that sustained parental efforts have a beneficial effect on reducing high-risk drinking and preventing harm even at this late stage of late adolescent/early adult development. Copyright 2010, John Wiley & Sons.

### **Comparisons of gambling and alcohol use among college students and noncollege young people in the United States.**

Barnes GM; Welte JW; Hoffman JH; Tidwell MCO. *Journal of American College Health* 58(5): 443-452, 2010. (25 refs.)

Objective: Gambling and alcohol use were compared for college and noncollege young adults in the US population. Participants: Participants were 1,000 respondents aged 18 to 21. Methods: Data were analyzed from a representative household sample of US young people aged 14 to 21 years old. Telephone interviews were conducted between August 2005 and January 2007. Results: After taking into account gender, age, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, college student status did not predict gambling, frequent gambling, or problem gambling. In contrast,

being a college student was associated with higher levels of alcohol use and problem drinking. Being male was the strongest predictor of both problem gambling and problem drinking. Blacks were less likely than whites to drink heavily; yet they were more likely than whites to gamble heavily. Conclusion: Young males should be targeted for prevention and intervention efforts for both problem gambling and problem drinking regardless of college student status. Copyright 2010, Heldref Publications.

### **Efficacy of a web-based, tailored, alcohol prevention/intervention program for college students: Initial findings.**

Bingham CR; Barretto AI; Walton MA; Bryant CM; Shope JT; Raghunathan TE. *Journal of American College Health* 58(4): 349-356, 2010. (46 refs.)

Objective: Reduce college student at-risk drinking (ARD) using a Web-based brief motivational alcohol prevention/intervention called Michigan Prevention and Alcohol Safety for Students (M-PASS). Participants: Participants included 1,137 randomly sampled first-year college students, including 59% female, 80% white, and averaged age 18.1 years. Methods: Intervention group participants (n = 616) attended 4 online M-PASS sessions, receiving feedback tailored to individual drinking patterns and concepts from 4 behavior change theories. Control group participants (n = 521) completed a mid-phase Survey, and both groups were Surveyed at baseline and posttest. Results: Evidence of M-PASS's efficacy was found. The intervention was associated with advanced stage of change, lower tolerance of drinking and drink/driving, fewer reasons to drink, and use of more strategies to avoid ARD. Preliminary evidence of behavioral change was also found. Efficacy was greater for women than men. Conclusions: Web-based programs may be useful in reducing alcohol-related risk among college students. Copyright 2010, Heldref Pub.

### **Before the party starts: Risk factors and reasons for "Pregaming" in college students.**

Read JP; Merrill JE; Bytschkow K. *Journal of American College Health* 58(5): 461-472, 2010. (36 refs.)

Objective: "Pregaming" drinking alcohol prior to going out is believed to be common, yet empirical examinations are scarce. In this study, we examined who is at risk for pre-gaming, consequences resulting from it, and motives behind it. Participants: Participants (N = 159, 52% female) were drinkers, aged 18 to 24, recruited from introductory psychology classes. Methods: In 2005 and 2006, interview measures of drinking and pre-gaming and self-report

demographic, motivational, and reasons for pre-gaming measures were administered. Results: Two-thirds of students pre-gamed. Younger age, but not Greek affiliation, was associated with heavier pre-gaming drinking. We found minimal support for the prediction of pre-gaming by general drinking motives. Specific reasons for pre-gaming were identified, including saving money and obtaining alcohol when under 21. Conclusions: Findings highlight the risk associated with pre-gaming, due to selection effects and to event characteristics. The unique reasons for pre-gaming must be further understood and addressed in targeted interventions. Copyright 2010, Heldref Publications.

### **In-depth exploration.**

Nabors EL. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 25(6): 1043-1063, 2010. (49 refs.)

College students experience an extremely high level of violence among intimate partners during their college careers, with prevalence rates ranging between 20% and 50%. Because intimate partner violence (IPV) among college students is such a widespread problem, it is important to understand the factors that contribute to this type of abuse. Studies using a variety of samples demonstrate that drug use is one such factor. However, research to date fails to identify specific types of drugs linked to college students' use of violence against intimates. In an attempt to fill this void, this exploratory study uses data from the Relationship Characteristics Study, which was conducted in 2001 and includes a sample of 1,938 college students, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between college students' drug use and IPV perpetration than the current literature allows. Copyright 2010, Sage Publications.

### **An ecological analysis of alcohol-outlet density and campus-reported violence at 32 US colleges.**

Scribner RA; Mason KE; Simonsen NR; Theall K; Chotalia J; Johnson S et al. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs* 71(2): 184-191, 2010. (29 refs.)

Objective: The purpose of this study was to assess the relationships among campus violence, student drinking levels, and the physical availability of alcohol at off-campus outlets in a multisite design. Method: An ecological analysis of on-campus violence was conducted at 32 U.S. colleges. Dependent variables included campus-reported rates of rape, robbery, assault, and burglary obtained from a U.S. Department of Education online database for the years 2000-2004.

Measures of student alcohol use and demographics were obtained from student surveys conducted for the Social Norms Marketing Research Project from 2000 to 2004. Measures of alcohol-outlet density within 3 miles of each campus were obtained from state alcohol-licensing authorities for 2004. Results: Both on- and off-premise alcohol-outlet densities were associated with the campus rape-offense rate but not with the assault or robbery rates. Student drinking level was associated with both campus rape and assault rates but not with the campus robbery rate. The apparent effect of on-premise outlet density on campus rape-offense rates was reduced when student drinking level was included in the model, suggesting that the effect of on-premise outlet density may be mediated by student drinking level. Separate analyses revealed a similar mediational role for off-premise outlet density. Conclusions: These findings demonstrate that there is a campus-level association between sexual violence and the campus-community alcohol environment. Copyright 2010, Alcohol Research Documentation.

### **Effects of college climate on students' binge drinking: Hierarchical generalized linear model.**

Seo DC; Li KG. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine* 38(3): 262-268, 2009. (19 refs.)

Background: Few studies have investigated the effect of college-level contextual factors on students' binge drinking. Most previous studies focused on the effect of individuals' characteristics on their binge drinking. Purpose This study tested the effect of college-level contextual factors on students' binge drinking. Methods: The 2006 National College Health Assessment data collected from 76,542 students in 113 U.S. 4-year colleges were analyzed using the Hox five-step hierarchical random effects logistic regression models. Results: College-level variables, such as percentages of male students, marijuana users, Black students, and students with Greek affiliation, significantly predicted students' binge drinking above and beyond student-level predictors. An intraclass correlation was 0.10 in the null model, indicating that 10% of students' binge drinking could be explained by differences among colleges. Significant cross-level interactions were found between college-level variables and student-level variables. Conclusions: In order to reduce binge drinking in college, the findings underscore the need for active intervention within the college climate that addresses drinking. Copyright 2009, Springer.