

Selected Studies on Alcohol, Marijuana, and Social Norms and Early-Mid Adolescents

Title: **Preventing alcohol, marijuana, and cigarette use among adolescents: peer pressure resistance training versus establishing conservative norms.**

Authors: [Hansen, W.B.](#); [Graham, J.W.](#)

Source: [Prev. Med.](#), 1991, 20, 3, 414-430, UNITED STATES

Abstract: BACKGROUND. Two strategies for preventing the onset of alcohol abuse, and marijuana and cigarette use were tested in junior high schools in Los Angeles and Orange Counties, California. The first strategy taught skills to refuse substance use offers. The second strategy corrected erroneous normative perceptions about prevalence and acceptability of use among peers and established conservative groups norms regarding use. METHODS. Four experimental conditions were created by randomly assigning schools to receive (a) neither of the experimental curricula (placebo comparison), (b) resistance skill training alone, (c) normative education alone, or (d) both resistance skill training and normative education. Students were pretested prior to the program and post-tested 1 year following delivery of the program. RESULTS. There were main effects of normative education for summary measures of alcohol ($P = 0.0011$), marijuana ($P = 0.0096$), and cigarette smoking ($P = 0.0311$). All individual dichotomous measures of alcohol, marijuana, and tobacco use indicated significant reductions in onset attributable to normative education. There were no significant main effects of resistance skill training. CONCLUSION. These results suggest that establishing conservative norms is an effective strategy for preventing substance use.

URL: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/1862062>

Title: **"But Others Do It!": Do Misperceptions of Schoolmate Alcohol and Marijuana Use Predict Subsequent Drug Use Among Young Adolescents?**

Authors: [Juvonen, Jaana](#); [Martino, Steven C.](#); [Ellickson, Phyllis L.](#); [Longshore, Douglas](#)

Source: [J. Appl. Soc. Psychol.](#), 2007, 37, 4, 740-758

Abstract: We examined the effects of perceived prevalence of drug use among same-age peers on adolescents' subsequent drug use. In 7th grade, participants estimated prevalence of alcohol and marijuana use among 7th-grade students in their school, reported own use of these drugs, receipt of offers to use these drugs, and frequency of contact with peers who use these drugs. In 8th grade, participants reported their frequency of alcohol and marijuana use. Although perceived prevalence of drug use predicted subsequent alcohol and marijuana use when controlling for actual prevalence, these effects disappeared once participants' prior levels of drug use and proximal peer

contacts were considered. Implications of findings for intervention programs aiming solely to increase accuracy of perceived prevalence estimates are discussed.

URL: <http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1559-1816.2007.00183.x>

Title: **Relations between normative beliefs and initiation intentions toward cigarette, alcohol and marijuana.**

Authors: [Olds,R.S.](#); [Thombs,D.L.](#); [Tomasek,J.R.](#)

Source: [Journal of Adolescent Health](#), 2005, 37, 1, 75

Abstract: PURPOSE: To examine the relations between normative beliefs and intentions to initiate cigarette, alcohol, and marijuana use among adolescents reporting no prior use. METHODS: An anonymous questionnaire was administered to 6,594 seventh- to twelfth-grade students in northeast Ohio. Separate analyses were conducted on sub-samples of respondents reporting no prior use of each substance. Within each of these 3 sub-samples, respondents were classified as holding high-risk intentions if they reported that they intended to begin using that particular substance within the next 6 months or were "not sure" of their intentions. Those reporting that they did not intend to start using a substance were classified as holding low-risk intentions. Multivariate logistic regression analyses examined the relations between normative beliefs and intention status (low- vs. high-risk), while accounting for socio-demographic characteristics. RESULTS: Across all 3 substances, normative beliefs were stronger predictors of intention status than socio-demographic variables. Higher levels of perceived acceptability and perceived prevalence were associated with holding high-risk intentions. Normative belief measures assessing close friend and sibling reference groups were much more important in explaining intention status than those assessing other reference groups (e.g., same age peers). CONCLUSIONS: Among adolescents with no prior use, normative beliefs concerning close friends and siblings may play an important role in the catalysis and support of intentions to initiate substance use. These findings challenge the utility of primary prevention strategies that provide normative feedback based on rates of substance use among distal reference groups.

URL: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/15963910>

Book Title: **The imaginary lives of peers: Patterns of substance use and misperceptions of norms among secondary school students**

Authors: [Perkins,H.Wesley](#); [Craig,David W.](#)

Source: 2003, 209-223, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA, US

Abstract: Reveals the pervasive pattern of misperception regarding peer tobacco, alcohol, and illicit drug norms found among middle school and high school students across the nation. The data were collected in a Web-based survey conducted in 28 schools in 5 states. It is argued that the dramatic potential for introducing the social norms model in secondary education is made apparent by the prevalence of misperceived norms at these earlier age levels.

Series Title: The social norms approach to preventing school and college age substance abuse:

A handbook for educators, counselors, and clinicians.

Publisher: Jossey-Bass

Place of
Publication: San Francisco, CA, US

ISSN/ISBN: 0-7879-6459-X

Title, **Are high school students accurate or clueless in estimating substance use
Primary: among peers?**

Authors,
Primary: [Page,Randy M.](#); [Hammermeister,Jon](#); [Roland,Michelle](#)

Source: [Adolescence](#), 2002, 37, 147, 567(7)

Abstract: The purpose of this study was to assess adolescents' estimations of the prevalence of alcohol and other drug use and to examine the consistency between these estimations and reported use. A survey was administered to 223 students in three northwestern U.S. high schools. Results showed that students in each of the three high schools grossly overestimated the prevalence of substance use when compared to self-reports of use. Still, students were not entirely clueless about the relative normativeness of substance use when comparing estimates and rates of use among the three schools. The school with the highest estimated prevalence of a particular substance use behavior generally also had the highest self-reported use of that same substance. These findings imply the need for high school personnel to provide students with accurate information about the actual prevalence of substance use within each school.

URL: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12458693>

Title: **Program integrity as a moderator of prevention program effectiveness: results
for fifth-grade students in the adolescent alcohol prevention trial.**

Authors: [Hansen,W.B.](#); [Graham,J.W.](#); [Wolkenstein,B.H.](#); [Rohrbach,L.A.](#)

Source: [J.Stud.Alcohol](#), 1991, 52, 6, 568-579

Abstract: This study reports the results of a test of the quality of program delivery (program integrity) as a variable that may moderate the effectiveness of alcohol prevention programs. Two theory-based programs, Resistance Training and Normative Education, were delivered to fifth-grade students who were then tested on program relevant mediating variables. Resistance Training was found to improve students' knowledge of peer pressure resistance strategies, their performance on a behavioral assessment of peer pressure resistance skills and the manifestation of their future intentions to drink alcohol. Normative Education was found to improve students' perceptions of a conservative norm regarding alcohol use, facilitated their belief that refusing unwanted offers to drink alcohol could be easily accomplished and reduced their perceptions of the prevalence of alcohol use. Program integrity was measured by program specialists who taught the programs to students and by trained observers. Ratings of program integrity were found to significantly moderate outcomes for three of seven mediating variables. Affected were knowledge of peer pressure

resistance strategies, behavioral pressure resistance skills and perceived self-efficacy. These results suggest that the quality of program delivery and reception may play an important moderating function on prevention program effectiveness.

Book Title: **Using social norms to reduce alcohol and tobacco use in two midwestern high schools**

Authors: [Haines, Michael P.](#); [Barker, Gregory P.](#); [Rice, Richard](#)

Source: 2003, 235-244, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA, US

Abstract: Describes the intervention conducted at 2 Midwestern high schools using social norms media to significantly reduce cigarette smoking and drinking among 10th grade students during a 2-yr period. This project was unique among social norms interventions in that it used media to change parents' and teachers' perceptions of students as well as the students' perceptions of their peers.

Editors: [Perkins, H. Wesley](#)

Series Title: The social norms approach to preventing school and college age substance abuse: A handbook for educators, counselors, and clinicians.

Publisher: Jossey-Bass

Place of Publication: San Francisco, CA, US

ISSN/ISBN: 0-7879-6459-X

Title: **The effect of early cognitions on cigarette and alcohol use during adolescence**

Authors: Andrews, J. A., Hampson, S. E., Barckley, M., Gerrard, M., & Gibbons, F. X.

Source: Psychology of Addictive Behaviors, 2008, 22(1), 96-106.

DOI: 10.1037/0893-164X.22.1.96

Abstract: The present study predicts cigarette and alcohol use in adolescence from the development of children's cognitions in the elementary years. Using latent growth modeling, the authors examined a model using data from 712 participants in the Oregon Youth Substance Use Project, who were in the 2nd through 5th grade at the 1st assessment and followed for 6 annual or semiannual assessments over 7 years. Growth in children's prototypes and subjective norms in the elementary years (Times 1 through 4) were related to their substance use in adolescence (Time 6) through their willingness and intentions (Time 5) to smoke and drink. Across the sample, for both substances, the intercept and slope of prototypes were either indirectly related to use through willingness or directly related to use. Both the intercept and slope of subjective norms were indirectly related to use of both substances through both willingness and intentions and directly related to cigarette use. Results suggest that elementary children have measurable cognitions regarding substance use that develop during the elementary years and predict use later in adolescence. These findings emphasize the need for prevention programs targeted at changing children's social images of substance users and encouraging more accurate perceptions of peers' use.

URL: <http://psycnet.apa.org/journals/adb/22/1/96.html>

Title: **Trajectories of peer social influences as long-term predictors of drug use from early through late adolescence**

Authors: Duan, L., Chou, C., Andreeva, V., & Pentz, M.

Source: Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 2009 38(3), 454-465

Abstract: The present study analyzed the long-term effects of perceived friend use and perceived peer use on adolescents' own cigarette, alcohol and marijuana use as a series of parallel growth curves that were estimated in two developmental pieces, representing middle and high school ($N = 1,040$). Data were drawn from a large drug abuse prevention trial, the Midwestern Prevention Project (MPP). Results showed that both perceived peer and friend cigarette use predicted own cigarette use within and across the adolescent years. For own alcohol and marijuana use, peer and friend influences were limited primarily to middle school. The findings suggest that strategies for counteracting peer and friend influences should receive early emphasis in prevention programs that are targeted to middle school. The findings also raise the question of whether cigarette use may represent a symbol of peer group identity that is unlike other drug use, and once formed, may have lasting adverse effects through the adolescent years.

URL: <http://www.springerlink.com/content/y05807k553537rnq/fulltext.pdf>

Title: **An Evaluation of the Small Group Norms Challenging Model: Changing Substance Use Misperceptions in Five Urban High Schools**

Authors: Ott,Carol H.; Doyle,Lynn H.

Source: The High School Journal, 2005, 88, 3, 45-55, Univ of North Carolina Press, US

Abstract: According to social norms theory, when high school students overestimate the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs (ATOD) by their peers, they tend to use more themselves. The purpose of this study was to determine whether these over estimations (misperceptions) could be corrected through a similar age peer-to-peer interactive social norms approach based on the Small Groups Social Norms-Challenging Model. The sample included 414 adolescents in health classes in five urban high schools. Baseline data were retrieved from the school district's Youth Risk Behavioral Survey (YRBS). Perception change was measured with items adapted from the YRBS. Results indicate a significant decrease in misperceptions from pretest to posttest. Student responses to open-ended questions indicate increased awareness of ATOD issues, positive plans for behavioral change, and positive program evaluation. Implications for use of the social norms approach is presented for high school teachers and administrators.

URL: <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=psyh&AN=2005-01791-005&site=ehost-live>

The following sources may also be of use to you:

1) Evanston Township High School's "Strength in Numbers" campaign:

Evanston Township High School has approximately 3,033 students (2000-2001 enrollment figures) and 313 teachers and administrators. In April, 2001, Evanston

Township High School (ETHS), in collaboration with the Evanston Substance Abuse Prevention Council, began a social norms marketing campaign targeted primarily at reducing the use of alcohol and tobacco among ETHS students.

<http://www.socialnorms.org/CaseStudies/evanstonhs.php>

2) DeKalb and Sycamore High Schools (DCP/SAFE):

In 1998, DeKalb County (IL), in partnership with the local DeKalb and Sycamore high schools, began an intervention using the social norms approach. Although ultimately targeted at DeKalb and Sycamore high school students, this intervention featured three interrelated normative message campaigns aimed at: 1) Students, 2) Parents, and 3) Teachers.

<http://www.socialnorms.org/CaseStudies/dcpinter.php>

3) The Power of Choice

The Power of Choice is a social norms campaign that has been running since 2001 in the Illinois high school communities of Naperville School District #203 and Indian Prairie School District #204. The Power of Choice campaign targets both students and their parents. The goals of the Power of Choice are to: 1) Support the majority of students who are making healthy choices, 2) Correct misperceptions about underage drinking and tobacco use, 3) Reduce underage drinking and tobacco use, 4) Reinforce positive parenting habits. The website hosts examples of survey results as well as posters, videos, brochures and other useful materials.

LINK: <http://www.thepowerofchoice.info/aboutus.htm>