

Selected Studies for Social Norms and Substance Abuse

Title: **Students' estimates of the prevalence of drug use: Evidence for a false consensus effect**

Authors: [Wolfson, Sandy](#)

Source: [Psychology of Addictive Behaviors](#), 2000, 14, 3, 295-298, Educational Publishing Foundation

Abstract: False consensus, or the tendency to overestimate the extent to which others share one's own attitudes and behaviors, was investigated in a study of 348 university students classified as non-drug users, cannabis-only users, or amphetamine and cannabis users. Participants estimated the prevalence of cannabis and amphetamine use among students. Cannabis and amphetamine users made significantly higher estimates of cannabis use among students than did nonusers, whereas amphetamine users gave significantly higher estimates of amphetamine use than nonusers and cannabis-only users. Correlations between estimates of use among friends and other students were significantly positive for both drugs. The results suggest that students are motivated to overestimate the commonality of their own position on drug use and that their estimates may also be influenced by selective exposure.

URL: <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=pdh&AN=adb-14-3-295&site=ehost-live>

Title: **Beliefs and social norms about ephedra onset and perceived addiction among college male and female athletes**

Authors: [Peters, R.J., Jr.](#); [Adams, L.F.](#); [Barnes, J.B.](#); [Hines, L.A.](#); [Jones, D.E.](#); [Krebs, K.M.](#); [Kelder, S.H.](#)

Source: [Subst. Use Misuse](#), 2005, 40, 1, 125-135

Abstract: 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.

URL: <http://informahealthcare.com/doi/abs/10.1081/JA-200030517>

Title: **Differences Between Actual and Perceived Student Norms: An Examination of Alcohol Use, Drug Use, and Sexual Behavior**

Authors: [Martens,Matthew P.](#); [Page,Jennifer C.](#); [Mowry,Emily S.](#)

Source: [Journal of American College Health](#), 2006, 54, 5, 295-300

Abstract:

Researchers in the social norms area have previously focused primarily on alcohol consumption, paying comparatively less attention to drug use and sexual behavior. The major purposes of this study were to (1) compare perceptions of peer norms in the areas of alcohol use, drug use, and sexual behavior with actual behavior and (2) determine if a relationship existed between a student's perceptions of normative behavior and a student's actual behavior. Participants were 833 college students at a large, public university in the Northeast. Study participants overestimated alcohol use, drug use, and sexual behavior among their peers. There was also a positive relationship between actual behavior and perceived peer norms, although the effect sizes for all behaviors were small to moderate. The authors provide further support for the tenets of social norms theory and suggest that social norms interventions are appropriate both campus-wide and to targeted high-risk groups.

URL: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16539222>

Title: **Substance Abuse and Dependency Risk: The Role of Peer Perceptions, Marijuana Involvement, and Attitudes toward Substance Use among College Students**

Authors: Todd F. Lewis and A. Keith Mobley

Source: [Journal of Drug Education](#), 2010, 40(3), 299-314

Abstract: Many college students are using substances at levels consistent with Substance Abuse or Dependence, yet little explanation for this phenomenon exists. The aim of this study was to explore a risk factor profile that best separates those with low and high potential for having a Substance Use Disorder (SUD). A discriminant function analysis revealed that participants with a high probability of having a SUD misperceive others' alcohol and marijuana use to a greater extent than those with a low probability of having a SUD. Implications for educators and counselors on college campuses are discussed.

URL: <http://baywood.metapress.com/media/d8pnthquvgq914kmexej/contributions/p/2/3/3/p233mr8u3q034264.pdf>

The following sites may also be of some use to you:

1) **Project Northland:** The project focuses on trying to delay the age when young people begin drinking, reduce alcohol among young people who have already tried it and limit the number of drug related problems. Project Northland incorporates evidence-based strategies such as correcting misperceptions of norms, increasing perception of personal risk, life-skills training, and promoting pro-social norms. The organization also teaches youth decision-making skills, assists in strengthening parenting skills, teaches youth interpersonal skills and provides information on substance abuse.

<http://www.hazelden.org/web/go/projectnorthland>

2) **National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHSDA) 1999:** SAMHSA's national survey on drug abuse

<http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/nhsda/2kdetailedtabs/Preface.htm>

3) **National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA):** This page includes statistics on drug abuse, drug profiles, and special population issues.

<http://www.nida.nih.gov/infobox/infoboxindex.html>

4) Multiple studies in H. W. Perkins (ed.), *The Social Norms Approach to Preventing School and College Age Substance Abuse: A Handbook for Educators, Counselors, and Clinicians*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.