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**BIG NEWS**

**State Receives \$11.7 Million Grant to Battle Drug Use, Build Healthy Communities**

**SAMHSA Administrator Charles G. Curie, a native Hoosier, presented the check to Governor Daniels on August 22, 2005.**

**The funds will be used to foster sustainable substance abuse prevention programs and services.**

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**ACROSS OUR DESKS TO YOURS**

**Adolescents' drug use and its relationship with beliefs on drug use and perception of peer approval**

*Swati Raychowdhury, PhD, MPH, Mi Kyung Jun, PhD, MPH, and E. Lisako Jones, PhD, MPH*

**Abstract**

Researchers and practitioners continue to explore the nature of adolescent drug use and the correlation of peer perceptions and belief in the harmful risks associated with the use of alcohol and other drugs. Youth prevention has focused on efforts to determine how adolescents perceive harming themselves or others who use drugs, and the extent to which adolescent drug use is associated with peer influence. Nationally focused research efforts find associations between social influences and beliefs associated with the susceptibility for drug use. Local level data was needed in order to aid state and community drug abuse programs. Data was collected from 141,342 youth in grades 6 through 12 in 156 separate communities or school corporations in the state of Indiana. A survey was administered from which results could be used to draw conclusions about alcohol and drug use throughout the state. Results indicated that students were less

likely to participate in drug use if their beliefs indicated a high risk of individuals harming themselves if they used drugs (i.e., cigarette use  $r=-.140$ ,  $p=.000$ ; alcohol use  $r=-.109$ ,  $p=.000$ ). Results also found that students who had a negative perception of peer approval on drug use were less likely to use drugs (i.e., marijuana use  $r=-.212$ ,  $p=.000$ ; cocaine use  $r=-.137$ ,  $p=.000$ ). Findings suggest that youth intervention programs should be directed towards peer influence and perceived risk educational components to further influence youth behaviors with alcohol and other drug use.

**Background**

Youth prevention has focused on efforts to determine how adolescents perceive the use of drugs as related to self-harm. Efforts have also sought to clarify the extent to which adolescent drug use is associated with peer influence. Research efforts have yielded associations among social influences and beliefs associated with

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**Upcoming Events**

**September 12–15**

- **Shelbyville, IN** Prevention Drug Abuse Training. Indiana Association of Prevention Professionals. [www.preventionprofessionals.org](http://www.preventionprofessionals.org)

**September 29–30**

- **San Francisco, CA** CADCA's Core Competencies that Lead to Successful and Sustainable Coalitions. <http://cadca.org>

**October 2–5**

- **Indianapolis, IN** Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse and Violence Prevention in Higher Education. <http://www.edc.org/hec/natl/2005/>

**October 17 - 23**

- **Crown Point, IN** The Grantsmanship Center. <http://www.tgci.com/>

**October 24–26**

- **Indianapolis, IN** Fundraising for Small Nonprofits. <http://appserv.iu.edu/cop/course.asp>

**October 27–28**

- **Indianapolis, IN** Proposal Writing <http://appserv.iu.edu/cop/course.asp>

**November 5– 9**

- **New Orleans, LA** 133<sup>rd</sup> American Public Health Association Annual Meeting, November 5-9, 2005. [www.apha.org/meetings](http://www.apha.org/meetings)

**November 17–18**

- **Indianapolis, IN** IYT's 2005 Kids Count in Indiana. [www.iyi.org](http://www.iyi.org)

**For a complete list of events, visit:  
[www.drugs.indiana.edu](http://www.drugs.indiana.edu)**

**Adolescents’ drug use and its relationship with beliefs on drug use and perception of peer approval** *(continued from page 1)*

the susceptibility for drug use. Similarly, research findings also indicate that adolescents are at heightened risk for substance use, but only if they reported themselves to be open to peer influence.

When testing for peer-group influences on the behaviors of drug and alcohol use, cigarette smoking, church going, and the likelihood of dropping out of high school, results indicate strong evidence of peer-group effects at the school level for all activities. Findings also reveal that peer drug use usually predicts self-reported drug use. When testing for peer-group influences on the behaviors of drug and alcohol use, cigarette smoking, church going, and the likelihood of dropping out of high school, results indicate strong evidence of peer-group effects at the school level for all activities. Findings also reveal that peer drug use usually predicts self-reported drug use.

**Purpose**

To investigate the nature of adolescent drug use and the associations among peer perceptions, and beliefs in the harmful risks associated with the use of alcohol and other drugs.

**Methods**

- N = 141,342
- Indiana students 6th through 12th grades
- Collected from 156 communities of school corporations throughout the state of Indiana during 2003 spring
- Paper-and-pencil based questionnaires administered during class time as groups
- Confidential and anonymous surveys

**Instrument**

Indiana Prevention Resource Center’s *2003 Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Use (ATOD) Survey*.

- 7-Items of beliefs subscale related to perceived risk of physical or other harm from drug use
- Four point Likert format ranging from “no risk” to “great risk”
- Internal consistency: Cronbach’s alpha=0.87
- 7-items of perceived peer approval/disapproval
- Five point Likert format ranging from “strongly approve” to “strongly disapprove”
- Internal consistency: Cronbach’s alpha=0.93

**Results**

- There were negative correlations between beliefs and annual and monthly use of various drugs – youth who believed that drugs were risky were less likely to use drugs.

Table 1. Correlations between beliefs & perceptions and monthly use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

	Cigarettes	Alcohol	Marijuana	Inhalants
<b>Beliefs</b> (Pearson r)	-0.278	-0.282	-0.287	-0.163
(P Value)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
<b>Percept.</b> (Pearson r)	-0.388	-0.431	-0.416	-0.215
(P Value)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

Table 2. Correlations between beliefs & perceptions and annual use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

	Cigarettes	Alcohol	Marijuana	Inhalants
<b>Beliefs</b> (Pearson r)	-0.278	-0.282	-0.287	-0.163
(P Value)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
<b>Percept.</b> (Pearson r)	-0.388	-0.431	-0.416	-0.215
(P Value)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

- There were negative correlations between peer approval and annual and monthly used of various drugs – youth who perceived that their peers did not approve drug use were less likely to use drugs.

Perceived risk and peer influence educational components should be developed to prevent adolescents from tobacco, alcohol and other drug use.

**Limitations**

*Non-sampling errors*

- Coding mistakes
- Missing data

*Sampling errors*

- Location of chosen population
- Reported drug use may vary from one sample from another, due to environmental, social differences, etc.
- Average estimate of sampling error for each grade (6th-12th) < ±1% within a 95% confidence level

**References**

Caldwell, L.L. & Darling, N. (1999). Leisure context, parental control, and resistance to peer pressure as predictors of adolescent partying and substance use: an ecological perspective.; *Journal of leisure research, 31 (1), 57-77.*  
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