Drugs in city neighborhoods

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Drugs in City Neighborhoods Drugs in city neighborhoods are an influence on the youth. The youth are drawn into becoming drug sellers. The drug activity has found a place in many distressed areas and as a result, has become a common source of income. Studies of understanding the social control in urban neighborhoods have been existent for over a century yet understanding the nature of the social relations that exert the current social behavior is still limited. Studies also show that urban residents within various states have been struggling with the issues of drug selling in their neighborhoods; especially in the poorer, disadvantaged urban neighborhoods. The Sacramento Neighborhood Alcohol Prevention Project (SNAPP) study was conducted to show this. The study displayed those who were more likely to become a target of social control. Many adolescents fall victim to their surroundings and adapt. On the other hand while many view inner cities in crime and drug infested areas, there are cities that exist and have reestablished themselves as safe neighborhoods by creating neighborhood patrols. ADOLESCENT DRUG USE AND THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD Drug selling exists in areas that are predominantly minority and low-income neighborhoods that have high crime rates and drinking-related issues. As a result, adolescents who live in these neighborhoods are found to be influenced into substance use patterns in various ways. Neighborhoods with conditions such as single-parent homes and homes with high poverty conditions make it a risky place for adolescents to grow. High crime neighborhoods that have adolescent alcohol and drug use make conditions very stressful for the youth. As a result, the youth are influenced. They fall victim and adapt to their surroundings becoming a product of their

environment by either selling or using drugs. In the city of Phoenix, the crime rate varies per neighborhood. There are neighborhoods that have high gang-related crimes and other neighborhoods where drugs are easier to get in because of informal social control. With this, children are more than likely to witness those who are drunk or high. In addition, because drugs are easier to get into the neighborhoods, adolescents are more than likely to be exposed to the offering of hard drugs and will likely smoke marijuana at school. With no positive influences outside of the home due to neighborhood conditions, the only exposure is how the majority of the youth is making a living by selling drugs or drinking alcohol. Because these neighborhoods are unstable, people are moving in and out quite often and no one truly gets the chance to know one another, which is another contributing factor to adolescents falling victim to his or her surroundings. CONNECTIONS BETWEEN SOCIAL TIES AND WILLINGNESS TO INTERVENE The connections between social ties and willingness to intervene varied by the types of intervening behaviors. This included using informal or formal interventions, the nature and risk of the situation and the strength of the connection of social ties. With drug selling, there is the direct intervention by notifying parents and physically punishing the parties involved, but only for those with intimate ties to the situation. (Family or close friend relation) In this case, intimate ties resulted in ignoring the activity as well as, weaker ties or no ties also, resulted in adults ignoring the situation by minding their own business. Those that did not intervene directly, went about by calling the police against outsiders. Even though adults are fearful with intervening in drug dealing, there are many who are friends with the perpetrators and their families. For those neighborhoods that

do not have those ties, there is the desire to clean up so the authorities are called on. The intimate ties were related to young children who were actively intervening to stop the fight between the weak ties that ignored the situation and those with no ties who called the police. The fighting between the teens and older youth had the connection between ties and intervening where some adults with close ties became involved in the violence. According to what the youth has reported, intimate ties would more than likely result in informal social control, while when ties were weak or nonexistent, formal social control was more common. Depending on the situation ties also have a downside, for it can lead to the identity of those who have reported the drug activity to the authorities, which can result in retaliation. In addition, gossips between neighbors identify snitches. DRUG SELLING Urban residents have been dealing with the issues of open-air drug markets in their neighborhoods. Drug activity has become institutionalized and the business is an adaptation to economic opportunities for the youth in distressed communities. Local social networks through the youth draw them into the drug business. Their perception of adults' responses to drug selling is that by using threat, violence, fear and intimidation will deter residents from reporting them by staying out of their business and keeping their mouths shut. Everyone adapts to the existence of drug selling along with the stress and dangers associated with it and to avoid witnessing anything, many of people stay home and mind their business, out of fear. The youth also believe that even if particular residents did decide to take action, their chances were slim that their efforts would put a stop to the drug selling business. The reason is there are those who have family members in the

business who would rather not see them locked up or arrested, which is another reason for ignoring the drug activity that surrounds them in their neighborhood. In addition, they acknowledge the possibility of getting physically harmed for notifying the police or openly preventing the drug selling. Nevertheless, there are a percentage of adults who will report drug activity to the police from time to time. STUDIES Studies show that urban residents within various states have been struggling with the issues of drug selling in their neighborhoods. For example, two neighborhoods in Sacramento were chosen for the Sacramento Neighborhood Alcohol Prevention Project (SNAPP). Both neighborhoods in Sacramento were selected as the intervention sites because both were ethnically and economically diverse as well as had high crime rates and alcohol related issues. This project focused on those individuals aging from 15 through 29 years of age who had alcohol related issues and its purpose was to help minimize the accessibility of alcohol; therefore reducing alcohol consumption. SNAPP is using the environment intervention to reduce the formal, informal and social access to alcohol. The model below indicates the roles played in the intervention program involving the reduction of alcohol access. SOURCE: Gruenewald, P., Lee, J., and. Remer, L., Treno, A. 197(11). PROJECT INTERVENTIONS Project lead agencies and advisory committees worked together to mobilize the neighborhoods in support of the SNAPP project. Members from both geographical areas were chosen to work on this project to ensure intervention implementation to the project design. The research staff at the Prevention Research Center worked with both committees. Each committee consisted of law enforcement officers, medical

service providers, alcohol-beverage control agents, community activists, youth, parents and met on a monthly basis at each site to collect data for the evaluation. The graph below shows the relationship between alcohol problems and alcohol outlets as a result of the SNAPP's intervention. TABLE 1 Descriptive information for dependent and independent measures, by study area. At large South North Assaults, per 1, 000 population Crime incidents 8. 46 9. 77 12. 58 Emergency medical service events 3. 28 5. 1 6. 47 Sociodemographics, % Black 17. 2 17. 4 19. 5 Hispanic 20. 8 39. 3 31. 0 Persons living in poverty 18. 3 35. 6 33. 0 Alcohol outlets, per roadway mile Bars 0. 029 0. 057 0. 052 Restaurants 0. 231 0. 216 0. 187 Off premise 0. 133 0. 362 0. 245 SOURCE: Gruenewald, P., Lee, J., and. Remer, L., Treno, A. 197(11). TABLE 3 Comparison of pre- and post-intervention premise survey results for both off-premise (apparent minor) and on-premise (pseudo-intoxicated patron) surveys. SOURCE: Gruenewald, P., Lee, J., and. Remer, L., Treno, A. 197(11). One-third reduction in sales to apparent minors in the South site relative to baseline (from 49% to 32%) compared with increases of 205% in the North (from 20% to 61%) and 23. 7% (from 38% to 47%) in the at-large area. Increases in service to pseudo-intoxicated patrons in the South, North and at-large areas of 26. 5%, 8. 8% and 46. 0%, respectively, between Waves 1 and 2. Between Waves 2 and 3 we found decreases of 28. 1%, 59%, and 76. 6%, respectively for sales to apparent minors and of 3. 5%, 5. 7% and 17. 4% for Pseudo Intoxicated Patron Surveys (Gruenewald, P., Lee, J., and. Remer, L., Treno, A., 2007). SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES A Latino middle school in Phoenix, AZ was monitored, whose neighborhood had the influences of alcohol, marijuana and cigarettes. Family structure, ethnic,

violent crime, socioeconomic composition, neighborhood immigrant, residential instability reflected the different effects of substance abuse. Different ethnicities varied within the results of substance abuse depending on what their upbringings were, family values and the influences they were exposed to in the neighborhoods they lived in. The study tests were based on the youth of various different ethnic backgrounds (Mexican and Non-Hispanic Whites. TABLE 2 Correlations between Recent Substance Use and Study Variables Neighborhood predictors Alcohol Cigarettes Marijuana Mexican background 0. 027 0. 037 0. 024 Recent immigrants -0. 027 0. 012 -0. 009 Officially poor 0. 012 0. 055 0. 053 Total violent crime rate 0. 059 0. 018 0. 031 Different residence five years ago -0. 066 -0. 001 -0. 046 Single-mother families 0. 003 0. 017 0. 043 Non-Hispanic White -0. 054 -0. 056 -0. 068 SOURCE: Kulis, S., Marsiglia, F., Nieri, T., Sicotte, D. 273-301. Most students lived in neighborhoods that were predominantly Mexican heritage but the number of Mexican residents ranged from 7% to 77%. Residential instability was also normal. The neighborhoods where most students lived in, more than half of the residence lived in different residences, five years prior yet; there were no neighborhoods where immigrants were predominant. Granted, the neighborhoods which the students lived in had high rates of poverty. The rates varied from less than half to five times the national rate. Crime rates and the proportion of single-mother families varied from very low to high. STRATEGIES FOR DOING AWAY WITH DRUG SELLING There is a growing realization that the best strategies for fighting crime in residential neighborhoods are those where the police work closely with resident organizations. These strategies require residents to believe that there are

others in their neighborhood who are committed to a crime free environment. This involves changing the daily work for the police to include investigating problems as well as incidents in the neighborhood. Recognizing the public opinion in regard as a threat to the community and defining it as a problem is another step to take and deploy more foot patrol and police officers in high-crime neighborhoods. This can make substantial headway against crime. Community volunteers who work together and with the local police force can contribute to deterring street crime. Residents can be armed with video cameras and walkie-talkies, film drug transactions and write down license plate numbers. Then later on relate the information to the police. Additionally, the presence of foot patrols warns drug dealers and other criminals that the neighborhood has been put " off-limits" which deters the drug sellers. The perspectives explored in this essay can assist us with addressing the urban youth issues that contribute to the dynamic nature of the informal social relations. Urban neighborhoods have high rates of not only drugs, but also violence that are connected to the adapted way of living. How do citizens and authority figures begin to address the problem? The first step is to break down the barriers between the citizens and the law enforcement agencies. The difficulty of this approach remains unknown, for it can be costly, labor intensive and politically challenging. In the end, if everyone comes together changes can happen which will result in the way the youth live today.