

Research paper on social norms paper

[Health & Medicine](#), [Alcoholism](#)



Effect on the Youth category of campus substance abuse

Crime in many campuses is mainly related to acts of drinking and other substance abuse. Most of the students that have been victims of crime in campuses tend to report of being intoxicated at the time the crime was committed. Further, substance abuse increases the aggressiveness of the students who in the end may engage in violent activities such as fights, looting and destruction of property. In cases of intoxicated women students, the situation may involve sexual assault and rape. Additionally, campus students are more likely to be involved in risky sexual behavior that may contribute to transmission of sexually transmitted infections. Academically, students that have excessive substance use may perform poorly. This may be caused because of absenteeism, not completing coursework or students may develop substance abuse medical conditions that may inhibit their participation in academic activity.

New substance abusers in a campus environment usually take a different path when abusing the drugs. This starts through blending with the rest of students, which then translates into engaging in different behaviors. The new users may even become excessive substance abusers than their counterparts. In the beginning, consumption of drugs and alcohol is minimal. However, once the abuser has access to freedom that he or she never enjoyed the substance abuse increases tremendously. One of the most contributing factors is the access to sexual activity. Alcohol, for instance, tends to impair the judgment of an individual in making the right decision. This scenario increases the need for a new alcohol user to increase uptake to have more encounters that are sexual.

Traditional approaches to drug and substance abuse prevention such as the normal health education have been ineffective in reducing substance abuse in campuses (McAlaney, Bewick, and Hughes, 2011). These outdated health education approaches have been based on using fear as a way of reducing the substance abuse. The prevention of substance abuse is effectively addressed using the social norms approach, which focuses on changing the behavior of students prior to starting engaging in substance abuse (McAlaney, Bewick, and Hughes, 2011). Most of the substance abuse in campuses is because of peer influence from students. The social norms approach recognizes that substance abuse in campuses is attributed to misperceptions brought about by peer influences. According to Pischke et al., (2012), students misjudge the regularity and amount of alcohol consumption of their peers. Therefore, the student may feel provoked to define what extent of heavy drinking needs to be and in the process increases his or her own alcohol consumption rate. In a way, one can say that substance abuse in campuses is a form of competition to see who is stronger.

The social norms approach is much more effective because it uses the susceptibility of students to peer influence (Pischke et al, 2012). Further, presenting students information on the actual levels of substance abuse in the campus is more likely to influence them rather than making non-evidenced based claims. Information based on facts is extremely valuable as this makes the students aware of the actual danger and effects that may result to substance abuse. This makes the social norms approach to be applied especially to new students in campuses whose behavior can be modified.

References

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