

Selected Studies for Social Norms and Alcohol and Athletes

Title: **Social norms and alcohol consumption among intercollegiate athletes: The role of athlete and non-athlete reference groups**

Authors: [Dams-O'Connor, Kristen](#); [Martin, Jessica L.](#); [Martens, Matthew P.](#)

Source: [Addictive Behaviors](#), 2007, 32, 11, 2657-2666

Abstract: The relationship between perceived alcohol use among peers and personal alcohol use was assessed in a sample of collegiate athletes. Data were collected on 109 intercollegiate athletes during the competitive season and 119 athletes during the off-season at a large, state university in the Northeastern United States. Participants were asked to estimate the normative alcohol use of four reference groups (closest athlete friend, closest non-athlete friend, typical athlete, and typical non-athlete). Results of both in-season and off-season analyses indicated that athletes estimated that others consumed more drinks per week than they did, and perceptions of these social norms predicted personal use. Although the typical athlete norm emerged as the strongest predictor of personal alcohol use, the relative strength of the relationships between individual behavior and the athlete and non-athlete norms varied according to seasonal status. Results have implications for the content and timing of prevention and intervention programs aimed at reducing high-risk alcohol use among intercollegiate athletes.

URL: <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/B6VC9-4NN6TNJ-1/2/d1aa6ac05261d2f72af13a9698101c7a>

Title: **A successful social norms campaign to reduce alcohol misuse among college student-athletes.**

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

Source: [J. Stud. Alcohol](#), 2006, 67, 6, 880-889

Abstract: OBJECTIVE: This study examines the impact of a social norms intervention to reduce alcohol misuse among student-athletes. The intervention was designed to reduce harmful misperceptions of peer norms and, in turn, reduce personal risk. METHOD: A comprehensive set of interventions communicating accurate local norms regarding alcohol use targeted student-athletes at an undergraduate college. An anonymous survey of all student-athletes was conducted annually for 3 years (2001: n = 414, 86% response; 2002: n = 373, 85% response; and 2003: n = 353, 79% response). A pre/post comparison of student-athletes was conducted separately for new and ongoing athletes at each time point to isolate any general time period effects from intervention effects. A cross-sectional analysis of student-athletes with varying degrees of program exposure was also

performed. RESULTS: The intervention substantially reduced misperceptions of frequent alcohol consumption and high-quantity social drinking as the norm among student-athlete peers. During this same time period, frequent personal consumption, high-quantity consumption, high estimated peak blood alcohol concentrations during social drinking, and negative consequences all declined by 30% or more among ongoing student-athletes after program exposure. In contrast, no significant differences across time were seen for new student-athletes each year with low program exposure. Among student-athletes with the highest level of program exposure, indications of personal misuse were at least 50% less likely on each measure when compared with student-athletes with the lowest level of program exposure. CONCLUSIONS: This social norms intervention was highly effective in reducing alcohol misuse in this high-risk collegiate subpopulation by intensively delivering data-based messages about actual peer norms through multiple communication venues.

Title: **Effects of a social norm feedback campaign on the drinking norms and behavior of Division I student-athletes.**

Authors: [Thombs,D.L.](#); [Hamilton,M.J.](#)

Source: [J Drug Educ.](#), 2002, 32, 3, 227-244

Abstract: Social norm feedback is a promising strategy for reducing alcohol misuse on college campuses. However, little is known about the impact of these interventions on at-risk populations, such as student-athletes. This study examined the effects of a campus-wide media campaign on Division I student-athletes at three universities. A discriminate function analysis revealed that a composite measure of perceived campus drinking norms distinguished between two campaign exposure groups. With the exception of one perceived norm measure (closest friends), the campaign-exposed group reported more conservative estimates of alcohol use in peers. However, there was no evidence that the campaign had reduced alcohol use. The inability of the campaign to reduce perceptions of alcohol use among one's closest friends may have accounted for the lack of change in drinking behavior. Discussion is directed to the potential limitations of using social norm feedback campaigns to reduce alcohol misuse in high-risk groups, such as student-athletes.

Title: **A systematic review of college student-athlete drinking: Prevalence rates, sport-related factors, and interventions**

Authors: [Martens,M.P.](#); [Dams-O'Connor,K.](#); [Beck,N.C.](#)

Source: [J.Subst.Abuse Treat.](#), 2006, 31, 3, 305-316, United States

Abstract: Alcohol use among college students has become a considerable public health problem. Among this group, intercollegiate athletes are at a particularly high risk for excessive alcohol consumption and resulting negative alcohol-related consequences. The purpose of our review was to systematically examine three main issues related to alcohol consumption among intercollegiate athletes: (a)

the prevalence rates and alcohol consumption patterns of this group, especially in comparison with those of collegiate nonathletes; (b) the various factors that might motivate or encourage alcohol use among intercollegiate athletes, primarily sport-related individual and environmental variables; and (c) considerations for conducting alcohol-related interventions with intercollegiate athletes.

Title: **Alcohol Use among College Students: A Comparison of Athletes and Nonathletes**

Authors: [Ford,JasonA.](#)

Source: [Substance Use & Misuse](#), 2007, 42, 9, 1367, Informa Healthcare

Abstract: This study examines alcohol use among college students, focusing on variation in binge drinking based on involvement in athletics. Prior research indicates that college students who participate in athletics are more likely to report binge drinking than are students who are not involved in athletics. However, existing research has not offered an explanation why college athletes are at a greater risk for binge drinking. Using data from the 1999 Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study, a national study examining substance use and other health risk behaviors of college students in the United States, the current research examines social norms as a possible source of the elevated levels of binge drinking among college athletes. Findings indicate that athletes are more likely to report binge drinking, in part, because they view alcohol use as being more normative. The limitations of the study are noted.

Links: <http://www.informaworld.com/10.1080/10826080701212402>

Title: **Perceived alcohol use among friends and alcohol consumption among college athletes.**

Authors: [Martens,M.P.](#); [Dams-O'Connor,K.](#); [Duffy-Paiement,C.](#); [Gibson,J.T.](#)

Source: [Psychol.Addict.Behav.](#), 2006, 20, 2, 178-184, United States

Abstract: Intercollegiate athletes have been identified as an at-risk group for heavy alcohol consumption (e.g., T. F. Nelson & H. Wechsler, 2001). The purpose of this study was to assess the relationship between descriptive drinking norms among one's closest friends and personal alcohol consumption among athletes. Specifically, the authors sought to determine whether perceptions of alcohol consumption among one's closest friend who was an athlete (athlete norms) demonstrated a stronger relationship with personal alcohol use than normative perceptions among one's closest friend who was not an athlete (nonathlete norms). Data were collected on 165 athletes competing at the National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I level. Results indicated that the athlete norms demonstrated a stronger main effect with personal alcohol use than the nonathlete norms, although both norms demonstrated strong effects. However, an interaction effect indicated that the athlete norms demonstrated a stronger relationship with personal consumption among men, whereas the

nonathlete norms demonstrated a stronger relationship among women. Implications for alcohol prevention programs among college athletes are discussed.

Title: **Substance use among college athletes: a comparison based on sport/team affiliation.**

Authors: [Ford, J.A.](#)

Source: [Journal of American College Health](#), 2007, 55, 6, 367-373

Abstract: OBJECTIVE: Prior research shows that college athletes have higher rates of substance use, especially alcohol, than do college students who are not involved in athletics. To augment the literature, the author sought to determine which sports/teams are at the greatest risk for substance use. PARTICIPANTS: The author used data from the 1999 Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study, a national survey of college and university students in the United States. METHODS: A series of chi-square and logistic regression models examined variation in substance use among college athletes on the basis of sport/team affiliation. RESULTS: Findings indicated that male hockey and female soccer athletes were the most likely to report substance use and that male basketball and cross-country/track athletes reported lower levels of substance use. CONCLUSION: There is variation in substance use on the basis of sport/team affiliation, and future researchers should examine why certain groups of athletes have higher rates of substance use.

The following sites may also be of use to you:

1) **Hobart and William Smith Colleges Most Valuable Player (MVP) Program:** The project introduces a comprehensive campaign targeted at student-athletes to promote positive norms, reduce harmful misperceptions about student drinking norms, and ultimately reduce high-risk drinking among athletes on this undergraduate residential campus with the development of innovative social marketing strategies.

<http://alcohol.hws.edu/mvp/index.html>

2) **NCAA Division III Student-Athlete Taking Active Responsible Roles (STARR) Social Norm Campaign:** STARR is an alcohol misuse and abuse prevention program based on the social norms theory. Eight institutions received a \$15,000 grant to participate in the two-year STARR pilot from fall 2001 through spring 2003. Each institution was responsible for forming a team and creating a social norms campaign reflecting its unique norms and campus culture.

http://www1.ncaa.org/membership/governance/division_III/d3_initiatives/STARR_grant

3) **A Multi-Campus Trial of Social Norming Approaches: Testing Universal and Targeted Interventions to Reducing High-Risk Drinking Among Student-Athletes**

This project implemented a social norms campaign at Kent State University, the University of Toledo, and the University of Akron to reduce high-risk drinking among

student-athletes. Each institution hosted a distinct component of the project, depending on the current stage of their implementation of the social norms model.

<http://www.higheredcenter.org/grants/0006high-risk-grant-winners.html>

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