

Selected Studies for Social Norms and Marijuana

- Title: **Misperceptions of College Student Marijuana Use: Implications for Prevention**
- Authors: [Kilmer, Jason R.](#); [Walker, Denise D.](#); [Lee, Christine M.](#); [Palmer, Rebekka S.](#); [Mallett, Kimberly A.](#); [Fabiano, Patricia](#); [Larimer, Mary E.](#)
- Source: [J.Stud.Alcohol](#), 2006, 67, 2, 277-281, Alcohol Research Documentation, US
- Abstract: Objective: This study investigates the relationship between marijuana use, perceived norms of use by friends and students in general, and negative experiences or problems from alcohol and drug use. It was hypothesized that students would overestimate the marijuana use of students in general and that perceptions about the prevalence of marijuana use would be related to drug-related consequences. Method: In this study, 5,990 participants provided information on the perceptions and consequences of drug use via an online survey or via a paper-based survey. Results: Although two thirds of participants reported no marijuana use, 98% of respondents incorrectly predicted that students in general use marijuana at least once per year. Perceptions of use by friends and students in general accounted for variance in drug use and related problems or experiences. Conclusions: Given the relationship between norm misperception and behavior with marijuana use, future research could explore the impact of targeting misperceived norms through prevention and intervention efforts.
- URL: <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=psych&AN=2006-02770-011&site=ehost-live>

- Title: **Preventing alcohol, marijuana, and cigarette use among adolescents: peer pressure resistance training versus establishing conservative norms.**
- Authors: [Hansen, W.B.](#); [Graham, J.W.](#)
- Source: [Prev.Med.](#), 1991, 20, 3, 414-430, UNITED STATES
- Abstract: BACKGROUND. Two strategies for preventing the onset of alcohol abuse, and marijuana and cigarette use were tested in junior high schools in Los Angeles and Orange Counties, California. The first strategy taught skills to refuse substance use offers. The second strategy corrected erroneous normative perceptions about prevalence and acceptability of use among peers and established conservative groups norms regarding use. METHODS. Four experimental conditions were created by randomly assigning schools to receive (a) neither of the experimental curricula (placebo comparison), (b) resistance skill training alone, (c) normative education alone, or (d) both resistance skill training and normative education. Students were pretested prior to the program and post-tested 1 year following

delivery of the program. RESULTS. There were main effects of normative education for summary measures of alcohol ($P = 0.0011$), marijuana ($P = 0.0096$), and cigarette smoking ($P = 0.0311$). All individual dichotomous measures of alcohol, marijuana, and tobacco use indicated significant reductions in onset attributable to normative education. There were no significant main effects of resistance skill training. CONCLUSION. These results suggest that establishing conservative norms is an effective strategy for preventing substance use.

Title: **"But Others Do It!": Do Misperceptions of Schoolmate Alcohol and Marijuana Use Predict Subsequent Drug Use Among Young Adolescents?**

Authors: [Juvonen, Jaana](#); [Martino, Steven C.](#); [Ellickson, Phyllis L.](#); [Longshore, Douglas](#)

Source: [J.Appl.Soc.Psychol.](#), 2007, 37, 4, 740-758

Abstract: We examined the effects of perceived prevalence of drug use among same-age peers on adolescents' subsequent drug use. In 7th grade, participants estimated prevalence of alcohol and marijuana use among 7th-grade students in their school, reported own use of these drugs, receipt of offers to use these drugs, and frequency of contact with peers who use these drugs. In 8th grade, participants reported their frequency of alcohol and marijuana use. Although perceived prevalence of drug use predicted subsequent alcohol and marijuana use when controlling for actual prevalence, these effects disappeared once participants' prior levels of drug use and proximal peer contacts were considered. Implications of findings for intervention programs aiming solely to increase accuracy of perceived prevalence estimates are discussed.

URL: <http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1559-1816.2007.00183.x>

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. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

Links: <http://vnweb.hwilsonweb.com/hww/jumpstart.jhtml?recid=0bc05f7a67b1790e9d1f806b25805519bb000a54e0>

[778a99b6b30766e849ec2845ec076e796d9d14&fmt=H](http://vnweb.hwwilsonweb.com/hww/jumpstart.jhtml?recid=0bc05f7a67b1790e9d1f806b25805519e44d80af7376cac2c891035794711a09ad9154fad8a34101&fmt=H)

Title: **Misperceptions of the norms for the frequency of alcohol and other drug use on college campuses**

Authors: [Perkins,H.Wesley](#); [Meilman,Philip W.](#); [Leichliter,Jami S.](#)

Source: [Journal of American College Health](#), 1999, 47, 6, 253-258

Abstract: A study examined misperceptions of the norms for the frequency of alcohol and other drug use on colleges campuses. Data were obtained from the Core Alcohol and Drug Survey national database of college students. Results revealed that many students misperceived the norms of their peers by perceiving considerably exaggerated alcohol and other drug use as typical at their college.

Links: <http://vnweb.hwwilsonweb.com/hww/jumpstart.jhtml?recid=0bc05f7a67b1790e9d1f806b25805519e44d80af7376cac2c891035794711a09ad9154fad8a34101&fmt=H>

Title: **Relations between normative beliefs and initiation intentions toward cigarette, alcohol and marijuana.**

Authors: [Olds,R.S.](#); [Thombs,D.L.](#); [Tomasek,J.R.](#)

Source: [Journal of Adolescent Health](#), 2005, 37, 1, 75

Abstract: PURPOSE: To examine the relations between normative beliefs and intentions to initiate cigarette, alcohol, and marijuana use among adolescents reporting no prior use. METHODS: An anonymous questionnaire was administered to 6,594 seventh- to twelfth-grade students in northeast Ohio. Separate analyses were conducted on sub-samples of respondents reporting no prior use of each substance. Within each of these 3 sub-samples, respondents were classified as holding high-risk intentions if they reported that they intended to begin using that particular substance within the next 6 months or were "not sure" of their intentions. Those reporting that they did not intend to start using a substance were classified as holding low-risk intentions. Multivariate logistic regression analyses examined the relations between normative beliefs and intention status (low- vs. high-risk), while accounting for socio-demographic characteristics. RESULTS: Across all 3 substances, normative beliefs were stronger predictors of intention status than socio-demographic variables. Higher levels of perceived acceptability and perceived prevalence were associated with holding high-risk intentions. Normative belief measures assessing close friend and sibling reference groups were much more important in explaining intention status than those assessing other reference groups (e.g., same age peers). CONCLUSIONS: Among adolescents with no prior use, normative beliefs concerning close friends and siblings may play an important role in the catalysis and support of intentions to initiate substance use. These findings challenge the utility of primary prevention strategies that provide normative feedback based on rates of substance use among distal reference groups.

The following sites may also be of use to you:

1) **The Majority Report**

The Majority Report is a prevention project that employs the evidence-based social norms approach as part of a multi-faceted strategy to prevent and reduce substance abuse among middle-school and high-school age youth in the Park City, Utah area.

http://www.themajorityreport.com/the_report1.pdf

2) **Marijuana Special Report**

This resource, compiled by PaperClip Communications, features a discussion of issues related to marijuana use among college students, facts about marijuana, a "Q and A" section, and resources you can use in developing marijuana prevention programs. It also includes a list of relevant journal articles on the topic.

<http://www.higheredcenter.org/drugs/marijuana-report.pdf>