Adolescent Treatment for Substance Use Disorders:
Outcomes and Outcome Predictors

Patricia A. Harrison
Stephen E. Asche

A statewide treatment outcomes monitoring system included baseline interviews with 387 adolescents and 863 parents representing 37 programs. This study examined adolescent and parent predictors of treatment completion and 6-month outcomes; the adolescent follow-up rate was 83.5%. Only 21.4% of the adolescents reported abstinence for the 6 months following treatment; however, marijuana use frequency, symptom counts, illegal activities, and emotional distress declined significantly. Logistic regression analyses showed that female gender increased the likelihood of both treatment completion and posttreatment abstinence, but parent participation in treatment predicted neither. These and other results are discussed in terms of their implications for examining the current treatment system.

KEYWORDS. Adolescent, substance abuse, treatment completion, treatment outcome
The Development of a Measure of Motivation to Change in Adolescent Substance Users:
Preliminary Psychometric Findings

Sheri Bauman
Rod J. Merta
Robert Steiner

Assessing motivation to change in adolescent substance abusers is necessary in order to match treatment interventions to stage of change. This article describes the initial development and validation of an adolescent-specific multi-dimensional scale to measure motivation to change related to substance use. Preliminary psychometric findings reveal adequate internal consistency and a factor structure corresponding to the inventory's subscales. Higher order factor analysis demonstrated the presence of a higher order factor (motivation to change) on which six of seven factors loaded. Cluster analysis revealed the presence of three groups, characterized as experimenters, precontemplators, and contemplators. Implications for future research and for practice are discussed.

KEYWORDS. Substance abuse, adolescents, motivation

Classifying Clinically Referred Adolescent Substance Abusers by Level of Externalizing and Internalizing Symptoms

Cynthia L. Rowe
Howard A. Liddle
Gayle A. Dakof

Adolescent substance abusers demonstrate numerous emotional and behavioral difficulties in conjunction with drug problems. In this study, 236 clinically referred substance abusing adolescents were grouped on level of self-reported and parent-reported internalizing and externalizing symptoms and compared on important variables. Three groups emerged: Externalizers, Exclusive Substance Abusers, and mixed (adolescents with both internalizing and externalizing symptoms). Exclusive Substance Abusers showed a general pattern of more positive functioning than adolescents in the other groups. This study reveals that clinically referred adolescent substance abusers can be meaningfully distinguished on levels of externalizing and internalizing problems, and that family characteristics differentiate these groups.

KEYWORDS. Adolescents, substance abuse, externalizing problems, internalizing problems, family
Perceived Neighborhood Risk as a Predictor of Drug Use Among Urban Ethnic Minority Adolescents: Moderating Influences of Psychosocial Functioning

Lawrence M. Scheier
Nicole L. Miller
Michelle Ifill-Williams
Gilbert J. Botvin

This study examined the moderating influences of psychosocial functioning on the relation between perceived neighborhood risk and alcohol, cigarette, and marijuana use in a sample of inner-city, ethnic minority youths. Perceived neighborhood risk assessed gang activity, fighting, and neighborhood toughness. Measures of psychosocial functioning assessed intrapersonal and interpersonal skills implicated as correlates and predictors of early-stage drug use. Neighborhood risk uniquely predicted alcohol, cigarette, and marijuana use; however, some relations were qualified by level of psychosocial functioning. Negative affect, peer relations, and social concern moderated the effects of neighborhood risk on alcohol use. Negative affect moderated the relations between neighborhood risk and cigarette use. Risk-taking and family relations moderated the relations between neighborhood risk and marijuana use. Overall, the size of these effects was small and underscores the need to include a wider range of conceptually relevant measures. Longitudinally, neighborhood risk was uniquely associated with less protection and greater polydrug use, controlling for early levels of psychosocial risk and protection. Net of prediction, both risk and protection were associated equivalently with neighborhood risk. Findings indicate a need to develop a more complete understanding of the precise manner in which environmental risk increases susceptibility to early-stage drug use.

KEYWORDS. Neighborhood risk, adolescent drug use, psychosocial risk, ethnic minority youths

BOOK REVIEW

Alcoholism: A Review of Its Characteristics, Etiology, Treatments and Controversies, by Irving Maltzman

Reviewed by Stanton Peele