Youth Knowledge, Interpersonal Skills, and Media Attitudes After Anti-Tobacco Training

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To see if youth tobacco use prevention training improves knowledge, interaction skills, and awareness of media influence, junior high and high school students (154 at pre-test, 176 at post-test) from southeastern U.S. public schools completed questionnaires before and after anti-tobacco lessons. After training, high school (but not junior high) students more strongly supported anti-tobacco policy. All students saw themselves as immune to tobacco media influence, but others as susceptible. An implication is that tobacco use prevention interventions for high school youth should focus on policy issues, and for all youth should teach critical viewing skills to resist the powerful messages put forth by the tobacco industry.

KEYWORDS: cigarette, tobacco, youth, teens, training
Early Intervention for Alcohol Use Prevention and Vehicle Safety Skills: Evaluating the Protecting You/Protecting Me Curriculum

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The present study reports the evaluation results of the "Protecting You/Protecting Me" (PIPIPM) alcohol use prevention and safety curriculum for third, fourth, and fifth graders when taught by high school peer leaders. The primary goal of the PIPIPM prevention program, developed by Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), is to prevent injury and death of children due to underconsumption of alcoholic beverages and vehicle-related risks, especially as passengers in vehicles in which the driver is not alcohol-free. Two classrooms for each grade were randomly assigned to receive either the intervention or serve as a Comparator in four sites in Texas. Pretest and posttest, 259 surveys were mailed (intervention n = 128; Comparison n = 131). A 6-week follow-up survey was also completed with 120 intervention students. The results showed the intervention group made significant improvements, relative to the Comparator group, in Vehicle Safety Skills, Intentions not to ride with an Alcohol Impaired Driver, Media Literacy, and Knowledge about Brain Development. Additional findings showed some individual differences by gender and grade and that the intervention's effect varied in a few areas depending on pretest score, gender, and grade. Overall, the curriculum benefits students by influencing their attitudes toward advertisements, increasing their intentions not to ride with a driver who has been drinking, developing their skills to protect themselves when they have no other option but to ride with an alcohol impaired driver, and improving their knowledge about the developing brain.

KEYWORDS: Alcohol, prevention, early intervention, media literacy, children, vehicle safety, evaluative, linear model

Fatal Injuries Associated with Alcohol Use

Among Youth and Adults: 1990-1998

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The major objective of this study was to compare trends in three types of fatal injuries associated with alcohol use among youth under the legal drinking age and among adults of legal drinking age from 1990-1998. The fatal injuries investigated included homicide, suicide, and motor vehicle-traffic deaths.

Results were: (1) motor vehicle-traffic deaths and homicide were higher among youth under the legal drinking age than among adults of legal drinking age; whereas, suicide was more common among adults of legal drinking age than among youth under the legal drinking age; and, (2) African American, Hispanic, and American Indian male youth under the legal drinking age were at substantial risk of being victims of homicide and motor vehicle-traffic deaths.

KEYWORDS: Alcohol, injuries, homicide, suicide, traffic, deaths, policy, youth, minorities

Misperceptions of the Prevalence of Marijuana Use

Among College Students: Athletes and Non-Athletes

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The prevalence of marijuana use and perceptions of the prevalence of marijuana use was assessed in a sample of intercollegiate athletes and a separate sample of primarily first-year non-athletes students at a northeastern public university. Marijuana use prevalence in the non-athlete sample was higher than the prevalence found in nationwide surveys of drug use on college campuses. Current use of marijuana was greater in non-athletes than athletes, however, lifetime use was equivalent. The perceptions of prevalence of marijuana use among both athletes and non-athletes exceeded self-reported use in these groups. Students who used marijuana held higher perceptions of the prevalence of marijuana use among their campus peers and those believing that marijuana use was normative on campus were more likely to be current marijuana users themselves. The findings from this study have important implications for designing college drug prevention programs.

KEYWORDS: Marijuana use, misperceptions, social norms, prevention, college students

Video Game Playing and Gambling in Adolescents:

Common Risk Factors

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Video games and gambling often contain very similar elements with both providing intermittent rewards and elements of randomness. Furthermore, at a psychological and behavioral level, slot machine gambling, video lottery terminal (VLT) gambling and video game playing share many of the same features. Despite the similarities between video game playing and gambling there have been very few studies that have specifically examined video game playing in relation to gambling behavior. This study aimed to explore the nature of adolescent video game playing.
gambling activities, and associated factors. A questionnaire was completed by 996 (549 females, 441 males, & unspecified) participants from grades 7-11, who ranged in age from 10-17 years. Overall, the results of the study found a clear relationship between video game playing and gambling in adolescents, with problem gamblers being significantly more likely than non-problem gamblers or non-gamblers to spend excessive amounts of time playing video games. Problem gamblers were also significantly more likely than non-problem gamblers or non-gamblers to view themselves as very good or excellent video game players. Furthermore, problem gamblers were more likely to report that they found video games similar to electronic machine gambling, to promote dissociation and to be amusing and/or relaxing.

KEYWORDS: Youth gambling, video game playing, internet, risk factors, coping strategies