EDITORIAL

Killing of the Innu
Peter L. Myers, PhD

Association Between Intimate Partner Violence and Help Seeking for Alcohol Problems
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Objectives: The primary aim of this study is to determine the association between intimate partner violence, alcohol problems, and help seeking behaviors for alcohol problems. In addition, the study was conducted to examine ethnic differences in the reporting of intimate partner violence, alcohol problems and treatment or help seeking for alcohol problems.

Methods: A probability sample (n = 1468) of White, Black and Hispanic couples 18 years of age or older in the U.S. household population was interviewed in 1995 with a response rate of 85%. Help seeking was defined as talking to someone or seeking treatment for an alcohol problem; therefore, the bivariate and multivariate analyses exclude lifetime abstainers.

Results: Multivariate analysis controlling for ethnicity, gender, age, education, and income indicated that those with alcohol problems and intimate partner
violence together were 1.5 (95% CI = 0.8-2.6) times more likely to seek help than those reporting alcohol problems alone.

Conclusions: The coexistence of intimate partner violence and alcohol problems may prompt individuals to seek help for alcohol problems. However, a majority of people who report intimate partner violence and alcohol problems or alcohol problems alone do not seek help.

KEYWORDS. Intimate partner violence, treatment seeking, help seeking, ethnicity, national survey

Substance Abuse Among Urban Aboriginals: Association with a History of Physical/Sexual Abuse
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This paper reports findings of a study of mental health among urban Aboriginal peoples. Both qualitative and quantitative techniques were used to explore the relationship between substance abuse and physical sexual abuse in a sample of Aboriginal peoples living in an urban community. Open-ended interviews were conducted in a sample of 30 Aboriginals that included Aboriginal social service providers (from health, legal and family services). Forty percent of the sample had been abused and many experienced social, psychological and emotional problems associated with abusive experiences. Content analysis of the interviews revealed common themes in violence discourse including loss of identity and control, the normalization of violence, and revictimization. Substance use, family dysfunction, and difficulty in interpersonal relationships were also associated with abuse experiences.

Structured interviews conducted with a larger sample of urban Aboriginals (n = 245) revealed high rates of lifetime psychological distress (depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation) as well as attempted suicide (39.1%). The analyses also demonstrated that there were high rates of sexual abuse (39.6%), physical abuse (51.8%), and emotional abuse (61.6%) in the sample. When the sample was stratified for history of physical and/or sexual abuse, the analyses indicated that social, psychological and behavioral problems were amplified among those with histories of abuse. Rates of recent and lifetime psychological distress were highest among those who had been both physically and sexually abused. In addition, females were more likely to have been physically and sexually abused (males 25.6% versus females 48.4%, \( p < 0.001 \)). Family dysfunction was a key indicator of psychological problems among abuse victims. In particular, a family history of psychological problems was strongly associated with physical/sexual abuse. While rates of family history of drug or alcohol problems are high for abused and non-abused individuals alike, those who had experienced physical abuse or physical/sexual abuse rated higher for a current substance abuse problem. It is suggested that issues such as family functioning and the intergenerational transmission of violent behavior and substance abuse be pursued in future mental health research among urban Aboriginal peoples.

KEYWORDS. Aboriginal, urban, interpersonal violence, physical/sexual abuse

Gender, Grade, and Ethnic Differences in Student Attitudes and Perception of Harm Toward Substance Use
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Inconclusive research results have emerged regarding students' attitudes and perception of harm toward substance use. Additionally, researchers have found mixed results regarding the combination of gender, grade level, and ethnicity with attitude toward use and perception of harm for drug usage. The current study attempts to explore the effects of gender, grade level and ethnicity on drug attitudes and perceived harm by youth. No overall gender differences were found in this study. However, significant differences were found for both gender level and ethnic groups on various drug types.

KEYWORDS. Ethnicity, gender, substance abuse, harm

Elderly Drug Use and Racial/Ethnic Populations
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Substance use and misuse among racial/ethnic subgroups remains a much understudied area. This article summarizes recent data from national surveys (SAMHSA) recording prevalence and treatment rates for major ethnic/racial subgroup. The authors point to a concern about the higher prevalence and treatment rates of alcohol among older American Indians and Alaskan Natives, but warn that more precise estimates must be obtained. They also address the finding that older African Americans have higher prevalence and rates of treatment admissions for certain illicit drugs such as cocaine. They highlight the unique concerns for older African Americans as the largest minority group within the U. S. Finally, a research agenda for the twenty-first century is suggested which will stress emphasis on continued, careful analysis of the life course of substance use among racial/ethnic subgroups.

KEYWORDS. Elderly, drug use, ethnicity

BOOK REVIEW

Reviewed by Peter L. Meyers, PhD

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