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CONTENTS

The Association of Alcohol Use and Depression Among Puerto Ricans in the United States and in Puerto Rico
Carlos F. Ríos-Bedoya, MPH, ScD
Joseph J. Gallo, MD, MPH

The association of high alcohol use and acculturation and/or migration among Puerto Ricans in the United States has not been studied. Two population-based cross-sectional surveys carried out by trained lay interviewers were analyzed. A total of 1,267 PR/US and 1,656 PR/PR aged 20-64 years were interviewed. The prevalence of any alcohol consumption for PR/US was 45.9% and for PR/PR was 51.2% (p < .001). High levels of depressive symptoms were associated with alcohol use for PR/PR only after controlling for sex, age and education. In contrast, for the PR/US, high levels of depressive symptoms were associated with alcohol use. In this study PR/PR have higher levels of alcohol use and more heavy drinkers than the PR/US. The findings of this study clearly demonstrate the importance and need for this kind of cross-cultural research to better understand the mental health status of migratory populations.

KEYWORDS. Puerto Rican, alcohol, depression, ethnicity, cross-cultural, migration

Desperately Seeking Skeezers: Downward Comparison Theory and the Implications for STD/HIV Prevention Among African-American Crack Users
William N. Elwood, PhD
Kathryn Greene, PhD

HIV infection rates among African-Americans have increased disproportionately when compared to other at-risk groups in the United States. Crack smoking also
The Social Context of Alcohol Initiation Among African American and White Youth

Lisa A. Strycker, MA
Susan C. Duncan, PhD
Michael A. Pickering, MS

This study documented the social context of alcohol initiation in children and adolescents, and examined gender, age, and ethnic differences among African Americans and Whites. Data comprised 148 youths reporting that they had tried alcohol, with a mean age of 13 years and a mean alcohol use onset age of 10 years. Most respondents (61%) indicated that they were with their parents when they first used alcohol, half were at home at the time, and many first tried alcohol when they were hanging out (39%) or at parties (35%). A number of significant differences were found between younger and older initiators, and White and African American youth, highlighting the importance of designing alcohol prevention interventions targeted by age and race.

KEYWORDS. Alcohol use, initiation, youth, social context

Double Whammy: Accessing, Recruiting and Retaining the Hidden of the Hidden

Emma J. Brown, PhD, RN, CS

Recruitment of women who use crack is challenging in any environment, but especially in rural environments. The nature of rural environments, which limits confidentiality, coupled with conservative views and stigma associated with drug use, contributes to the difficulty of access to rural residents who use illicit drugs if one only uses traditional recruitment strategies. This ethnographic study among rural black women who use powder and crack cocaine, however, implemented effective recruitment and retention strategies. Recruitment strategies included: concealing the nature of the study from all residents in the county with the exception of the participants, recruiting potential participants into one or more health prevention programs sponsored by a local community-based organization as well as the current research study, modifying traditional participant observation and ethnographic mapping techniques, using snowball sampling technique, and employing two indigenous women to serve as "cultural brokers." Retention strategies focused primarily on maintaining a personal relationship with the participants by visiting them in their homes, at hangouts, in jail and correctional facilities, and providing incentives and favors. These strategies made it possible to recruit rural black women who use powder and crack cocaine for participation in drug-use research and to retain the majority of recruits.

KEYWORDS. African American women, drug use, rural, recruitment, retention

The Prevalence of Alcohol, Cigarette, and Marijuana Use Among Ghanaian Senior Secondary Students in an Urban Setting

Samuel Adu-Mireku, PhD

This study assessed the prevalence of, and the association between alcohol, cigarette, and marijuana use among senior secondary-school students in Accra, Ghana. A sample of 894 students (56.9% girls, 43.1% boys; mean age = 17.4 years, SD = 1.40) completed a modified version of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey questionnaire. Analytical techniques utilized included chi-square and logistic regression. Overall, lifetime alcohol use was 25.1%; lifetime cigarette use was 7.5%; and lifetime marijuana use was 2.6%. Among lifetime users, current alcohol use was 46.2%; current cigarette use was 44.6%; and current marijuana use was 58.3%. Boys were significantly more likely than girls to be lifetime users of all three drugs, but not as current users. Logistic regression analysis indicated that the lifetime use of both cigarette and marijuana appears to be strongly associated with lifetime alcohol use, which is more prevalent. The results of this study showed lower prevalence rates than those reported in other African countries and in Western societies. Nonetheless, there is a need to strengthen current prevention programs through better education of school-going adolescents primarily because of the increasing availability of, and the unrestricted access to, cigarette and alcohol products in Ghana at this time.

KEYWORDS. Alcohol, nicotine, marijuana, Ghana, high school students

Exploring the Relationship Between Race and the Use of Cocaine: A Temporal Examination of Houston Arrestees

George S. Yacoubian, Jr., PhD

In 1986, Congress passed the Anti-Drug Abuse Act, legislation that provided harsh new penalties for violations involving crack cocaine. Penalties for powder cocaine offenses, however, were not altered proportionally. This legislation has been denounced on the premise that it unfairly targets minority offenders who are
presumed to use crack cocaine more than its powder counterpart. To date, however, only a small body of scholarly research has examined the relationship between race and the preference for crack versus powder cocaine, and no studies have examined this nexus over time. In the present study, a temporal exploration is undertaken with a sample of 6,732 adult Houston arrestees surveyed through the Drug Use Forecasting (DUF) Program between 1990 and 1994. Logistic regression identified that the two most powerful predictors of self-reported three-day powder cocaine use were being white and ever having injected drugs illegally. The two most powerful predictors of self-reported three-day crack cocaine use were being black and ever having injected drugs illegally. While being white was a strong predictor of three-day powder cocaine use each year between 1990 and 1994, the association between being black and having recently used crack cocaine diminished considerably over time. Legal implications are assessed in light of the current findings.

KEYWORDS. Crack cocaine, drug arrests, race and drugs

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ABSTRACT. The association of high alcohol use and acculturation and/or migration among Puerto Ricans in the United States has not been studied. Two population-based cross-sectional surveys carried out by trained lay interviewers were analyzed. A total of 1,267 PR/US and 1,656 PR/PR aged 20-64 years were interviewed. The prevalence of any alcohol consumption for PR/US was 45.9% and for PR/PR was 51.2% (p < .001). High levels of depressive symptoms were associated with alcohol use for PR/PR only after controlling for sex, age and education. In contrast, for the PR/US, high levels of depressive symptoms were associated with alcohol use. In this study PR/PR have higher levels of alcohol use and more heavy drinkers than the PR/US. The findings of this study clearly demonstrate the importance and need for this kind of cross-cultural research to better understand the mental health status of migratory populations. [Article copies available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service: 1-800-HAWORTH. E-mail address: <docdelivery@haworthpress.com> Website: <http://www.HaworthPress.com> © 2003 by The Haworth Press, Inc. All rights reserved.]

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