Perception of Substance Use Problems in Asian American Communities by Chinese, Indian, Korean, and Vietnamese Populations

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The study was a cross-sectional survey using a convenience sample of 425 Asian American respondents to examine their perceptions of substance use problems in the Asian American community and help-seeking preferences. The authors examined respondents' perceptions of the severity of substance use problems in the Asian American community, perceived etiology of substance use problems, beliefs about treatment, perceived help-seeking preferences and helpful services. Respondents showed a relatively low prevalence of drinking and drug use: 20.9% for drinking and 3.3% for drug use. As a group, respondents did not perceive substance use as a serious problem in the community except for the Vietnamese American respondents. In addition, respondents showed a positive attitude toward treatment, although such an attitudinal change was not yet accompanied by a change in their behavioral preferences. Findings also suggested a tendency for Asian American respondents to utilize personal resources rather than professional help or formal treatment programs in response to substance use problems. There was an apparent lack of interest among respondents to use support groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous. Implications for developing culturally relevant interventions for prevention and treatment as well as future research are discussed.

KEYWORDS. Alcohol use, drug use, Asian American populations, help-seeking
of alcohol use among adolescents and adults, and the role of peer influences in promoting or preventing risky drinking behaviors. The prevalence of risky drinking behaviors among adolescents is of particular concern, as it is associated with a range of negative outcomes, including academic performance, mental health problems, and risky sexual behavior. This issue is especially significant in light of the ongoing opioid crisis, as alcohol use can interact with opioids to increase the risk of overdose. Future research should focus on developing effective interventions to reduce risky drinking behaviors among adolescents and adults, with a particular emphasis on addressing the role of peer influences in promoting or preventing these behaviors.