Alcohol and Binge Drinking
Behaviors Among College Students

BSN Students: Jessica Mueller, Taylor Thompson, Haley DeYoung, Megan Eggert, Jennifer Mitchell, Kelly Wilkins, Ahmad Muhammad, and Hussein Shahine
Theresa A. Kessler, PhD, RN, ACNS-BC
Christine P. Kurtz, DNP, RN, PMHCNS-BC
College of Nursing & Health Professions

Sample Characteristics (n = 1,011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek-affiliation</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student athlete</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drink alcohol</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg. drinks/week</td>
<td>4.5</td>
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</tbody>
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Key Findings

Drinking
87% of Greek-affiliated students drink compared to 64% of non-Greek
(X² = 56.180, p < .001) (pre-intervention: 84%, 57%, p < .001)
85% of athletes drink compared to 70% of non-athletes
(X² = 11.173, p = .001) (pre-intervention: 75%, 63%, p = .01)
Binge drinking
39% of drinkers engaged in binge drinking during the past 30 days
(pre-intervention: 72%)
48% of males binge drink compared to 38% of females
(X² = 13.415, p = .001) (pre-intervention: 77%, 58%, p = .001)
59% of Greek-affiliated students binge drink compared to 32% of non-Greek
(X² = 68.037, p = .001) (pre-intervention: 75%, 60%, p = .106)
54% of athletes binge drink compared to 39% of non-athletes
(X² = 9.055, p = .003) (pre-intervention: 72%, 64%, p = .625)
Top reasons for drinking
77.8% “to have fun”
64.8% “to feel good and relax”
34.9% “makes it easier to socialize”
34.0% “to get drunk”
Top reasons for not drinking
63.0% “be in control of self”
45.8% “don’t want to get in trouble”
44.7% “it is illegal”
44.7% “negative effects on health”

Significance of Problem
- A serious public health concern among college students is misuse of alcohol
- Drinking on college campuses is a unique culture and changing this culture is a top priority
- 39% of college students binge drink [SASSMA, 2011] which is correlated with high-risk behaviors, such as
  unsafe sex, sexual assault, injuries, and even death
  (National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism [NIAAA], 2012)
- Students overestimate the amount of alcohol peers consume, normalizing drinking behaviors
  (Doumas, McInerney, & Skok, 2008)

Purpose
The main objectives of this study were to:
- Evaluate evidence about drinking behaviors among college students
- Assess alcohol use behaviors among undergraduate students at a private, faith-based university
- Identify factors that are associated with drinking on the college campus
- Assess the effects of a mass media campaign focused on alcohol use

Summary of Evidence
- Upon entering college, students should be screened for alcohol use [Scott-Shellton et al., 2013]
- Mass media campaigns are an effective structural intervention for behaviors that are prevalent within a population
  (Smith & Lipsey, 2008)
- Social norms correct students’ misperceptions of “normal” behaviors and is based on the notion that
  college students want to fit in with peers [Kearney, Manley, & Chestnut, 2013]
- Interventions should target high-risk events such as freshmen year, spring break, and 21st birthday
  (Scott-Shellton et al., 2014; Tanner-Smith & Lapsa, 2013)

Mass Media Campaign
- Electronic and printed posters displayed in academic and residential buildings
- Halloween yard display and spring break union building display about binge drinking
- Social media messaging on Instagram, Twitter, & Facebook

Mass Media Campaign Findings
- Students noticed alcohol-related information/facts around campus most often in these formats
  - Posters (81.9%)
  - Displays (47.0%)
  - Social media (24.9%)
- Effects of the mass media campaign
  - “had no effect” (69.9%)
  - “I learned something” (23.9%)
  - “I thought about it differently” (10.6%)
- 68.6% of students were aware of the Indiana Lifeline Law
  - Learned about it from posters (24.6%)
  - Viewed on social media (9.8%)
- Students defined binge drinking
  - Correctly (33.2%)
  - “Drinking until you blackout” (24.7%)
  - “6-10 drinks” (15.0%)

Conclusions
- Athlete, Greek-affiliated, and male students drink significantly more and engage in binge drinking more often
- Binge drinking on this campus is a significant problem; while causation cannot be determined, the percent of students who bingeing decreased significantly from pre to post-intervention
- Posters were an effective structural mass media campaign strategy
- Students were knowledgeable about the Lifeline Law, but most were unable to define binge drinking
- Majority of students who drink did so to facilitate socialization; responsibility was a common theme for not drinking

Recommendations
- Future campaigns should target binge drinking related to Greek-affiliation, spring break, Halloween, and end of school year as high-risk situations
- Continue collaboration with the Office of Alcohol and Drug Education to build on current strategies