

ARTICLES:

Health Related Behaviors, Health Outcomes and Health Access Issues among Cannabis Users in the Midwestern USA.....8 - 27

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ABSTRACT

This study identifies new areas for risk-reduction strategies and research with regular cannabis users. Participants at a cannabis advocacy event in the Midwestern USA completed a survey including items from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Most participants (70%) reported using cannabis to treat a medical condition, though a smaller portion (28%) had a medical marijuana card. Participants reported several health risks associated with cannabis use, including driving a vehicle while high on cannabis, using cannabis laced with some other drug and having more intense experiences than they intended. Nearly one-quarter of participants indicated they did not have any health care coverage and; consequently, not being able to see a doctor when they needed to because of the cost. The findings indicate a variety of health issues in cannabis users that warrant attention from health educators and researchers. Additional research is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of health-promoting interventions in this population.

Keywords: cannabis; marijuana; health behavior; substance use; health promotion; healthcare access

The Role of Breathalyzer Test for Understanding Drinkers' Patterns and Behaviors: A Study Conducted in Porto Party Settings.....28 - 49

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the relevance of the breathalyzer test as a harm reduction tool in outreach interventions implemented in nightlife environments. Specifically, it analyzes (i) gender and age differences on Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC); (ii) the association between BAC levels and expected effects and (iii) the relationship between BAC levels and intentional behavior in a driving and non-driving sample. It was conducted for a two-month period during an outreach intervention implemented in one of the most important Portuguese nightlife districts - Movidá at Porto. Real time data concerning sociodemographic dimensions and BAC were collected. Gender differences were found both on subjective and objective measures of alcohol ingestion. Participants with BAC levels below 0.5 g/l tend to overestimate their expected BAC levels, while those with BAC levels over 0.8g/l seem to underestimate them. Partygoers that did not intend to drive had higher alcoholic rates, compared to the ones that intended to continue to drink throughout the night. Breathalyzer tests can be performed to improve knowledge regarding the phenomenon of alcohol use; namely, drinking patterns in nightlife environments, gender-related differences, alcohol estimation bias and collective consciousness on alcohol-related harms. Implications of the study will be discussed considering harm-reduction interventions on nightlife environments.

Keywords: alcohol, harm reduction, pleasure, party settings, breathalyzer, blood alcohol concentration (BAC)

Effects of Social Capital on the Culture of College Drinking50 - 69

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ABSTRACT

Research was conducted to determine if social capital influenced the norms of drinking and alcohol-related behavior amongst college students. A random sample survey was distributed to college students at a medium-sized regional university (N = 2600). A mixed-method design was used to examine the results, including correlation and regression analysis and content analysis. Social capital was operationalized in three forms. An inverse association indicates students who report heavy/binge drinking are less influenced by factors of social capital, whereas students who report light drinking are influenced by factors of social capital. Continued mixed-methods research at multiple universities is recommended.

Keywords: social capital, alcohol, college, student, drinking, health, community, culture

ABSTRACT

The aim was to examine the theoretical constructs and psychometric structure of the Protective Behavioural Strategies Scale (PBSS). Exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis (EFA, CFA) were conducted on data from two studies. Only data from registered university students (18-25 years) were included. EFA supported a two-factor solution for the PBSS accounting for 43.07% of the variance, with Stopping/Limiting Drinking (SLD) and Manner of Drinking (MOD) retained as factors. Item loadings were dissimilar to those in the original scale. CFA was completed to test the replicability and reliability of the model. Alpha coefficients ranged from poor (.58) to acceptable (.72). Results raise concerns about the psychometric structure of the PBS scale and future research should consider cultural and age differences.

Keywords: *protective behavioral strategies, psychometric, confirmatory factor analysis, alcohol, validity*