

## ADOLESCENT SUBSTANCE USE AMONG A MULTICULTURAL POPULATION

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Adolescent substance use is a prominent public health concern, with heavy use or abuse of substances being associated with acute or chronic health problems (e.g., injuries and diseases of the liver) and has been found to be comorbid with other mental health disorders (e.g., depression and conduct disorder). Research on adolescent substance use for Asian and Pacific Islander adolescents have typically not taken into consideration the differences across the heterogeneous ethnic groups. This pilot study assesses the prevalence of substance abuse/dependence rates (by utilizing DSM-IV criteria) among the four major ethnic groups of Hawaii (i.e., Native Hawaiian, Japanese, Filipino, and Caucasian) and examines the relationships among variables relating to adolescent substance use. A total of 196 high school students (in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade) were included in the data analysis. Students were administered the Diagnostic Interview Schedule for Children, the American Drug and Alcohol Survey, and the Prevention Planning Survey. There were 50 (25.5%) Native Hawaiian, 49 (25.0%) Japanese, 80 (25.4%) Filipino, and 47 (24.0%) Caucasian students. Descriptive statistics, chi-square tests, and univariate as well as multiple logistic regressions were conducted. There were 23 students (11.9% of the sample) that met criteria for DISC alcohol abuse or dependence. A total of 120 students (61.2%) reported using more than a few sips of alcohol ( $p = .0013$ ). Pairwise logistic regressions found that Native Hawaiian rates were significantly ( $\alpha = .01$ ) greater than Japanese and Caucasian students. Statistically significant multiple logistic regressions (including gender, grade level, ethnicity, main wage earner's educational level, and 7 factors of the Prevention Planning Survey in the model) were found for DISC alcohol abuse or dependence ( $p = .0029$ ), with ~30% of the variance being accounted for as well as lifetime use of alcohol ( $p < .0001$ ), with 49% of the variance being accounted for. The findings show there are differences when ethnic groups are disaggregated for Asian and Pacific Islander students and future research should take this into consideration. When there is a greater understanding of the distinct differences across Asian and Pacific Islander students, the findings can then be applied to develop culturally appropriate intervention and prevention strategies.