




SPR 18th Annual Meeting

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ID# 92

Location: Mt. Evans A (Atrium Tower/2nd Floor)

Time of Presentation: Jun 02 3:00 PM - 4:30 PM

Category/Theme: Epidemiology

The American Indian Alcohol and Drug Survey: A Review of 35 Years of Research

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The American Indian Alcohol and Drug Survey is a project that has had continuing support from NIDA since 1974 and is the only on-going survey that assesses drug use, violence, and victimization among 7-12th grade reservation youth. Data from this project has been used by Congress, the Indian Health Service, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and agencies including SAMSHA, NIAAA, and NIDA for setting policy and funding priorities (including prevention and treatment).

Each year approximately 10 schools on or near reservations are selected for data collection each year (~1,500 students per year), and three tribes surveyed the previous year are resurveyed. Rural youth, who make up the comparison sample, are also surveyed each year through a similar process.

Indian youth continue to use drugs at significantly higher rates than their non-Native counterparts, however, the pattern of increases and decreases over time parallel those of non-Indian youth. While rates of low and moderate drug use in Indian youth are in perfect synchrony with secular changes in use by other American youth, there is a consistent, steady percentage of Indian youth that can be classified as heavy drug users (approximately 15-20%). Inhalant use has been declining among Indian youth since about 1985, which is at a rate that is greater than that of non-Indian youth. Family and cultural influences appear to be much more important for Indian youth than non-Indian youth. In addition, two main theories were developed out of this research. Primary Socialization Theory and Peer Cluster Theory have both provided important frameworks in understanding substance use in youth.

Our research has provided important trend data on substance use in Native and non-Native populations, enabled agencies and communities to advocate for funding, assisted tribes in creating prevention programming, and shed light on the factors that contribute to substance use in youth. In the next five years we will continue our same research but also explore the almost normative use of marijuana in reservation youth (i.e., 46% of Indian 8th graders and 51% of Indian 12th graders have used marijuana in the past month as opposed to 9% and 22% for non-Indian youth). Because of these trends we have added new questions to assess attitudes, beliefs, and use patterns of marijuana, which will allow us to learn why these high rates of use persist, and also tell use where and how to intervene to produce levels of community readiness that will support prevention efforts in this area.

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