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Success of Partnership-Based, Combined Family-School Preventive Interventions

Very few randomized, controlled studies have examined the long-term outcomes of combined family- and school-based interventions designed to prevent adolescent substance use in general populations. Key reasons for intervention research on this topic concern the prevalence of substance use in the general population, with its social, health, and economic consequences, and the influence of factors originating in family and school environments on substance use. In an article published in the current issue of "*Drug and Alcohol Dependence*", researchers found that the tested interventions had a range of long-term, positive effects on substance use.

Dr. Richard L. Spoth of Iowa State University (Ames, IA) and colleagues collected self-reports from 1,677 seventh grade students from 36 schools who had been randomly assigned to the Strengthening Families Program: For Parents and Youth 10-14, plus the school-based Life Skills Training, Life Skills Training alone, or to a control group. Reports were collected prior to interventions, six months following interventions, and then yearly through the twelfth grade. Measures included initiation of alcohol, cigarettes, marijuana, and drunkenness, along with a substance initiation index, as well as measures of more serious use including frequency of alcohol, cigarette, and marijuana use, drunkenness frequency, monthly poly-substance use, and advanced poly-substance use. For all substance initiation outcomes, intervention groups showed significant, positive point-in-time differences at twelfth grade and/or slowed growth of substance initiation outcomes when compared with the non-intervention control group. Although no main effects for the more serious substance use outcomes were observed, a higher-risk subsample demonstrated significant, positive twelfth grade point-in-time and slowed growth of those substance outcomes for the interventions on all measures.

Drug and Alcohol Dependence is the official journal of the College on Problems of Drug Dependence (www.cpdd.org), the largest and oldest organization for the scientific study of drug dependence. The peer-reviewed Drug and Alcohol Dependence (www.elsevier.com/locate/drugalcddep) is published by Elsevier Science Inc., a leading publisher of scientific, technical, and medical journals, books, and reference works. Elsevier Science is a member of the Reed Elsevier PLC group (www.reedelsevier.com), a leading publishing and information business.

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