

Role of Religiosity in Alcohol Consumption Among Christian College Students: A Mixed Method Approach

College students participate in numerous health-risk behaviors that may put them at risk for developing addictions and/or chronic diseases, or even put them at risk for early death. Many of these are related to alcohol use (Merrill, Kenney, & Barnett, 2017). This study focused on regular alcohol use, considered by some researchers to be the number one public health issue on college campuses (Misch, 2010). Responses from a health risk behavior survey given on an SDA campus were analyzed. Logistic regression analysis was used to develop models that explain alcohol consumption. Results show age increased the odds of regular drinking by 50%, religious participation decreased the probability of alcohol use by 26%, and believing the body is the temple of the Lord decreased the odds of alcohol consumption by about 60%. Ethnicity and gender were not statistically significant. Follow-up focus groups supported these results, but individual reasons for binge drinking also were related to addiction and mental health issues. Content analysis of the focus group transcripts built upon Bronfenbrenner's (1979) human ecology theory and showed that individuals were influenced by micro-system relationships (parents, peers, school, spirituality), meso-system interactions (peers-school and parents-religion), and macro-system cultural standards (college culture and religious teachings). Implications for SDA college administrators and campus ministry leaders will be discussed.

References

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- Merrill, J.E., Kenney, S.R., & Barnett, N.P. (2017). A time-varying effect model of the dynamic association between alcohol use and consequences over the first two years of college. *Addictive Behaviors*, 73, 57-62.
- Misch, D. A. (2010). Changing the culture of alcohol abuse on campus: Lessons learned from second-hand smoke. *Journal of American College Health*, 59(3), 232-234.

Abstract

This presentation presents a study from a survey that examined religiosity's role in alcohol consumption among SDA college students. Statistically significant religiosity variables were religious participation, and believing one's body is the temple of the Lord. Follow up focus groups examined these variables in more depth.

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