

Title: EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PSYCHOLOGICAL FUNCTIONING AND ADOLESCENTS' INTENTIONS TO USE TOBACCO, ALCOHOL, AND MARIJUANA

Presenting Author: Memetovic, J., Graduate Student, School of Population and Public Health, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada

Co-author: Richardson, C. G. Assistant Professor, School of Population and Public Health, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada

Presented at: Lost in Translation: Seeking answers in addiction and concurrent disorders. Vancouver, BC, February 15-17, 2011

Objectives:

Adolescents' psychological functioning has been shown to be strongly related to the initiation and escalation of substance use. The purpose of this study was to determine if psychological functioning also predicts intentions to use tobacco, alcohol (binge drinking), and marijuana prior to initial experimentation.

Methods:

Participants were 1367 grade 8 students enrolled in the British Columbia Adolescent Substance Use Survey. Psychological functioning was assessed using the Substance Use Risk Profile Scale (SURPS) - a 23-item instrument measuring anxiety sensitivity (5 items), hopelessness (7 items), sensation seeking (6 items) and impulsivity (5 items). Independent samples t-tests were used to compare scores on the SURPS sub-scales across self-reported intentions to use each substance in the future.

Results:

Compared to participants who indicated that they intended to smoke in the future, participants who did not intend to try cigarettes scored significantly lower on the hopelessness ($p < .01$), sensation seeking ($p < .01$) and impulsivity ($p < .01$) sub-scales, but not the anxiety sensitivity sub-scale ($p = .84$). Findings for intending to try marijuana were similar: Hopelessness ($p < .01$), sensation seeking ($p < .01$) and impulsivity ($p < .01$) scores were lower among those who did not intend to use marijuana in the future. For those who had endorsed alcohol use at least once but had never been binge drinking, significantly lower scores on the sensation seeking scale ($p < .01$) alone were found among those who did not intend to binge drink in the future.

Conclusions:

Our findings indicate that hopelessness, sensation seeking and impulsivity, as measured by the SURPS, are related to non-using adolescents' future intentions to try these substances. Research focused on understanding how psychological functioning in these domains relates to the formation of substance use intentions is needed to better understand how to modify intentions prior to the initiation of substance use.