Research Spotlight

2400 - Protecting Transfers from Bias and Other Risk Factors in the University Setting
Special Populations, Diversity and Inclusion

The purpose of the project was to identify ways to more comprehensively address pitfalls of university culture through prevention by investigating all aspects of substance use through a social-ecological model. To this aim, this project engaged a team of key stakeholders critical for the UCSB campus climate. This includes UCSB Alcohol and Drug Programs, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; Academic & Staff Assistance Program; Health & Wellness; Institutional Research, Transfer Student Center and faculty and students.

Isaac Bouchard, Undergraduate Student Researcher
Paola Portabales Mosquera de Barros, Undergraduate Student Researcher
Daniel del Cid, Graduate Student Researcher
Jill Sharkey, Associate Dean/ Professor

University of California, Santa Barbara
Protecting Transfers from Bias and other Risk Factors in the University Setting
Isaac Bouchard, Paola Portabales Mosquera de Barros, Daniel A. Del Cid, Jill Sharkey

Introduction
The goal of this project was to investigate:
- How university culture presents risks related to substance use among transfer students.
- Potential solutions by examining attitudes held by faculty and students.
Does the prevalence of substance use differ among 4-year and transfer students?

Methods
- Attitudes towards the campus climate in relation to substance use were measured.
- Qualitative and quantitative surveys were administered to students and faculty.

Procedures
- Approved by a university review board
- Part of a larger study on perceptions and use of substances across the university
- Survey:
  - Administered online
  - Open-ended questions
  - 30 minutes
- Students that participated were entered into a raffle to win a gift card

Sample Characteristics
- 3147 Participants
- Gender:
  - 58.4% women, 41.6% men
- Age:
  - 18-44 years (M = 19.61, SD = 3.74)
- Ethnicity:
  - 42.7% Latino, 10.1% Asian / Pacific Islander, 7.9% Black or African American, 23.6% White or Caucasian, 9.0% Mixed
- Classification:
  - 50.6% freshmen, 25.8% sophomores, 21.1% juniors, 2.2% seniors
- Student Profile:
  - 96.6% Full-Time, 3.4% Part-Time

Results

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Conclusions
- Transfer students’ reported lifetime use of marijuana was not significantly different than that of nontransfer students.
- Use of other illegal drugs was significant by transfer student status, with higher reported use by transfer students than nontransfer students.
- Use of prescription drugs that were not prescribed to the student was also significantly higher for transfer students than nontransfer students.
- Transfer students’ reporting of bias perception was significantly and negatively correlated with mental health challenges.

Implications
- Development of campus-based interventions to decrease substance use and increase healthier coping strategies
- Interventions and outreach efforts to reduce substance misuse should be preventive and proactive in nature.

References

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Contact Information
Isaac Bouchard
Email: isaacbouchard@ucsb.edu