

Feature Article: Is "Binge Drinking's" Binge Over?



Understanding Binge Drinking," a special issue of *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors* (December 2001, Volume 15, #4), should help resolve the controversy about use of the

"binge" measure of college student drinking. In addition to invited contributions by Henry Wechsler and William DeJong, the issue included four scientific research studies which evaluated the efficacy of the 5/4 measure (five drinks for men and four drinks for women once within the last two weeks) in identifying high-risk users of alcohol.

In an overview of the research and arguments in the special issue, editor Kate B. Carey (2001) concluded that the 5/4 measure remains useful for research and epidemiological studies of alcohol use in populations, but that it is not an appropriate term to use for prevention and/or educational purposes. Recommended alternate terms include: heavy episodic drinking, heavier drinking, high-risk drinking, risky drinking and at-risk drinking. She states:

"It may be that more problems than benefits arise from using the term binge drinking to refer to the heavy episodic drinking characteristic of college-aged youth" (p.285).

Three advantages and five disadvantages were presented. Advantages are that the 5/4 measure is a good identifier of risk behavior at the population level, is succinct and informative, and is well documented. Disadvantages are that: it is controversial, that a "binge" is not synonymous with intoxication, it does not predict problems at the individual level, it is insensitive to differences in the number of drinks, and students react negatively to the term. Thus, her rec-

ommendation was that the measure be maintained for research purposes only, but with a different name.

DeJong (2001) provides additional objections to use of the "binge" measure including that it exaggerates problems, does not take into account mediating factors such as time and body size, may obscure program success because of insensitivity to reductions in the number of drinks above five, and fosters misperceptions of the norm which, in turn, exacerbate the problem.

A major contribution is the four scientific research studies in which the 5/4 measure was compared with other measures of alcohol use. The conclusion in all four of these studies is that the 5/4 measure is not appropriate because it may falsely capture non-problem drinkers (Lange & Voas, 2001; Perkins, DeJong and Linkenbach, 2001) and that other measures are more strongly correlated with negative drinking outcomes (Borsari et al, 2001; O'Neil, Parra & Sher, 2001). The box on page 8 provides citations of authors' conclusions from this research. These studies provide unambiguous scientific support for the unanimous recommendation of the Inter-Association Task Force (IATF), representing 21 higher education organizations, against the use of the "binge drinking" measure for college populations.

Thus, while social norms practitioners may choose to continue using this measure for research and comparison purposes along with other measures, it is inadvisable to use in educational and prevention programs or in presentations to students and the media.

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"It may be that more problems than benefits arise from using the term binge drinking to refer to the heavy episodic drinking characteristic of college-aged youth."

Kate B. Carey, special issue editor, *Psychology of Addictive Behavior*

Editor's *notes*

The world of social norms is growing by leaps and bounds and it is hard to keep up with all that is going on. There are currently four federal agencies funding social norms research and interventions, at least four state-wide multi-site projects, interventions with a variety of non-college populations, and interest in applying social norms to topics such as racism, environmental issues, violence prevention and eating issues. Measures of misperceptions are now routinely incorporated into research protocols for AOD studies, many alcohol abuse interventions which show effectiveness have a social norms component, and published research documenting the effectiveness of the model and the validity of the theory is growing.

With so much activity it is hard to do justice here to all that is happening and to acknowledge all of your contributions. In light of this challenge, our goal is to focus on the big picture, keep you informed about critical issues and ideas, best practices, and controversies, and serve as a catalyst to the field. I hope this second issue will serve that purpose.

About this issue. Along with success and visibility comes the danger of being misinterpreted and the possibility of being misrepresented by the very same forces that we are trying to correct. This was certainly the case in a recent *New York Times Magazine* article in which social norms marketing was recognized as one of the “great ideas of 2001.” To provide insight into this problem, four national experts comment on the article.

This issue also contains a discussion of the controversy about the 5/4 “binge drinking” measure, an expanded focus on recent research and a report on a multi-site experimental study being conducted by the Education Development Center.

I look forward to hearing your comments and ideas, your reactions, and your thoughts about how we can best serve you.

May the New Year bring greater health and well-being to all of you and to all those who we serve through our work.

Sincerely,

Alan David Berkowitz, Ph.D.

Editor

Corrections Department.

Apologies to Editorial Board members Jeff Linkenbach and Jeanne Far for our overlooking a misspelled name, incorrect affiliation, or wrong degree. True to the spirit of social norms, the corrections are reported below without the mistakes, so you won't have any problem remembering which is which.

Jeanne Far, Ph.D. Washington State University

Jeff Linkenbach, Ed.D. Montana State University

A correction to the *New York Times*: “the watershed study conducted by H. Wesley Perkins” was actually conducted by both Wes Perkins and Alan Berkowitz.

SNQ Notes & News

Coming Up in the Spring 2002 Issue of *The Social Norms Quarterly*:

In our next issue, we will feature an article applying the social norms approach to sexual assault prevention, in conjunction with the 2nd National Sexual Violence Prevention Conference being held May 28-31, 2002 in Chicago, Ill. In addition, we'll spotlight a book review by Robert Granfield, Ph.D., from the University of Denver's Department of Sociology, that tells us about *Social Norms*, a compilation of essays edited by Michael Hechter and Karl-Dieter Opp.

Upcoming “Working Papers” for February and March 2002

Robert Granfield from the University of Denver is writing a working paper on factors affecting the believability of social norms marketing campaigns to students. Alan Berkowitz and Rich Rice, from the National Social Norms Resource Center, are writing a paper titled “Responding to the Critics” which will address common theoretical and methodological criticisms of social norms.

The Fifth Annual National Conference on the Social Norms Model

... will be held July 10-12, 2002 in Philadelphia, Pa. The conference is co-sponsored by the National Social Norms Resource Center (www.socialnorm.org) and the BACCHUS and GAMMA Peer Education Network (www.bacchus-gamma.org). Detailed program and registration information will be made available on their web sites in the coming months.

Recent Research

Editors Note: Recent research continues to provide support for the theory of social norms and for its effectiveness in preventing and reducing alcohol use and abuse. In a number of recent studies, for example, reductions in drinking were correlated with more accurate perceptions. Other studies provide evidence for the importance of social network or small group norms, help extend the model to issues such as body size and homophobia, and document its efficacy with high-school and middle-school populations. A number of these studies are from the special "binge-drinking" issue of the Psychology of Addictive Behaviors reported on elsewhere in this issue.

Challenging the Collegiate Rite of Passage: A Campus-Wide Social Marketing Media Campaign To Reduce Binge Drinking. (2001) Peggy Glider, Stephen Midyett, Beverly Mills-Novoa, Koreen Johannessen, and Carolyn Collins. *Journal of Drug Education*, Vol 31(2): 207-220. This research study reports the results of a thorough evaluation of the highly regarded social norms campaign at the University of Arizona. Over a three-year period, an overall 29.2 percent decrease in binge-drinking rates was achieved.

Attitudes Toward Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual College Students: The Contribution of Pluralistic Ignorance, Dynamic Social Impact, and Contact Theories. (2001) Anne M. Bowen and Martin J. Bourgeois. *Journal of American College Health*, 50(2):91-96. The authors determined that students incorrectly perceive their friends and the average student on campus to be less accepting of LGB students than they actually are. The misperception was greater and more influential for students in general than for friends. Thus, for homophobia, perceptions of campus climate influence behavior more than per-

ceptions of friends. While increased exposure to LGB individuals was associated with more tolerance, increased exposure did not influence perceptions. This suggests that to change the perception of the larger campus climate with respect to homophobia the correction of misperceptions is more important than exposure. This may be due to the fact that straight individuals are more influenced by their perceptions of straight peers than by what they may learn from individuals of a different sexual orientation.

Self-Organization of Alcohol-Related Attitudes and Belief in a Campus Housing Complex: An Initial Investigation. (2001). *Health Psychology*, Vol. 20, 434-437. This study, by Martin Bourgeois and Anne Bowen, documents the importance of residence hall clusters in shaping drinking practices through shared misperceptions of each others' drinking. In addition to confirming previous research in which drinking attitudes and behavior of friends and the "typical student" are misperceived, a students' residence hall building and floor of residence reliably predicted both personal drinking attitudes and beliefs about the drinking attitudes of other students. Drinking norms varied considerably by residence hall and floor.

Gender Differences in Relationships Among Perceived Attractiveness, Life Satisfaction, and Health in Adults as a Function of Body Mass Index and Perceived Weight. (2001). *Psychology of Men and Masculinity*, 2(2):108-116. Donald R. McCreary and Stanley W. Sadava. In a study of 813 adult men and women found that men and women both misperceive their own weight and attractiveness, with men likely to misperceive themselves as more overweight and women likely to misperceive themselves as more underweight. In addition, overweight men saw themselves as more attractive than did overweight women, while underweight women rated themselves as more attractive than did similarly underweight men. While these

weight-misperceptions are subjective and do not involve social norms for size and attractiveness, it is possible that subjective misperceptions of weight are based on misperceptions of social norms. Thus, studies should be conducted to determine if gender-based misperceptions for weight and attractiveness exist, and if they are correlated with subjective misperceptions.

Progression Into and Out of Binge Drinking Among High School Students.

(2001) *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors*, 15(4):341-349. Elizabeth D'Amico and her colleagues assessed binge drinking rates in a sample of 1,567 high school students and found that among students who drink, 30 percent transitioned into or out of binge drinking during the academic year. Of the different protective and risk factors studied, only the perceived intensity of student alcohol use predicted behavior. Thus, "higher perceptions of student alcohol use were associated with a subsequent escalation of personal drinking." The authors conclude that "One means of deterring escalation or encouraging de-escalation of alcohol use is to provide accurate normative feedback on intensity of student alcohol use."

Preventing Binge Drinking During Early Adolescence: One- and Two-Year Follow-up of a School-Based Preventive Intervention.

(2001). *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors*, 15(4):360-365. Gilbert Botvin and his colleagues evaluated the effectiveness of a school-based prevention program among seventh-grade inner-city youth and found it to be effective in reducing binge drinking at one- and two-year follow-up assessments. The proportion of binge drinkers was over 50 percent lower in the intervention group relative to the control group in follow-up assessments. The intervention provided information on the negative consequences of use, decreasing social acceptability of use, and actual prevalence rates among adults and adolescents. At the one-year follow-up, the

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from the field

The Social Norms Marketing Research Project

Editor's Note: Each issue of the Social Norms Quarterly will feature a model program or intervention that has been successfully implemented in a campus or community setting.

The Social Norms Marketing Research Project (SNMRP) is a national, multi-site study designed to test the effectiveness of campus-based social norms marketing campaigns in reducing college student high-risk drinking. It is based at the Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC), in Newton, Massachusetts in partnership with the Golden Key International Honor Society. It was designed to create experimental conditions to scientifically evaluate the social norms approach by comparing a group of colleges randomly assigned to conduct a social norms campaign with a non-intervention control group. It utilizes a stronger research design than previous evaluation studies, which have been limited to one campus.

The SNMRP is funded by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism and the U.S. Department of Education. There are 32 schools participating in this five-year study, with half implementing a social norms campaign ("Just the Facts") and half not. A random sample of 300 students on each campus is surveyed annually to assess perceptions of student drinking norms and drinking behavior.

Preliminary Results

Baseline data from spring 2000 confirm that students at all 32 colleges overestimate peer alcohol use. Preliminary results from the spring 2001 survey (administered just one semester after initiation of the campaign) suggest that students are seeing the campaign and remembering the message. In general, students at schools with campaigns have more accurate perceptions of peer alcohol use than they did prior to the study, while students at

control schools have less accurate perceptions. Future analysis will determine if these changes in perceptions are also accompanied by changes in behavior.

Interestingly, these data also show similar misperceptions regarding student support for stricter alcohol policies. In other words, students are in favor of stricter policies but incorrectly believe that their peers do not support them. These data may be useful to college and university administrators who wish to implement new alcohol policies, but are reluctant to do so for fear of negative student response. While the most vigorous voices responding to proposed alcohol policies are frequently in protest, this negative backlash belies an underlying "silent majority" of students who are likely to favor new alcohol prevention policies. Thus, campuses that collect information regarding the level of student support for alcohol policies will likely find more support than anticipated. Administrators armed with this factual information can then implement or strengthen alcohol prevention policies and not be deterred by a vocal minority.

Campaign Oversight

An essential component of this study is the development and implementation of highly visible media campaigns on the 16 experimental campuses.

Adequate and effective implementation has been ensured using the following methods:

- ◆ an in-person training event for campus-based personnel
- ◆ the development of a guidebook that outlines each step needed to effectively develop, implement and track the campaign

- ◆ frequent contact with site-based staff via e-mail, phone, and mail, including special features, such as "topic of the week"
- ◆ a rigorous checkpoint schedule to ensure the quality of all sites' messages and materials
- ◆ required progress reports each semester.

Lessons Learned

In addition to evaluating program effectiveness, the SNMRP aims to uncover the methods by which such campaigns can be executed most effectively. Some of the lessons learned so far may be useful to others implementing a multi-site campaign:

- ◆ **Gain the support of top administrators** on campus and let stakeholders know about the campaign ahead of time. Make sure that you have informed key stakeholders on campus. Having key administrators on board with the project will help when problems arise and when soliciting additional resources for your campaign.
- ◆ **Be creative in identifying campaign resources.** Having cash funds is the easiest way to ensure an effective, far-reaching campaign. However, securing free goods and services and dedicated volunteers can enhance the quality and reach of your campaign.
- ◆ **Take care when working with graphic designers,** graphic design classes, and student volunteers. When getting free help, make sure that the goals and strategies of the campaign are clear and that you are up front about expectations for the final product. Graphic designers, whether paid or pro bono, must understand the mission and methods of the campaign. They must also understand that you will be requesting specific changes at several stages of the development process based on audience research.

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From the Field

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- ◆ **Really listen to students.** Audience testing is a key component of any marketing campaign. Many people are surprised when students choose the ad design that they liked the least. When getting feedback from students about the campaign, really listen to what they have to say. The campaign must appeal to them, not you.
- ◆ **Encourage dialogue.** Students, faculty and administrators alike may be critical or skeptical of the campaign, especially in the beginning. Learn to see discussion of the campaign on campus as positive; it means students are seeing and thinking about your message.

Upcoming Guide

The SNMRP has developed a guide that takes the reader through each step needed to plan, develop, pretest and implement a highly effective media campaign. The Higher Education Center is adapting this guide for use by the broader alcohol and drug prevention field. Once finalized, it will be the most comprehensive, practical guide about social norms marketing to date. A future issue of the *Social Norms Quarterly* will contain a review of this important new resource, which should be available in six to nine months.

by Laura Gomberg, M.S.P.H., Project Director, Social Norms Marketing Research Project, Education Development Center

To learn more about this project and data collected so far, see the SNMRP website at www.edc.org/hec/snmp. If you would like to be added to our mailing list to be notified about future publications, including the upcoming guide, please e-mail the staff at socialnorms@edc.org.



Editor's Note: "The Gathering Place" brings together news, announcements, and important developments in the field of social norms.

California State University System Endorses Social Norms. At its July meeting, the Board of Trustees for the California State

University System voted to adopt and implement a new set of comprehensive alcohol guidelines with the goal of encouraging positive behavior and wise choices. Included in the guidelines are recommendations that social norms interventions be implemented by all 23 institutions within the Cal State system. For a copy of the policy and guidelines, go to:

<http://www.calstate.edu/infocenter/reports.shtml>, or contact: Colleen Bentley-Adler, Director, Public Affairs, California State University, cbentley-adler@cal-state.edu

Three National Surveys Document Healthy Drinking Norms Among College Students. In the year 2000, most students drank moderately, heavy drinking was not the norm, most students drank safely and serious harm as a consequence of drinking was uncommon, according to data from three national longitudinal surveys of alcohol use on campus. This data summarizing results from the National College Health Assessment, the Core Alcohol and Other Drug Survey, and the Monitoring the Future project was recently posted on the website of the National Social Norms Resource Center (www.socialnorm.org). These results support the claim that most students drink responsibly or not at all, even though a minority do engage in high-risk drinking. The data provides a good picture of national norms for drinking and can be used to make comparisons with campus or regional data.

Recent Research

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intervention group had increased drinking knowledge, decreased pro-drinking attitudes, and more accurate perceptions of peer use. At the two-year follow-up, accurate perception of peer drinking norms was the only outcome variable associated with continuing reductions in binge drinking.

Examination of the Short-Term Efficacy of a Parent Intervention to Reduce College Student Drinking Tendencies. (2001). *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors*, 15(4):366-372. Rob Turrisi and his colleagues developed a manual for parents of college student freshmen who were interested in exerting a beneficial influence on their child's drinking. In the follow-up evaluation the treatment group reported significantly less negative consequences than individuals in the control group,

along with a reduction in misperceptions of both parents and peer's approval of drinking.

Relative Efficacy of a Brief Motivational Intervention for College Student Drinkers. (2001). *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors*, 15(4):373-379. BASICS, developed by Alan Marlatt and his colleagues at the University of Washington, has extensive research supporting its effectiveness as a one-one intervention for reducing high-risk use. This study, conducted at Auburn University, strengthens these results by including a control group and an educational intervention group in the research design along with a sample of more high-risk drinkers. BASICS is one of many successful interventions to reduce high-risk drinking that include a social norms component.

"Social Norms Marketing" Chosen As One of the "Great Ideas" of 2001

In the Dec. 9 issue of *The New York Times Magazine*, "Social Norms Marketing" was listed as one of the "80 ideas that shook the world (or at least jostled it a little) in 2001." This "Encyclopedia of Ideas" contained the following description of "Social Norms Marketing":

"What's the best way to stop college students from drinking? Invoke their inner lemmings."

Social-norms marketing is the science of persuading people to go along with the crowd. The technique works because people are allelomimetic—that is, like cows and other herd animals, our behavior is influenced by the behavior of those around us....

...Rather than telling students to 'Just say no!' they are saying, in effect, 'Just be like everyone else.'...

The *Social Norms Quarterly* asked a number of national experts if this characterization of the model was accurate. Here are their responses.

Rich Rice (Coordinator for Information and Education at the National Social Norms Resource Center).

The good news is that *The New York Times Magazine* selected social norms as one of the important ideas of 2001. The bad news is that it did so in a manner that is neither entirely flattering nor accurate.

Well, we all know that journalists (even very receptive ones) don't simply repeat verbatim what they're told, but rather interpret it, put it into their own words. Talk as you might about positive norms, the power of misperception and peer influence, and the desire to promote healthy and protective behaviors, your journalist-listener might respond: "So, you're appealing to a person's inner lemming, is that it?" To which the obvious response, of course, is: "No, we're appealing to the inner person, and talk-

ing about what they're doing right."

Unfortunately, this conversation with the *New York Times* reporter never occurred, so there was no chance to clarify and positively reframe what the social norms approach is about. Sometimes these opportunities arise, and sometimes they don't: that's the good news along with the bad. And try as we might to steer an interview in one or another direction, we won't always succeed.

So, as we all continue to discuss and explain the social norms approach, we need to be mindful of the fact that we are necessarily engaged in a process that is not entirely under our control. Communication is like that: fraught with both challenges and possibilities.

William DeJong, (Director, Higher Education Center and Professor, Boston University School of Public Health).

For most college students, a primary motivation is to fit in with their peers, especially when they are making decisions about alcohol consumption. This is exactly why the social norms marketing strategy is so important: if students are inclined to conform to their peers, then they might as well conform to accurate rather than misperceived drinking norms.

Now we come to the *Times's* crack about students avoiding dangerous drinking by finding their "inner lemmings." Being influenced to drink less by knowing that most students are not heavy drinkers is portrayed as mindless herd behavior. In contrast, the *Times* implies, choosing to be a heavy drinker is the behavior of the assertive, intelligent individualist. That's a dangerous

The New York Times Magazine Description of Social Norms Marketing

What's the best way to stop college students from drinking? Invoke their inner lemmings. Social-norms marketing is the science of persuading people to go along with the crowd. The technique works because people are allelomimetic—that is, like cows and other herd animals, our behavior is influenced by the behavior of those around us....

...Rather than telling students to "Just say no!" they are saying, in effect, "Just be like everyone else."...

message. How ironic that, in praising social norms marketing, the *Times* would describe it in a way that serves to undermine its effectiveness.

Patricia Fabiano, Ph.D. (Program Director of Prevention and Wellness Services, Western Washington University).

For those of us who have successfully applied the social norms approach to reducing heavy, frequent drinking on campus, the recognition that recently came from the *New York Times* was indeed heartening. The *Times* acknowledged the social norms approach as one of the "great ideas of 2001," and in doing so, shined a spotlight on social norms research far brighter and broader than any 10 academic journals combined could do.

However in the journalistic retelling of the social norms story, the *New York Times* reporter described the social norms approach as "appealing to one's

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inner lemmings,” and by using these words, conjured up images of a rush to conformity and fueled the argument that social norms campaigns encourage students to reject independent thought and be like “everyone else.”

As a practitioner who has applied the social norms approach to the reduction of heavy, frequent drinking and to more subtle issues like violence and prejudice reduction, I think we need to seize moments like these and reframe them in ways that help people understand the theoretical underpinnings of the social norms approach.

Deep within the theories and strategies

“This is exactly why the social norms marketing strategy is so important: if students are inclined to conform to their peers, then they might as well conform to accurate rather than misperceived drinking norms.”

**William DeJong,
Director, Higher
Education Center and
Professor, Boston
University School of
Public Health**

used by social norms practitioners is a world-view that says most people, most college students, most youth are good, not in a moralistic or dualistic “good/ bad” sense, but basically decent, law-abiding, caring, hard-working, and in the case of college students, either non-drinkers

or moderate, responsible drinkers.

Contrary to the cynicism that has characterized much social commentary about young people throughout the 1990s, the social norms approach focuses on the many who do not want the negative consequences associated with alcohol abuse and drug use; who want healthy, peer relationships; who are peaceful negotiators, not violent; and

who have egalitarian yearnings for a just world.

When cultural commentators like the *New York Times* reporter choose to represent the social norms approach as one that appeals to our “inner lemmings,” perhaps it is the time for us to be sanguine and reframe such descriptions as popular attempts at describing the urge to goodness, wholeness, health and justice that is tapped into and uncovered by the social norms approach. Was it “inner lemmings” that raised billions of dollars for survivors of Sept. 11 and caused a wave of positive patriotism the likes of which many of us have never seen before in our lifetimes? Or was it the instantaneous permission to stop and act on our own finest underlying personal attitudes and values granted by witnessing startling events and the incredibly heroic behavior of people in New York and Washington?

“Inner lemmings” and the suggestion of conformity is not the language those of us who have successfully applied the social norms approach would have chosen. But when you step back and look at the idea that we, like “everybody else” are good, caring, just and in the case of college students, either non-drinkers or moderate drinkers, perhaps we can use such (mis)representations to our advantage.

Alan D. Berkowitz (Independent Consultant and Editor of the *Social Norms Report*).

The “conformity criticism” has become one of the more popular misinterpretations of social norms. It provokes the question: to what values or actions does the social norms approach appeal? Are we suggesting that individuals should behave a certain way because the majority does? I believe that this is only partly true as an explanation for what we do.

Certainly students and the rest of us are influenced to some extent by a conformity motivation. To the degree that this is true, an effective social norms campaign replaces conformity to unhealthy behavior with conformity to more healthy behavior. If this were all that we were doing I believe that it would be enough to justify the approach. But there is something else.

Changing perceptions provides permission for individuals to act in congruence with underlying personal attitudes and values. This is entirely consistent with the goal of student development theory and higher education in general to create individual men and women whose behavior is congruent with his or her own values. In fact, research suggests that misperceptions are in fact what promote conformity because misperceptions encourage people to act in opposition to their convictions.

As far as lemmings go, I think the reporter has it backwards. The lemmings myth is about group self-destructive herd behavior. In this case, the lemmings are the students who drink more than they want to because of a misperception. Drinking in a more healthy fashion, even if in part for conformity reasons, is not lemming behavior.

The full text of the New York Times article is posted on the National Social Norms Resource Center website (www.socialnorm.org).

“As we all continue to discuss and explain the social norms approach, we need to be mindful of the fact that we are necessarily engaged in a process that is not entirely under our control.”

Rich Rice

Binge Drinking

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Conclusions of Research Studies on the 5/4 "Binge" Measure

- ◆ "Results indicate that the currently used definitions of binge drinking predict relatively low BACs and may not be capturing the excessive-drunkenness quality of the term. Consumption duration may explain the lower BACs." (Lange & Voas, 2001).
- ◆ "The use of this term to describe drinking events that do not produce illegal BACs or significant impairment may affect the credibility of responsible-drinking campaigns." (Lange & Voas, 2001).
- ◆ "A sizeable percentage of young adults in Montana who would be labeled as 'binge drinkers' by this definition actually do not reach estimated maximum BAC levels that public health experts associate with high-risk impairment." (Perkins, DeJong & Linkenbach, 2001).
- ◆ "Results indicated that neither binge drinking frequency nor BAL were more highly related to alcohol-related problems than was weekly drinking." (Borsari et al, 2001).
- ◆ "Subjective-effect measures of heavy drinking (i.e. times high or drunk) appear to perform similarly to our binge-drinking measure with respect to covariation with alcohol-related problem indicators. These results suggest that although the binge-drinking indicator is clearly associated with concomitant alcohol-related problems, it may not deserve special status as an indicator of problematic alcohol involvement during the college years." (O'Neil, Parra & Sher, 2001).

Citations from *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors*, Volume 15, #4.

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All of these articles are found in *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors*, Volume 15, #4.

Contributions:

Do you have a promising practice or successful application that you would like to contribute to the *Social Norms Quarterly*? Would you be interested in reviewing research and/or program materials or making recommendations to your colleagues? Is someone doing creative work in this field that should be recognized? If you have anything that you would like to contribute to the *Social Norms Quarterly*, or if you would like to suggest a topic for a working paper, please contact:

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