

# The Report on Social Norms

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## Presentations on Social Norms at Annual Meetings: 2004

### An Overview of The 2004 National Social Norms Conference

By Richard Rice, MA – National Social Norms Resource Center

#### Editor's Note

This Working Paper contains reviews of eleven social norms presentations offered at professional conferences in 2004. Although they represent only a small percentage of social norms programs presented at these conferences, they provide a good snapshot of the field in its current form. In addition to more traditional alcohol prevention programs, interventions are reviewed that focus on sexual assault prevention, seatbelt use, positive parenting practices, and BAC feedback, in populations of college students, high school students, and parents of middle-school students.

Rich Rice offers an overview of presentations at the National Social Norms Conference in the first article. Four additional sessions are summarized that were presented at the Department of Education's Annual Meeting last month. These ten summaries only provide a glimpse into the variety and range of social norms presentations offered at these two conferences. My apologies to the many programs that could not be reviewed here due to space limitations. I have taken the liberty of adding a few comments to each session report to share my perspective on the importance of each study.

The final abstract is of a social norms intervention to prevent sexual assault conducted with high school students. It is authored by Mary Heppner and her students. Mary is one of the top sexual assault prevention researchers in the country and this study is extremely well-conducted and methodologically sound. I believe that it will break new ground for the field of social norms when it is published.

Best wishes to all as we approach the New Year.  
Alan Berkowitz  
Editor, *The Report on Social Norms*  
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The 2004 National Social Norms Conference, which took place July 21-23 in Chicago, provided a wide array of presentations of benefit to practitioners, administrators, and stakeholders at high schools, colleges and universities, and community-based health agencies. The optional pre-conference seminar, conducted by H. Wesley Perkins and Michael Haines, was the largest ever held, with nearly one hundred participants. This intensive seminar is designed specifically for those conference attendees who are relatively new to the social norms approach and who wish to gain a solid understanding of the underlying theory and its application to the field of health promotion.

With nearly thirty sessions, this year's conference was both large and extremely varied. A number of sessions were devoted to various aspects of project implementation, such as the use and analysis of focus group research, message and media development, market testing, and the collection and analysis of quantitative data. Given the large number of sessions and the wide range of material covered, this overview will be limited to a description of a number of key findings presented at the conference.

#### **"Reducing Misperceptions of College Student Drinking Norms Lowers Risk: Results of a Nationwide Evaluation of Alcohol Abuse Prevention Efforts"**

*Presenters: H. Wesley Perkins, Ph.D., Professor of Sociology, Hobart and William Smith Colleges (Perkins@hws.edu) and Michael P. Haines, M.S., Director, National Social Norms Resource Center (Mhaines@niu.edu)*

#### **Description of Study**

Research conducted over the past two decades has consistently identified a wide range of negative consequences affecting a sizeable minority of college student drinkers, including various injuries to self, injuries to others, and institutional costs. Given the seriousness of the issue and the wide array of prevention initiatives currently available, it is critically important that colleges and universities be able to identify the correlates of alcohol abuse prevention programs that are actually effective in reducing alcohol-related harm. This session reported results of the largest nationwide study to date assessing the extent of misperception among students about their peer drinking norms and the effectiveness of reducing these misperceptions in preventing alcohol abuse. The data was collected from 76,145 students attending 130 colleges and universities throughout the United States in the National College Health Assessment Survey between 2000 and 2003. Four critical questions were examined in this study:

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- 1) How prevalent are the misperceptions of college student drinking norms across campuses nationwide?
- 2) How important are perceived norms in predicting high-risk drinking behavior?
- 3) What impact does exposure to alcohol education information in general have on the perception of campus drinking norms?
- 4) Do schools where alcohol education is associated with less misperception have less personal alcohol abuse among their students?

**Results**

The data analysis for this sample produced the following findings:

- 71% of college students nationwide overestimate the level of alcohol consumption among their peers. No matter what the individual campus norm for drinking—be it low, moderate, or relatively high—a consistently large percentage of students erroneously believe the norm is to drink more than what is really being consumed by the majority of students.
- Students' perceptions of the drinking norm on their campus was the strongest predictor of the amount of alcohol personally consumed in comparison with the influence of all other demographic characteristics that commonly predict personal drinking levels.
- A student's perception of the norm is much more influential in determining his or her drinking behavior than is the amount actually being consumed by most other peers on campus.
- At over 90% of schools prevention program information is not associated with reducing misperceptions. Many programs actually inflate misperceptions.

- At schools where misperceptions of peer norms are lowered by exposure to prevention information, high risk drinking behavior and negative consequences are reduced by as much as one-third in comparison to schools where programs have no impact on or actually inflate misperceptions of the norms.

*(This ground-breaking study provides important empirical support for the social norms model. It shows that misperceived norms are a pervasive problem nationally, and that on campuses where misperceptions are reduced as a result of drug prevention efforts, high-risk drinking behavior and negative consequences are reduced. Due to limitations of the database it was not possible for the authors of this study to determine or describe the specific content of the alcohol education information that students were exposed to. However, the study does tell us that, whatever the cause, campuses that successfully reduce misperceptions are healthier than campuses that don't. This study is more methodologically sound than a previous multi-campus study purporting to evaluate social norms efforts—see RSN 3(1)—Sept 2003 for a review of this study. — Ed.)*

**“Using Social Norms to Promote Health among College Student Athletes: Results from the HWS Most Valuable Players Project and the NCAA STARR Project”**

*Presenters: H. Wesley Perkins, Ph.D., Professor of Sociology, Hobart and William Smith Colleges (Perkins@hws.edu) and Sarah Dufresne, Assistant Director of Education Outreach, National Collegiate Athletic Association (sdufresne@ncaa.org).*

**Summary of Presentation**

Previous research has revealed higher rates of health risk behaviors among intercollegiate student athletes compared to other undergraduates. In addition, student athletes also hold exaggerated perceptions of the norms for student athlete alcohol and tobacco use similar to norms misperceptions documented in student populations in general. In 2001 two projects were launched as social norms interventions to test the possibility of reducing these misperceptions and promoting health among student athletes at Division II schools. The Most Valuable Players Project (MVP) developed at Hobart and William Smith Colleges (HWS), supported by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, designed an intensive social norms intervention for student athletes modeled after the highly successful social norms intervention previously developed at HWS for students in general.

The MVP project included an anonymous web-based survey about personal attitudes, behaviors, and perceived peer norms that was conducted among student athletes at HWS, and print, electronic, and peer communication strategies promoting accurate positive norms to reduce destructive misperceptions (<http://alcohol.hws.edu/mvp>). Adopting the HWS MVP model, The STARR MVP Project was implemented by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) at five Division III schools throughout the Northeast and Midwest with annual data collection between 2001-2003.

Results are based on 1,140 student athlete survey respondents in the HWS MVP Project and 3,487 respondents in the five-school STARR MVP Project.

Highlights of HWS MVP results from the pre (fall 2001) and post (fall 2002/2003) comparison include:

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*Social Norms Conference**continued from page two*

- 46% reduction in the proportion of student athletes drinking more than once peer week
- 30% reduction in the proportion of student athletes reaching a BAC of .08 or greater when drinking at parties or bars
- 34% reduction in the proportion of student athletes experiencing frequent negative consequences due to drinking during the academic term
- 38% reduction in the proportion of student athletes using tobacco weekly
- A 2.5 hours per week increase in time spent in academic activities, on average, for each student athlete

Results of STARR MVP Project replication at five other NCAA Division III schools from the pre (fall 2001) and post (fall 2002/2003) comparison include:

- 18% reduction in the proportion of student athletes drinking more than once per week
- A reduction of almost 2 drinks, on average, for each student athlete per two week period
- 25% reduction in the proportion of student athletes experiencing frequent negative consequences due to drinking during the academic term
- 31% reduction in the proportion of student athletes using tobacco weekly
- A one-hour per week increase in time spent in academic activities, on average, for each student athlete

*(This study is noteworthy for a number of reasons. First, it shows that a successful social norms intervention can be simultaneously replicated in a number of different schools. It is the second report of a social norms intervention implemented at multiple campuses, the first being a multi-campus DWI study conducted in Minnesota—see RSN 3(6)-Working Paper #14, March 2004.*

*Second, it is an example of secondary or indicated prevention and suggests that social norms interventions can be successfully adapted to address the needs of special populations such as athletes. Third, it is one of the few social norms interventions to integrate normative messages into campus media and technical systems. — Ed.)*

### **“An Integrated Approach to Reduce High-Risk Drinking at Florida State University”**

*Presenters: Rick Howell, B.S., Project Manager, Florida Center for Prevention Research (rlh1995@mailier.fsu.edu), Dina Wilke, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Florida State University School of Social Work, and Michael P. Smith, B.S., M.P.A., Director, Florida Center for Prevention Research (MPSmith@admin.fsu.edu)*

#### **Program Description**

This presentation examined the impact of a three-year integrated approach to high-risk drinking at Florida State University (FSU), a large public institution with 37,000 students. FSU’s determination is to change perceptions that drive behavior by revealing a more balanced picture of student life. Baseline data from the National College Health Assessment Survey (NCHA) revealed that 49.4% of students surveyed reported having four or fewer drinks the last time they partied/socialized; however, their perception was that only 24.7% of their peers were drinking a similar amount. In addition, 17.3% reported abstaining from drinking, while they perceived that only 1% of their peers were abstaining.

Primary Normative Messages have included: “Celebrating the University’s Strengths,” “Typical Student,” and “Skeptical Bubble,” a concept borrowed from Dr. Linda Hancock of Virginia Commonwealth University.

Primary Marketing Methods have been: Print Media: 1/2 page four-color and B/W ads in school newspaper, 18-1/2 x 11 four-color bus cards on campus buses and for use as posters at authorized posting locations around campus, 8x10 four-color prints of ads for distribution in freshman residence halls; Electronic Media: Backgrounds and screen savers on computers in campus computer labs; and billboards at locations around campus with high student traffic.

#### **Project Results (Comparison of 2002-2004 NCHA Data)**

Since 2002, high-risk drinking at FSU has declined 13.8 percent overall, with a 15 percent reduction among male students and a 5 percent reduction among female students. In addition, there has been a 21 percent increase in the number of students that reported abstaining from drinking.

*(Florida State is one of a few schools in the “Matter of Degree” program that has combined environmental management interventions with a social norms media campaign. From an evaluation point of view, it is not possible to determine to what extent the programs’ success is due to the social norms component, the environmental management component, or both. It is interesting to note that in an evaluation of “Matter of Degree” programs published in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine by Henry Wechsler and colleagues there was no acknowledgement that at least two of the AMOD programs evaluated also conducted social norms interventions on their campuses. See RSN 3(3)—Nov 2004 for a review of this study. — Ed.)*

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*Social Norms Conference**continued from page three***“MOST of Us Prevent Drinking and Driving: A Successful Social Norms Campaign to Reduce Impaired Driving among Young Adults in Western Montana”**

*Presenters: Jeff Linkenbach, Ed.D., Director of the Montana Social Norms Project (jwl@montana.edu) and H. Wesley Perkins, Ph.D., Professor of Sociology, Hobart and William Smith Colleges (perkins@hws.edu)*

**Summary of Presentation**

The MOST of Us Prevent Drinking and Driving Campaign is the first successful demonstration applying social norms theory to the problem of impaired driving in a large statewide population. This controlled social norms intervention was designed to reduce risky impaired driving behavior among Montana's young adults aged 21-34. An initial campaign survey found that while only 20% of Montana young adults had driven within one hour of consuming two or more drinks in the previous month, 92% of respondents *perceived* that the *majority* of their peers had done so. Such a disparity between perception and behavior is precisely what social norms theory predicts, and by correcting this misperception, the MOST of Us Prevent Drinking and Driving Campaign was able to reduce the prevalence of impaired driving in its target population.

With funding from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), a 15-month media campaign was carried out in a 15-county intervention area in the western portion of Montana. This intervention area is home to half of the state's 21-34 year old population. This quasi-experimental intervention exposed the selected counties to high doses of the

social norms message, and then compared the resulting changes in perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors with the eastern Montana counties that served as the control group. The treatment counties were dosed with high-intensity paid social norms radio and television commercials, theater slides, posters, billboards, local and college newspaper advertisements, and promotional items bearing social norms messages. Most of this media communicated the normative message:

*“MOST Montana Young Adults (4 out of 5) Don't Drink and Drive.”*

Additional messages focused on the use of designated drivers and other protective factors, and some were tailored to particular markets with county-specific statistics. A control area in the eastern half of the state was exposed to low levels of free social norms media, local and college newspaper advertisements, and promotional items as well as the fear-based messages commonly produced by other sources. Specific controls were instigated to eliminate or severely restrict the use of fear-based media efforts in the treatment counties.

A baseline and three follow-up statewide surveys were conducted at various points before, during, and after the campaign with a total of over 3,500 respondents. Analysis of this self-report data showed unequivocally that the high-intensity social norms campaign improved the accuracy of the target audience's perceived norms and increased their healthy, preventative attitudes and behaviors regarding impaired driving. Compared to data from the control counties, statistically significant results among young adults in the targeted counties showed:

- An 8% relative decrease in the percentage who believed that the average Montanan their age drove after drinking during the previous month;
- An 11% relative increase in the percentage who accurately perceived

that the majority of their peers use a non-drinking designated driver;

- A 14% relative decrease in the percentage who reported personally driving after drinking;
- A 15% relative increase in the percentage always using non-drinking designated drivers;
- A 17% relative increase in the percentage who supported passing a law to decrease the Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) legal limit for driving to .08%.

By the end of the campaign, young adults in the intervention counties were seeing the normative environment more accurately in comparison to their counterparts in the control counties. The reduction of their misperceptions about the pervasiveness of impaired driving among their peers led to positive changes in their personal attitudes and to a reduction in risky behaviors. In contrast, young adults residing in the control counties who were exposed to the traditional fear-based messages reported *increased* risks associated with impaired driving.

This research provides practical implications for traffic safety programmers, challenges widely-held assumptions about the efficacy of fear-based media, and signals the need for future research on the behavior-changing potential of promoting positive norms.

*(This is the second successful social norms DWI study, the first being a multi-campus study conducted in Minnesota - for a summary, see RSN 3(6)-Working Paper #14, March 2004. It is also the third successful state-wide intervention conducted by the Montana Social Norms Project, which has also hosted well-evaluated studies documenting increased seatbelt use and reduced tobacco use among youth in Montana. —Ed.)*

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## Social Norms Conference

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### “A Community-Based Social Norms Campaign to Promote Positive Parenting Practices”

*Presenters: William Bacon, Ph.D., Associate VP for Research and Evaluation and Michele Bayley, MPH, Director of Community Initiatives, Planned Parenthood of New York City.*

#### Program Description

Planned Parenthood of New York City has recently launched a community campaign targeting parents of teens aged 11-17. The campaign is intended to complement youth-focused programming designed to help young people avoid sexual risk-taking, including early intercourse. The parent campaign takes a social norms approach to promoting positive parenting practices. An extensive community-based planning process was followed by focus groups with parents in the target community in order to identify specific practices that parents were using to help protect their teens from sexual risk-taking. This information then formed the basis of a parent survey, which was conducted with a randomly selected sample of parents in order to determine actual and perceived norms for each of the identified parenting practices. The survey identified large and pervasive misperceptions of parenting-related norms.

#### Baseline Survey Findings

In the initial survey conducted as part of this project, the following findings were reported:

- Perceived: 20% of parents always meet their teen’s closest friends
- Actual: 65% of parents always meet their teen’s closest friends
- Perceived: 25% of parents never allow their teen to go to parties at homes where they know there won’t be any parents
- Actual: 78% of parents never allow their teens to go to parties at homes

where there won’t be any parents

- Perceived: 33% of parents always talk to their teen about the dangers of sexually transmitted diseases
- Actual: 80% of parents always talk to their teens about the dangers of sexually transmitted diseases
- Perceived: 30% of parents always talk to their teens about what might happen if she got/he got someone pregnant
- Actual: 70% of parents always talk with their teen about what might happen if she got/he got someone pregnant
- Perceived: 37% of parents always praise their teen when he or she makes good choices
- Actual: 87% of parents always praise their teen when he or she makes good choices
- Perceived: 37% of parents always tell their teen how much they care about him or her
- Actual: 90% of parents always tell their teen how much they care about him or her

The misperceptions found as a result of this survey informed the development of a social norms marketing campaign directed at the community. Follow-up data was planned for fall 2004.

*(Planned Parenthood’s Parent Campaign is a companion to a sexual risk-taking campaign that is already underway in a number of New York City middle schools. Planned Parenthood has documented misperceptions of middle-school students’ norms for sexual activity and found that over-perceiving the norm is correlated with risky sexual behavior. Their media campaign is directed towards correcting these misperceptions and was described in RSN 3(6)—March 2004. The goal*

*of the parent campaign is to enlist parental support in supporting the norms that are being addressed in the student campaign. —Ed.)*

### “Male College Students’ Willingness to Prevent Rape: The Impact of Personal Attitudes, Referent Group Norms, and Peer Educators”

*Presenters: Jerold L. Stein, Ed.D., Dean of Students, Stony Brook University (jstein@notes.cc.sunysb.edu) and Jeffrey A. Barnett, Academic Advisor, Stony Brook University*

#### Program Description

This session was devoted to a discussion of the predictors of male college students’ willingness to prevent rape in the context of social norms and peer influence theories. It included an overview of the theoretical and conceptual socio-cultural models of human behavior reported by Dewey (1916), Astin (1993), Perkins and Berkowitz (1986) and Gladwell (2000) in the context of rape prevention programming. Results were reported of a research study on a college campus examining factors (actual norms; referent group norms; and exposure to peer educators) that contribute to male college students’ Willingness to Prevent Rape (WPR). The researchers also examined the difference between actual and the perceptions of referent group norms.

#### Findings

Consistent with findings of other research studies and through data analysis, seven themes emerged from this study:

- The potent influence of the peer group and other socio-cultural variables
- That most men are uncomfortable with rape supportive attitudes and behaviors

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# The National Meeting on Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse and Violence Prevention in Higher Education.

## Oct. 16-19, 2004, Arlington, VA

### “Web-Based Delivery of Normative Feedback to Deter Heavy Drinking Among Freshmen”

Dennis Thombs  
(*dthombs@educ.kent.edu*), Scott Dotterer, Scott Olds, Cynthia Osborn (Kent State University) and Alan Berkowitz (Independent Consultant)

An intervention based on Social Norms Theory was designed to reduce high-risk drinking in freshmen living in residence halls. The project strategy was based on findings from a recent field study of nighttime drinking at Kent State University (KSU). One objective of the proposed project was to test whether credible and personally relevant normative feedback provided via the Web, and based heavily on blood alcohol concentration (BAC) data, would reduce alcohol intoxication levels as well as self-reported drinking behaviors and consequences, in an intervention residence hall compared to a control residence hall. A second objective was to determine whether the intervention can increase help-seeking behavior among high-risk drinkers. The presenters found that in both residence halls a majority of the BACs on all four nights of the week are .00 (no drinking). Moreover, the mean BACs in both halls have ranged from just .01 to .02 on all nights of the week. These BACs were substantially lower than those observed among the general population of freshmen living in residence halls at KSU. In addition, 14% of the residents in the intervention hall and 30% of the residents in the control hall did not engage in high-risk drinking. This difference suggests that compared to the control, the intervention was moderately successful in deterring heavy, episodic

drinking. However, when these two rates are considered within the larger context of drinking on this campus, it appears that both the experimental and control conditions may have had a relatively large positive effect on heavy, episodic drinking. For example, in a random web-survey conducted in 2004 it was found that 47% had engaged in high-risk drinking, while in a random survey of undergraduate classes, it was found that 55% of residence hall students had engaged in high-risk drinking.

*(This study is part of a growing trend utilizing BAC normative feedback in social norms campaigns. While collecting BAC's on the spot is more labor intensive, it has the advantage of being more objective than survey responses and is thus less subject to question by students. —Ed.)*

### “Five Years Later—A Communication Theory Perspective on Social Norms and Environmental Management”

Nancy Harper  
(*harpern@gvsu.edu*), David Jones, and Shannon Welsh, Grand Valley State University (GVSU)

ALERT Labs employs an environmental management approach with the central focus on “social norms” as interpreted from a “communication and social construction of reality” theoretical perspective. The target audience is first-year students, with other students, faculty, and staff as the secondary audience. ALERT’s successful comprehensive prevention program was developed over the past five years at GVSU.

Programs of ALERT Labs include:

1. *Research*: a survey instrument is used to measure student drinking

behaviors and attitudes across campus; an annual survey, conducted each April, of a random sample of all GVSU students serves as the ultimate outcome measure; also includes periodic use of focus groups, interviews, and evaluation of archival data.

2. *Curriculum Infusion*: video production and development of educational and training modules with the assistance of faculty for use in *FS 100 Freshman Seminar*;
3. *Passport Social Mentoring Program*: for the first six weeks of the semester, upper class students mentor incoming freshmen and help them adjust to university life; includes two living centers housing 300 students who have contracted to be substance-free; *The Passport Student Organization (PSO)*: affiliated with the national BACCHUS organization, a student group sponsoring alcohol-free weekend activities funded by Student Senate. PSO sponsors an annual “Overnighter” which attracts some 3,000 students and celebrates alcohol-free fun.
4. *ALERT SOC It To Me Players (The Players)*: a student troupe presenting Health Education Theatre;
5. *Misperceptions Media Campaign*: videos, newspaper ads, flyers, t-shirts, etc. to inform students and others that “nearly 80% of GVSU students drink moderately or not at all.”
6. *Pathways Recovery Program*: a community of students who are in recovery, who offer 12-step meetings for the community plus a collection of apartments reserved for “Recovery Housing;”

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*The National Meeting on Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse and Violence Prevention in Higher Education**continued from page six*

7. *The ALERT Labs Website*: contains descriptions and results of programs;
8. *Policies and Procedures Revision*: review of existing policies and procedures that have supported a student drinking culture; an ongoing effort focusing on law enforcement and on practices that are fundamental in a variety of student activities,
9. *Community Outreach*: collaboration with community groups.

Outcomes of the ALERT Labs' Program, comparing the 1999 baseline to 2002, are that the percentage of students who drank heavily on three or more occasions per week decreased by 59 percent; the percentage of students who drank heavily decreased by 32 percent; the percentage who drank moderately increased by 25 percent; the percentage who drank moderately or abstained increased by 19 percent; and the misperception that "everyone" drinks weekly decreased by 24 percent.

*(A noteworthy aspect of this campaign is the "Passport Social Mentoring Program" and "Passport Student Organization." These activities give visibility to upper-class students who have chosen to live substance free and provide a clear message that it is possible to live on campus without drinking. — Ed.)*

### **"Taking Your Social Norms Campaign to the Next Level"**

*Kim Dude, University of Missouri, Columbia (DudeK@missouri.edu)*

The University of Missouri Columbia, has been implementing a social norms campaign for over five years. In spite of some promising results, the feedback from students was that they were tired of it and simply did not believe it. Last year, the campus's Wellness Resource Center created a new survey and asked several additional

questions which provided the opportunity to expand the focus and move completely away from focusing on the number of drinks to other choices students were making about their health, and placed emphasis on the protective factors that students use, such as choosing not to drink the night before a test or project or using a designated driver. This new approach has taken these social norming efforts to a new level. Students like it, remember it, and most importantly believe it. Research indicates a decrease in the at-risk drinking rate for the first time in several years. The new social norming messages use the theme, "Most of Us."

*(Sustainability is a critical issue for social norms campaigns that continue beyond a few years. Messages can get stale and seem overly-familiar to students. This program reminds us that we can keep things "fresh" so that social norms campaigns continue to have powerful effects. — Ed.)*

### **"Using Blood Alcohol Concentration With Social Norms Marketing to Reduce Negative Consequences"**

*Jennifer Bauerle, University of Virginia (jab9qp@cms.mail.virginia.edu)*

From 1999 through 2004, the University of Virginia has conducted a variety of drug prevention efforts using social norms. Last year we re-focused our efforts to address BAC. We had determined that drinks per week were a primitive predictor of negative consequences and that a more sensitive measurement was needed. Other researchers determined that sharing normative blood alcohol concentration (BAC) information from a group of college peers with an individual student, who is a drinker with a high average BAC, could result in the student drinking less. Using social norms

marketing methods, it is possible to apply this individual feedback approach to large groups of students who have been identified as high-risk consumers of alcohol. This was the focus of our efforts in 2003-2004, the sixth year of our social norms marketing campaign to curb high-risk drinking. The BAC normative message was introduced by integrating the concept into spring issues of the *Stall Seat Journal* monthly poster series, a campus-wide poster campaign, and wallet-sized BAC cards.

Following these efforts, the 2004 Health Promotion Alcohol Survey was administered to a random sample of 5,158 undergraduate students, with a response rate of 50%. The results of the survey are encouraging. Most important to the program, however, is what students are experiencing as a result of their drinking. This is measured in terms of negative consequences. When looking at all UVA undergraduate students, 10 of the 17 negative consequences declined in the year 2004 from 2003. More than 12% reported fewer injuries as a negative consequence of their drinking since 2003. Driving under the influence decreased by 9% over the last year and 26% since 2001. Overall, the social norms campaign is making positive headway with the negative consequences associated with high-risk drinking.

*(An interesting feature of the UVA social norms efforts is that they have successfully reduced negative consequences of drinking without impacting frequency and quantity. Other studies suggest that social norms campaigns may impact frequency without impacting quantity, and vice-versa. These findings suggest that not all successful social norms campaigns will have the same effect, and that we still do not clearly understand the specific mechanisms of change and why they differ across campuses. — Ed.)*

## Social Norms Conference

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- That may men underestimate their peers' willingness to prevent rape and their disapproval of rape supportive myths
- That most men believe that men need to play a role in rape prevention and are willing to prevent rape
- Men's willingness to prevent rape is consistent with masculine ideals, e.g., being "protective"
- How men define rape may be a critical factor in men's willingness to prevent rape
- Ethnic differences are evident

### Ancillary Findings

In addition, the study reported the following views regarding responsibility for rape prevention:

- 71% of the men said that men and women need to share equally the responsibility for preventing rape
- Nearly 86% of the men indicated that either men alone or women and men need to share equally the responsibility for preventing rape

*(One of the very interesting findings of this study is the fact that men's definition of rape influences their willingness to prevent it. Thus, if men can be taught to more accurately define consent and label rape they might be motivated to take action to prevent it. This finding, along with the finding of Fabiano et al that men's willingness to prevent rape is a function of whether other*

## The Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association. August 2004, Honolulu, Hawaii

### Acquaintance rape and male high school students: Can a Social Norms intervention change attitudes and perceived norms?

*Theresa L. Hillenbrand-Gunn and Mary J. Heppner (University of Missouri-Columbia), Pam A. Mauch (Independent Practice, Columbia, Missouri) and Hyun-Joo Park (University of Missouri-Columbia)*

This study investigated the effects of a social norms based intervention on high school males' rape supportive attitudes and behaviors, as well as their views of their peers' norms. The experimental group participated in a 3-session intervention on acquaintance rape, which incorporated local social norms. Following each session, the participants completed a Thought Listing Form. At post-test and 4-week follow-up they again completed the quantitative measures. As hypothesized, the participants' ratings of their peers were significantly different (worse) from the peers' ratings of themselves at pre-test regarding attitudes toward sexual violence. Furthermore, the experimental group participants' ratings of their peers were significantly more accurate following the intervention, indicating they viewed their peers as less rape supportive. At post-test, the experimental group demonstrated a significant decrease in rape supportive attitudes (IRMA), as compared to the control group, and this decrease was maintained at follow-up.

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*men are perceived as willing to prevent rape, suggest two important new directions for men's rape prevention programming. The Fabiano study was reviewed in RSN 3(3)-November 2003 —Ed.)*

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