



CONTACT: Joe Sutherland, Burness Communications
301-652-1558
Prabhu Ponshe, Health Matrix
703-918-4930
202-942-1538 (May 25-27, 2005)
703-615-2466 (cell)

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Editor's Note: The following research will be released at the Society for Prevention Research (www.preventionresearch.org) 2005 annual meeting, May 25-27, 2005, Washington, DC.

STRATEGIES TO STOP DRINKING PROBLEMS ON CAMPUS

Colleges consider changes to dorm life, campus concerts

- What are some of the strategies that colleges are using to prevent alcohol and drug abuse among students?
- Does converting from a 'dry' to a 'wet campus increase student drinking?
- How do the social norms of dorms, and the degree to which students bond with their dorm-mates, affect alcohol and drug use?

Excessive drinking and drug abuse are a persistent problem on college campuses. Colleges can pursue a variety of strategies to fight the problem: they can target individual students for education or other interventions; they can offer all students an alternative to drinking and drug use, such as alcohol-free parties; or they can focus on reducing the risks by offering safe ride programs. Other potential solutions may be harder to replicate through programs. For example, the drinking norms in student housing have already been shown to affect student alcohol consumption.

In this session at the Society for Prevention Research Annual Meeting, presenters will discuss a variety of strategies and their effectiveness. Some colleges have created 'dry' campuses to try to reduce drinking, but have found they cannot compete with off-campus venues for top concert acts. Boise State University in Idaho has bucked the trend by going from 'dry' to 'wet,' and researchers will discuss how this has affected student drinking. Another study examined whether giving feedback about drinking and drug use and peer norms to students who had violated campus drug and alcohol rules helps prevent future problems. The third study discussed in this session will explore how dorm-mates may affect drinking. Previous research has documented that peer environments affect student drinking; researchers have undertaken a new effort to document how students' degree of identification with their school, peers or dorms affects how normative pressures affects drinking patterns.

Sources: Robert Saltz, Ph.D., Mark Johnson, Ph.D., Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation; Helene R. White, Ph.D.; Rutgers, Thomas Morgan, Ph.D., The State University of New Jersey; James E. Lange, Ph.D., San Diego State University; Robert Turrisi, Ph.D., Pennsylvania State University.