

“If only students understood the risks involved, they would certainly modify their alcohol use behavior.”

Awareness of alcohol usage and misuse, especially on university and college campuses is no longer new and surprising. This very problem exists and it should be examined scientifically and in detail. Thus, the research in the field has been conducted by the range of psychologists in recent years (Goldman, 2002). The most significant is, however, that anecdotal reports go the years back, and there has been documentation on this very particular issue for at least 50 years in the United States. Research which is available indicates that 80% of college students approximately drink; moreover half of college student drinkers are engaged in heavy episodic drinking with deadly consequences (Goldman, 2002).

Thus, the practice shows that students that misuse the alcohol and are inclined to the excessive alcohol intake or drinking spree are more likely among college students to be associated with a wide range of adverse and devastating consequences: nonfatal and fatal injuries; poisoning of alcohol; blackouts; failure in academic achievements; violence, including assault and even rape; unwanted pregnancy; diseases transmitted sexually, including HIV/AIDS; damage of property; and criminal and vocational consequences that could jeopardize future job prospects and the people around. In addition, student that are abused by drinking negatively influence not just themselves. Their fellow students may experience secondhand impacts ranging from innocent disrupted sleep and study to criminal sexual or physical assault. Furthermore, they attend the institutions that usually expend valuable resources to deal with such personal and institutional negative consequence of their devastating behavior.

Hypothesis

It is essential to know that “although college drinking has been a concern for some time, amelioration of the problem has been hampered by inconsistent attention from both college administrators and researchers“(Goldman, 2002). Indeed, the inadequate attention, namely the lack of it in relation to the following problem caused the aggravations. Anyway, according to Goldman, “drinking on college campuses may seem to be entrenched and impervious to intervention; however, it is potentially modifiable with carefully targeted approaches endorsed by all stakeholders - including students - who truly value the institution” (Goldman, 2002).

Procedure

Hence, Johnston and O’Malley (“*Epidemiology of Alcohol and Other Drug Use among American College Students*”) managed to examine the results of several large national studies on college student drinking: the Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study (1), the Core Institute (2), Monitoring the Future (3), the National College Health Risk Behavior Survey (4) and the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (5) (Goldman, 2002). Most of the studies were designed to survey the drinking, but others were primarily more widely focused.

Results

Thus, it is crucial to know that despite different weaknesses and strengths, all obtained mainly approximately the same similar findings. It was found out that about 80% of college students do drink, about 70%, however, have had a drinking habit in the past 30 days and about 40% are

engaged in heavy episodic drinking permanently. Ethnic, racial and gender effects are considered to be also consistent across all the studies conducted: traditionally male students drink far more than the female students, more than that black or Hispanic students drink less than white students. It is the strict tendency.

In addition, some supporting issues were studied and submitted to the closest scrutiny. Many biological, psychological and social factors have been studied in order to explain the wide variation in drinking habit among individual college students. Campus norms for alcohol use, perceived or real, are a strong predictor of individual student drinking. According to research, “those under the age of 21 are more likely to be heavy - sometimes called “binge” – drinkers. Moreover, “22% of all students under the age of 21 compared to 18% over 21 years of age are heavy drinkers. Among drinkers only, 32% of under the age compared to 24% of legal age are heavy drinkers” (Engs, 1998). Moreover, the drinking issue is closely related to the increase of driving problems among the same age category. Heavy drinkers under the age of 21 are more likely to provoke car accidents and speeding in a state of alcoholic intoxication. Thus, “the decrease in drinking and driving problems is the result of many factors and not just the rise in purchase age or the decreased average consumption. These include: education concerning drunk driving, designated driver programs, increased seat belt and air bag usage, safer automobiles, lower speed limits, free taxi services from drinking establishments, etc” (Engs, 1998). So the problem of drinking should be viewed in complexity and close relation to the other supporting issues.

Discussion

Explaining the relationship of the findings to the original theory and hypothesis, it is essential to mention that exploring the youth psychology, the researchers may also encounter the so-called mitigating facts that are applicable ultimately to the particular age category of heavy drinkers. Thus, many claims can be made in relation to the drinking age issue closely connected to the problem of college drinking. The legal drinking age should be lowered to about 19 or 18 and young adults should be allowed to drink ultimately in controlled public environments such as pubs, clubs, restaurants, taverns, and official school or university functions (Engs, 1998). It is connected with the tendency of young adults under the current legal age to violate the banning. In most cases youngsters resort to drinking without adult’s knowledge in places unappropriated for controlled drinking under the age of 21. Indeed, it is much easier to take the situation under control by means of giving little freedom, especially in relation to youngsters. Hence, mature and conscious drinking should be expected. According to Ruth Engs, Professor, Applied Health Sciences, it is quite natural and suitable in terms of youth at college age and the drinking history in the United States and other cultures (Engs, 1998).

Thus, it is widely accepted that though the legal age is 21, the majority of school or college students consume alcohol, but in ultimately irresponsible manner. Hence, for them alcohol is considered to be a kind of taboo or forbidden fruit. They use it to display the rebellion against the system, as the means of avenge to parents or adults in general. “Drinking among college students is often associated with impulsivity/sensation seeking or the regulation of negative emotional states including depression and anxiety. Many students are heavily influenced by social factors, however” (Goldman, 2002). Moreover, the religious assumptions play role, as well. “Studies have also indicated that religiosity is inversely related to drinking and sociability positively related to drinking and that members of Greek organizations and students involved in athletics drink more than other students” (Goldman, 2002).

However, even the National Prohibitions in the history of the USA could not prevail and resolve the problem of juvenile drinking completely. “Historically, these prevention efforts have focused on educational strategies, but accumulating research has indicated these strategies do not appear to be effective in isolation” (Goldman, 2002).

Thus, it is essential to avoid the mistake nowadays. In the case if prohibition does not work, it is appropriate to resort to permission within legal boundaries. Thus, let us appeal to the legalization of marijuana in Holland. Now, the light drug consumption is relatively controlled in this very country.

However, considering the fact that the current prohibition of the alcohol in the USA is not working, it is essential to resort to the alternative way out. For example, such nations as Italians, Greeks, and Chinese do not see the alcohol as the magic poison against all problems or means of alienation. Within these societies abuse of alcohol is not tolerated, adults make an example of responsible conscious and warranted alcohol usage at home under control. Appropriate educational techniques, role modeling and educational programs must be used in problem solution, as well. The 21 year old drinking age law is considered to be ineffective and out of date, we are obliged, thus, to change the purchase age in order to increase the responsibility among juvenile alcohol users and shift the social consensus on what particularly constitutes responsible drinking and compensate the lack of knowledge of dependable drinking behaviors (Engs, 1998).

Behavior Change

The campus population includes approximately 19% abstainers, 37% “social” drinkers, who do not engage in heavy episodic drinking, 21% higher risk drinkers who occasionally consume five or more (four or more for women) drinks on a single occasion and 23% who frequently consume five or more drinks. Approximately 47% of drinkers do so “to get drunk” (Wechsler et al., 2000). Nevertheless, those drinkers, who fall near the very extreme end of this statistics, are likely to need more intensive intervention, and such services should be available to this subset of the population in order to prevent and get rid of the problem. “It is critical that students who have chosen not to drink at all are also acknowledged and supported. Any successful comprehensive approach will ensure that these students are helped to resist pressures to drink if they so choose and will provide the means for minimizing the untoward effects of other students’ drinking (e.g., on their ability to study)” (Goldman, 2002). In such a way it is possible to come closer to the habit and behaviour change of the heavy drinking youth.

In order to support the alcohol usage refusal among students a lot of programs have been implemented lately. Hence, such multi component programs basically include some combination of challenge expectancy, drink refusal skills, self-monitoring, and moderation of the drinking techniques, lifestyle skills, balance, normative feedback and motivational enhancement (Goldman, 2002). According to the research, the evidence is reported to be good as far as the effectiveness of multi component skills-based programs is concerned, as well as for some of their components that have been isolative tested in. These programs involve also the multiple sessions with participation of the trained leaders. “Brief motivational interventions are a practical alternative that may be equally effective for many at-risk students, and current research suggests they may not always require one-on-one interaction with a provider. In contrast, little research has been carried out on treatment approaches for college students” (Wechsler et al., 2000).

In addition, emerging across all the treatment and prevention literature and supportive resources is the issue of recruiting, retaining, and identifying students, who are in need of alcohol programs and

specialized literature. These means are considered to heighten the motivation in giving up drinking as one of the most devastating habits. For some students such means are the last instance to resort to. Perhaps, all the possible ways someday will turn out to be the words of wisdom for the heavy drinkers. Despite the fact that “students appear to overestimate other students’ actual drinking and approval for heavy drinking and to underestimate fellow students’ support for drinking restrictions, the correction of the alcohol drinking reproach and overcoming the difficulties, including the goal of some campus-wide programs, in order to get the positive outcome really can be achieved.

References

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