



FEATURE ARTICLE

Alcohol and Marijuana Use and Risk-Taking Behaviors among African American Emerging Adult Students

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ABSTRACT

Alcohol, marijuana use, and unprotected sex are major public health concerns among college students ages 18 – 24. However, there is limited information about African American students attending Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in areas of health knowledge, health behavior, and overall attitude towards health. Alcohol and marijuana use is prevalent during college years and is associated with unprotected sex, sexual assault, drunk driving, dating violence, depression, and additional unintended consequences. Unfortunately, these overlapping behaviors have long-term health consequences for college students. The Get SMART Project aims to provide re-purposed prevention education to emerging adult populations. Preliminary data from the study strongly suggest that students were engaged in various high-risk behaviors. Alcohol and marijuana use were significant factors for unprotected sex, multiple sex partners, and offered opportunities for sexual assault. Analyses revealed that alcohol and marijuana use are prevalent among both males and females. Surprisingly, females indicated using both at higher frequencies. Less than 50% of the students reported using a condom during their most recent sexual intercourse, yet, they acknowledged knowing their HIV status. In addition to the importance of condom availability on HBCUs campuses, emerging adult substance use, and sexual health awareness risk communication is notably needed.

Key Words: alcohol; marijuana; sex; HBCUs

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