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Northeast CAPT News Update

Tania Garcia, Director

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VOICES FROM THE FIELD

Parents are Teachers

Parents are Teachers (PAT) is a parenting skills program designed to foster strong family attachments among immigrant families. Developed in 1997 by Rhode Island-based Initiatives for Human Development (IHD), the 13-session curriculum incorporates classroom education, extensions for home-based activities with other family members, and a Team Leader component for program graduates. Demonstrated outcomes include improved family communication, family rules, family bonding, and child disciplining techniques.

Program sessions are taught in English, with a translator present. Participants are provided with a Parent Manual written in English, accompanied by handouts in both English and Spanish (these can be translated into other languages, as needed.) The curriculum also includes "homework" activities that participants do with their children.

Past PAT participants report these outcomes:

- Improved communication with their children
- Increased ability to establish and enforce rules
- More patience and self-control, especially when disciplining their children
- More time spent with the entire family
- Increased sense of parenting self-efficacy

Strengthening its evaluation to further assess and verify the program outcomes required that IHD work closely with its evaluators to: 1) clearly define PAT's theory base; 2) select test items that reflected this theory; and 3) identify control groups reflective of the population participating in PAT. In addition, since the program's target group was immigrants, its developers and evaluators had the challenge of developing a culturally appropriate outcome measure for populations with a very limited English proficiency and often a limited reading proficiency in their own languages as well. Perhaps the greatest challenge was to find a way to also survey the children of both participant and control group parents. To address these issues, both parties have had to engage in lengthy dialogues around the premises, goals and strategies of the program. They have also had to be patient and persistent with developing survey items, finding ways to secure a sufficient control group within a frequently transient population, and circumventing overly positive pre-surveys.

PAT is one of the few emerging evidence-based programs that targets immigrant families with culturally appropriate prevention interventions. In 2000, PAT received CSAP's Exemplary Substance Abuse Prevention Program Award as a promising program.

IHD is a community-based non-profit with 30 years of experience developing and implementing prevention programs for high-risk youth and their families. Its mission is to increase the capacity of individuals, families, and communities to lead healthy, productive lives by "teaching them how to fish rather than giving them fish."

For more information on PAT, please contact:
Sandra Del Sesto,
Initiatives for Human Development
474 Broadway
Pawtucket, RI 02860
Phone: 401-722-9400 Fax: 401-721-9994
Email: spdelsesto@ihdri.org

RESEARCH UPDATE

Drug Abuse Risks for Acculturating Immigrant Adolescents: Case Study of Asian Indians in the United States

Immigrant parents and their U.S.-born children may experience stressful family conflicts over the different sociocultural norms of the U.S. and their country of origin. Such stresses may heighten adolescents' vulnerability to drug abuse. This article documents the extent of drug use in a sample of 200 U.S.-born Asian Indian adolescents. According to the study, 28 percent of the participants reported using alcohol on at least one occasion, 16.5 percent had used cigarettes, and 2.5 percent had used marijuana. Adolescents who placed importance on their parents' drug abuse prevention messages tended not to use drugs. The implications of the study's findings for drug abuse assessment, treatment, and prevention are discussed.

Reference: Bhattacharya, G. (2002). Drug Abuse Risks for Acculturating Immigrant Adolescents: Case study of Asian Indians in the United States. *Health & Social Work*, 27(3); 175-183.

Recency of Immigration, Substance Use, and Sexual Behavior among Massachusetts Adolescents

This study examined the relationships between recency of immigration, substance use, and sexual behavior. Surveys conducted with 2635 Massachusetts 8th and 10th graders compared health behaviors and risk and protective factors among students living in the U.S. for different amounts of time. Compared with lifetime residents, immigrant youths (particularly those living in the United States 6 years or less) reported lower lifetime and recent alcohol and marijuana use ($P < .001$), although sexual intercourse rates were similar across groups. Recent immigrants were most likely to report peer pressures to engage in, and less parental support to avoid, risk behaviors ($P < .001$). A window of opportunity exists to provide primary prevention programs in schools to immigrant youths that may reduce adolescent health risk behaviors.

Reference: Blake, S.M., Ledsky, R., Goodenow, C., and O'Donnell, L. (2001b). Recency of immigration, substance use, and sexual behavior among Massachusetts adolescents. *American Journal of Public Health*, 91(5); 794-799.

Acculturation Increases Risk for Substance Use by Foreign-Born Youth

The authors discovered that foreign-born youth who had lived in the U.S. fewer than five years had a lower prevalence of substance use than young people who were born in the U.S. Yet, prevalence estimates for foreign-born youth who had lived in the U.S. for 10 years or longer were not significantly different than estimates for U.S.-born youth, except that U.S.-born youth reported substantially higher rates of heavy alcohol use. The study reinforces the results of previous studies. What makes it unique is that it is the first study to estimate the prevalence of substance use among foreign-born youth age 12 to 17. It also explores the relationship between acculturation, defined as the length of time a young person has lived in the U.S., and substance use.

Reference: SAMHSA News (January/February 2004). Acculturation increases risk for substance use by foreign-born youth. SAMHSA News, 12(1). Retrieved February 21, 2006 from http://www.samhsa.gov/samhsa_news/VolumeXII_1/article2.htm

Integrating Cultural Variables into Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment with Racial/Ethnic Minorities

This paper introduces a set of variables, identified as "cultural variables," as important descriptors of the life experiences of people from the major ethnic/racial minority groups in the U.S. It asserts that most contemporary models for prevention and treatment are "culturally blind" to the effects of these variables on the risk of substance abuse among racial/ethnic minority people. Accordingly, a viable strategy for culturally relevant research and program design is to integrate these cultural variables into existing models to create culturally rich models for research as well as for the development of prevention and treatment programs. The use of model programs is discussed with regard to the competing aims of maintaining program fidelity while also making cultural adaptations to these model programs to make them more culturally relevant. Strategies and recommendations are presented for integrating cultural variables into prevention and treatment programs that serve racial/ethnic minorities.

Reference: Castro, F.G., and Alarcon, E.H. (2002). Integrating cultural variables into drug abuse prevention and treatment with racial/ethnic minorities. *Journal of Drug Issues*, 32(3); 783-810.

Co-occurring Alcohol, Drug, and Other Psychiatric Disorders among Mexican-Origin People in the United States

The authors of this study examined the co-occurrence of alcohol, drug, and non–substance use psychiatric disorders in a population sample of Mexican-origin adults from rural and urban areas of central California. Co-occurring lifetime rates of alcohol or other drug disorders with non–substance use psychiatric disorders, or both, were 8.3% for men and 5.5% for women and 12.3% for the US born and 3.5% for immigrants. Alcohol abuse or dependence with co-occurring psychiatric disorders is a primary disorder among Mexican-origin adult males (7.5% lifetime prevalence). US-born men and women are almost equally likely to have co-occuring disorders involving substances. Acculturation effects are expected to increase co-morbidity in the Mexican-origin group.

Reference: Vega, W.A., Sribney, W.M., and Achara-Abrahams, I. (2003). Co-occurring alcohol, drug, and other psychiatric disorders among Mexican-origin people in the United States. *American Journal of Public Health*, 93(7); 1057.

NEW RESOURCES

New Report on Trends in Girls' Use of Drugs, Alcohol, Cigarettes, and Prescription Drugs

Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) John P. Walters, *Seventeen* magazine, and teen medical experts released a new analysis of recent findings on drug and alcohol use trends among girls. Despite commonly held beliefs that boys are at higher risk for using illegal substances, data indicate that girls have caught up with boys in illicit drug and alcohol use and have actually surpassed them in cigarette and prescription drug use. There are also more girls who are new users of substances than boys. Although substance use among teens has shown steady declines in the past few years, ONDCP and other experts warned parents that girls display unique vulnerabilities that can lead to substance abuse. Research also indicates that drug and alcohol use has a more profound impact on teen girls, both physically and psychologically. The findings show that when girls use illicit drugs, marijuana is the most commonly used substance. Marijuana is used more than cocaine, heroin, Ecstasy, and all other illicit drugs combined. For the last two years that research is available (2003–2004), more teenage girls than boys started using marijuana, alcohol, and cigarettes.

To access the full report, go to: http://www.mediacampaign.org/pdf/girls_and_drugs.pdf.

Teen Drug Use Down but Progress Halts among Youngest Teens

Monitoring the Future, one of the key national surveys of adolescent substance use, released key findings from the 2005 survey on December 19, 2005. According to the study, the proportion of older teens who use illicit drugs continued to decline in 2005, the fourth consecutive year of decline among the nation's 10th- and 12th-grade students. However, the long-term improvements that had been occurring among 8th graders since 1996 appear to have halted.

To access the full report, go to: www.monitoringthefuture.org

SELECTED UPCOMING EVENTS

Upcoming Online Courses

Don't Judge a Book by Its Cover: Using Feasibility Assessment to Select Prevention Programs

April 24-28, 2006

This course presents a tool designed to help practitioners select an evidence-based prevention program that matches their organization's or community's capabilities. It combines readings, online activities, and moderated discussion. Course materials include planning tools, an annotated bibliography of resources on capacity-building, and links to related Web sites.

Locating, Hiring, and Managing an Evaluator

May 22-26, 2006
This course is designed to increase participants' understanding of the value of evaluating programs, things to consider when hiring an evaluator, and how to work with an evaluator effectively. This is the first course in a three-part series on evaluation.

To receive information on course registration, please go to: captus.samhsa.gov/northeast and add your name to the mailing list. For more information on these online events, please contact Melanie Adler at madler@edc.org or 617-618-2309.

NECAPT Key Contacts

General Contact
(888) 332-2278
capt@edc.org

Supplements
Weed and Seed, Ecstasy, Earmark, Inhalant, and GRAAP
Carlos Pavao
(617) 618-2458
cpavao@edc.org

State Manager – NY, NJ
Deborah McLean Leow
(212) 807-4218
dmclean@edc.org
Secondary contact:
Lisa McGlinchy
(617) 618-2412

State Manager – CT, RI, ME, NH, VT, MA
Carol Oliver
(617) 618-2762
coliver@edc.org

State Manager – DE, MD, PA
Carlos Pavao
(617) 618-2458
cpavao@edc.org

Service to Science Academies
Chelsey Goddard
(617) 618-2338
cgoddard@edc.org

Distance Learning
Melanie Adler
(617) 618-2309
madler@edc.org