ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS IN COLLEGE ATHLETICS

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objectives

 To understand the impact of alcohol on athletes as a special population.
 To identify other drugs that affect athletes as a special population.
 To touch on emerging prevention strategies to reduce the impact of alcohol on athletes.
The Issue

- Long history of alcohol intertwined with sports
  - Sponsorship
  - “Sports” bars, bars
- Especially an issue for collegiate athletes
  - Misperceived norms
Alcohol and Student-Athletes

- 83.1% of athletes used alcohol in 2009 (Bracken & Wilfert, 2010)
  - 77.5% in 2005
- 86.1% of athletes that drink report they do so for reasons not related to sports (Bracken & Wilfert, 2010)
- 49% of the student-athlete population drinks 5 or more drinks in one sitting (Bracken & Wilfert, 2010)
  - 22% of male student-athletes 10+
Athlete?

- How do you define an Athlete?
  - National Collegiate Athletic Association?
  - Intramural sports?
  - “Greek Week” Athletes?

- Intramural athletes are an at risk-risk population with drinking rates similar to those of Greek Life (Ward & Gryczynski).
  - But is there overlap from NCAA athletes?
Illinois Student Athletes

- **Intercollegiate**
  - Only 26.3% strongly agree that they abide by the university policy and regulations that concern alcohol and other drug usage
    - 33.4% non athletes
  - 23.5% reported increased alcohol use in the past year
    - 19.1% non athletes
  - 78.5% think alcohol should be available at parties
    - 72.1% non athletes

- **Intramural**
  - Only 24.5% strongly agree that they abide by the university policy and regulations that concern alcohol and other drug usage
    - 35.3% non athletes
  - 24.3% reported increased alcohol use in the past year
    - 19% non athletes
  - 79.9% think alcohol should be available at parties
    - 70.5% of non athletes

*Data from Illinois Core 2010*
Risk for Athletes

- Drinking can affect athletic performance (O’Brien & Lyons, 2000)
  - Impair psychomotor skills
  - Decrease physiological levels of functioning
  - Impair body’s temperature regulation system
- Greater risk of injury (O’Brien & Lyons, 2000)
  - Weaken left-ventricle heart function
  - Worsen asthmatic symptoms
  - Spinal cord injury
- Athletes who use alcohol at least once a week had an injury rate of 54.7% (O’Brien & Lyons, 2000)
  - Compared to nonusers with a rate of 23.5%.
Intercollegiate Athlete Consequences

- **Illinois Core Data**
  - 20.1% of athletes report being hurt or injured at least once in the past year due to alcohol or other drugs
    - 16.2% non athletes
  - 26.7% reported they performed poorly on a test or project at least once in the past year
    - 20.4% non athletes
  - 40.5% have gotten into an argument or fight at least once in the past year
    - 31.5% non athletes
  - 34.4% have missed a class at least once in the past year
    - 27.3% non athletes
  - 42.8% have experienced memory loss at least once in the past year
    - 35.1% non athletes
  - 43.3% have done something they later regretted at least once in the past year
    - 35.6% non athletes

*Data from Illinois Core 2010*
Intramural Athlete
Consequences

**Illinois Core Data**

- 21.3% of athletes report being hurt or injured at least once in the past year due to alcohol or other drugs
  - 15.1% non athletes
- 25.5% reported they performed poorly on a test or project at least once in the past year
  - 19.6% non athletes
- 39.8% have gotten into an argument or fight at least once in the past year
  - 30.2% non athletes
- 36.4% have missed a class at least once in the past year
  - 25.4% non athletes
- 45.9% have experienced memory loss at least once in the past year
  - 32.7% non athletes
- 44.5% have done something they later regretted at least once in the past year
  - 33.8% non athletes

*Data from Illinois Core 2010*
In-Season?

- 72% of student-athletes report their drinking is less than normal when their sport is in-season (Brenner & Swanik, 2007)
- Team leaders have an increased risk of binge drinking
Illinois Leadership Statistics

- Intercollegiate athlete leaders
  - 61.9% have had 5+ drinks in one sitting at least once in the past two weeks
    - 52% of athletes
    - 46.7% of non-athletes
- Intramural athlete leaders
  - 62.7% have had 5+ drinks in one sitting at least once in the past two weeks
    - 59.9% of athletes
    - 43.7% of non-athletes
- Generally, leaders use alcohol and other drugs more frequently.

*Data from Illinois Core 2010*
Overestimation

- Athletes tend to overestimate the amount of alcohol consumed by their peers (Grossbard, Hummer, LaBrie, Pederson, & Neighbors, 2008).
  - The more they think other athletes drink, the more they will drink.

- Athletes are role models for the campus community (Perkins & Craig, 2006).
  - Do other students then drink more because they think athletes are drinking more?
  - What if athletics is a significant part of campus culture?
But my friends...

- **Illinois Intercollegiate Athletes**
  - 52.3% feel that their close friends wouldn't disapprove of them having 5+ drinks in one sitting
  - 47.2% of non athletes

- **Illinois Intramural Athletes**
  - 56.6% feel that their close friends wouldn’t disapprove of them having 5+ drinks in one sitting
  - 44.9% of non athletes

*Data from Illinois Core 2010*
Campus Involvement

- More involved athletes are less likely to exhibit high-risk drinking behaviors. (Brenner, Metz, & Brenner, 2009)
  
  - Especially these groups:
    - Those involved in individual sports
    - Female athletes
    - Division III athletes
Illinois Athletes as role-models

- **Intercollegiate athletes**
  - 25.6% of strongly agreed that they have a responsibility to contribute to the well-being of other students
    - 19.9% non athletes

- **Intramural athletes**
  - 23.3% strongly agree that they have a responsibility to contribute to the well-being of other students
    - 19.7% non athletes

*Data from Illinois Core 2010*
Male Athlete Risk

- Higher # of heavy drinking episodes over the past year than non athletes. (Yusko, Buckman, White, & Pandina, 2008)
- Drink more than non athletes on heaviest day (Yusko et al., 2008).
  - Heaviest day is usually a Saturday
- Performance enhancing drugs common
- Certain types have increased risk (Ford, 2007).
  - Hockey: binge drinking and marijuana
Female Athlete Risk

- Females consume alcohol less frequently than non-athlete peers (Yusko et al., 2008).
  - Drink less, fewer days a week
- Lower social drug use, higher performance enhancing drug use (Yusko et al., 2008).
  - Use weight loss aids, energy supplements (Higher Education Center, 2010)
  - Cross country runners, dancers, gymnasts, figure skaters (Higher Education Center, 2010)
Female Risk Cont’d

- Dietary supplements not FDA regulated, may violate NCAA Standards (NCAA, 2010)

- Soccer players most likely to binge drink, use marijuana, and use illicit drugs (Ford, 2007) out of six major female collegiate sports*
  - Runners, swimmers, and divers less likely

*Sports include: volleyball, soccer, swimming/diving, basketball, softball, and running.
Other Drugs: NCAA Banned Substances*

- Stimulants (ex: amphetamines-caffeine)
- b. Anabolic Agents (ex: testostrone, etc.)
- c. Alcohol and Beta Blockers (banned for rifle only) (ex: alcohol, etc.)
- d. Diuretics and Other Masking Agents (ex: hydrochlorothiazide, etc.)
- e. Street Drugs (ex: heroin, marijuana, etc.)
- f. Peptide Hormones and Analogues (ex: Human Growth Hormone, Human chorionic gonadotropin)
- g. Anti-estrogens (ex: anastrozole, clomiphene, etc.)
- h. Beta-2 Agonists (Bambuterol, etc.)

* Taken from the 2009-2010 NCAA Banned Drugs List
Other Drugs: NCAA Restrictions*

- Blood Doping
- Local Anesthetics (under some conditions)
- Manipulation of Urine Samples
- Beta-2 Agonists permitted only by prescription and inhalation
- Caffeine if concentrations in urine exceed 15 micrograms/ml

* Taken from the 2009-2010 NCAA Banned Drugs list
Performance-Enhancing Drugs

- Athletes can believe these drugs are beneficial to their performance (Buckman, Yusko, White, & Pandina, 2009)
  - Often do not realize they can be addictive.

- Male athletes that have used performance enhancing drugs (Buckman et al., 2009):
  - Heavier alcohol usage
  - Use social drugs more frequently
  - Incur more negative consequences than peers
Social Drug Usage

- Marijuana lower for athletes, still a problem (Yusko et al., 2008)
- Male athletes report higher level of tobacco use in off-season (Yusko et al., 2008)
  - Use smokeless tobacco at a rate higher than any other population at all times
- Females have higher levels of social drug use during off-season (Yusko et al., 2008).
- Females use weight loss aids and supplements year round
Peer Pressure in Illinois

- Intercollegiate athletes
  - 49.7% experienced peer pressure to drink or use drugs at least once in the past 30 days
    - 38.8% of non-athletes

- Intramural athletes
  - 50.6% experienced peer pressure to drink or use drugs at least once in the past 30 days
    - 36.5% of non-athletes

*Data from Illinois Core 2010*
Do they always drink?

- **Illinois Intercollegiate athletes**
  - 72.5% report that they refused at least one drink offer in the past 30 days
    - 66.6% non athletes
  - 19.2% held a drink decoy at least once in the past 30 days
    - 13% non athletes

- **Illinois Intramural athletes**
  - 76.2% report that they refused at least one drink offer in the past 30 days
    - 64.2% of non athletes
Level of “attraction”

- Level of attraction indicates strength of bond to team (Grossbard et al., 2008).
- Athletes with higher attraction use drugs like marijuana at lower rates than those with weaker attraction.
  - Concern about performance of the team
- Athletes with higher attraction had fewer incidents of alcohol-related consequences.
Recommendations

- Barriers to reduction
  - Athletes report that they receive more alcohol prevention programming than the rest of the campus as a whole (Nelson & Wechsler, 2001).
  - Not effective as there has been no change in alcohol data.
- Need to focus on evidence-based programs
AOD Programming for Illinois Athletes

- **Intercollegiate**
  - 11.7% state they are involved in AOD prevention on their campuses
    - 7.9% of non-athletes

- **Intramural**
  - 10.1% state they are involved in AOD prevention on their campuses
    - 7.7% of non-athletes

- **Why?**
  - Self-report, misunderstood question
  - Peer Eds, have legitimate interest
  - Either way... we see athletes ARE receiving programming
    - Is it effective?

*Data from Illinois Core 2010*
Evidence-based approaches

- Bystander intervention programs can help to build this unity
- Social Norms Campaign (including marketing)
  - Athletes tend to overestimate, present them with the real truths
- Substance-free alternatives
- Reduce availability of alcohol on or near campus (Higher Education Center, 2010)
- Having consistent and clear policies regarding alcohol in athletics (Higher Education Center, 2010)
- Incentives for athlete involvement in the greater campus community (Brenner, Metz, & Brenner, 2009)
- BASICS
Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention for College Students (Turrisi et al., 2009)

- Brief personalized feedback
- Skill-based interventions
- Delivered by professionals or by peers

Effective for high risk drinking groups such as athletes

Most effective when used in combination with other alcohol prevention programs
Summary

- Athletes are a unique group!
- Motivations to not use (Bracken & Wilfert, 2010):
  - 27.4% no desire to experience the effects
  - 21.8% goes against beliefs and values
  - 19.2% concerned with health
  - 12.4% worried it would hurt their athletic performance
- Higher attraction=less alcohol related consequences
Summary Cont’d

- Athletes need effective prevention programming!
  - Health Educators must focus on those methods that have been proven to make change.
  - Using more than one method is often the most effective approach.
- Illinois Core data suggests both intercollegiate athletes and intramural athletes are at high risk for binge drinking.
  - Leaders seem to be especially vulnerable
References

References Cont’d

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