The Effects of a Medical Amnesty Policy on a College Campus

Presented for the: Illinois Higher Education Coalition by Tavis Glassman, PhD, MPH, MCHES
Overview

- Scope of the Problem
- Medical Amnesty
- Program Goals
- Intervention
- Evaluation
- References
Scope of the Problem

Alcohol is involved nationally in ...

- 1,825 student deaths annually
- 75% sexual assaults
- 66% of suicides
- 50% of all driving fatalities

(Hingson et al., 2010)
High-Risk Drinking/Binge Drinking

What is binge drinking?

- 5 or more drinks in one sitting for men
- 4 or more drinks in one sitting for women

(Wechsler et al., 2000)
UT High-Risk Drinking Rate

Percentage


34 37 33 43 42 37 33 42
Data were collected in Spring 2010, the policy was implemented in Fall 2010.
I have had alcohol poisoning at least once since attending college

(UT AlcoholEdu, 2012)
Why Don’t Students Call for Help?

• Don’t know how to respond appropriately
• Unaware of signs and symptoms
• Afraid of getting in trouble with the university
• Fearful of law enforcement
• “Someone else will call”

(Lewis & Marchell, 2006)
Medical Amnesty

• What is Medical Amnesty?
  – Health Protection Strategy
  – Policy that allows students’ to seek help during alcohol related emergencies

• What does Medical Amnesty do?
  – Protects students from judicial sanctions at their university if they call for help (or are the victim) during an alcohol related incident
  – Student academic and judicial records stay incident free

(Higher Education Center for Alcohol Drugs and Violence Prevention, n.d.)
What concerns has your administration expressed regarding medical amnesty?
Administrative Concerns

• If an institution implements a medical amnesty policy, will students drink more excessively?
  – This is not the case, two different studies indicate that medical amnesty policies do not increase drinking, just help seeking behavior with students. ¹,²

• Medical Amnesty is not a Get out of Jail Free Card.
  – Mandatory counseling sessions
  – Educational programs
  – Restorative justice

(Blavos et al., under review; Lewis & Marchell, 2006)
Methods

• A medical amnesty policy was implemented during the 2011/2012 year.
  – Aggressively promoted!

• UT Alcohol & Drug Survey was implemented to help evaluate the policy.

• Classrooms were randomly selected by the registrar.

• Survey was implemented in the spring.

• A total of 369 out of a possible 380 students completed the survey generating a participant response rate of 97%.
Medical Amnesty at UT

Program Goal 1: To increase the likelihood that UT students will call 911 for help during an alcohol related emergency.
Would Students Call for Help for Their Friends?

- Likely: 95%
- Unlikely: 5%

(UTADS, Spring 2012)
Program Goal 2: Decrease students’ perceived susceptibility that they will receive sanctions from the university if they call for help during an alcohol poisoning incident.
Perceived Likelihood of Receiving Sanctions

- Likely: 84%
- Unlikely: 16%

UTADS, Spring 2012
Medical Amnesty at UT Cont.

Program Goal 3: To increase student self-efficacy in responding appropriately during an alcohol poisoning incident.
Know What to Do in Case of an Alcohol Emergency

- 84% Agree
- 16% Disagree

UTADS, Spring 2012
Educational Marketing Campaign

- Series of messages and posters designed to educate students

- Poster creation timeline
  - Initial poster creation, October 2011
  - Message testing, November 2011
  - Printing, December 2011
  - Implementation, January 2012
First Draft
(prototype)

CALLING FOR HELP ISN’T A CRIME

No Rocket Left Behind

MEDICAL AMNESTY

CALL 911 OR x2600

Signs of alcohol poisoning:
• pale skin
• irregular breathing
• mental confusion
• vomiting
First Draft
(prototype)

ROCKETS TAKE CHARGE!
CALL 911 OR x2600

THIS LITTLE PIGGY
DIDN'T SLEEP IT OFF...

Signs of alcohol poisoning:
• pale skin
• irregular breathing
• mental confusion
• vomiting

MEDICAL AMNESTY
CALL 911 OR x2600
WHAT’S THIS MEDICAL AMNESTY THING?

• A policy that lets you all and get help for yourself or your friend in case of an alcohol emergency.

• Nothing ever goes on your academic or judicial record.

First Draft
(prototype)
HOW DO YOU GET MEDICAL AMNESTY?

1. Make the call.
2. The next day your conduct officer will schedule a meeting with you.
3. Ask for Medical Amnesty at your conduct meeting.
4. Nothing goes on your academic or judicial record.

CALL 911 OR x2600
Final Draft with Marketing

When is it one too many?

If a friend or fellow student has an emergency related to drugs or alcohol:

1: Call 911 and 419-383-4433 (UTPD)
2: Stay with the person
3: Ask for Medical Amnesty

Where can I find out more?
Get a copy of the Medical Amnesty policy in the Student Union, room 151.

Why Medical Amnesty?
We want you to be confident you can make the right decisions if there is an alcohol or drug-related emergency without fear of getting in trouble with UT.

For even more, contact:
Alexis Havas, MS, CRSS
Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Prevention Specialist
alexis.havas@utoledo.edu
Medical Amnesty Policy
The University of Toledo

In case of an Alcohol or Other Drug Related emergency this policy encourages you to:

- Get help for you or your friends
- Call UTPD at 419.530.2600 or 9-1-1

What happens after I make the call?

- You meet with a conduct officer who can provide you with Medical Amnesty, they will likely refer you to other UT staff for further discussion of your situation
- Your parents will be notified but nothing will go on your academic record

Does this impact the role of the police?

- UT and other police still have the ability to cite or arrest you for violations of the law
- The incident WILL NOT go on your academic record

Why is UT doing this?

- UT wants every student to feel confident that they can make the right decision if there is an alcohol or other drug related emergency without fear of getting in trouble with the University
- This is not entrapment; you will not get in trouble as the University simply wants to encourage students to make the call if there is an alcohol or other drug related emergency

Where can I read the policy?

- The policy is available for viewing at the following website:
  - http://www.utoledo.edu/studentaffairs/reslife/ATCDPC/pdfs/Medical_Amnesty_Policy_Signed.PDF

Who do I contact if I have more questions?

- Alexis Blavos, M.Ed, MCHES
  Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Prevention Specialist
  419.530.8436
  alexis.blavos@utoledo.edu

Live Well!
Signs of Alcohol Poisoning

Critical Signs for Alcohol Poisoning

- Mental confusion, stupor, coma, or person cannot be roused
- Vomiting
- Seizures
- Slow breathing (fewer than eight breaths per minute)
- Irregular breathing (10 seconds or more between breaths)
- Hypothermia (low body temperature), bluish skin color, paleness

What Should I Do If I Suspect Someone Has Alcohol Poisoning?

- Call UTPD (419.530.2600) or 9-1-1 immediately, do not wait for all symptoms to be present.
- Stay with the person until help arrives.

Office of Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Prevention
Alexis Blavos, M.Ed., MCHES
Student Union 1511-A
Alexis.blavos@toledo.edu
419.530.8436
Medical Amnesty now in effect

By - in Your opinion -
Published: Monday, September 27, 2010
Updated: Monday, September 27, 2010 07:09

To the Editor,

The University of Toledo has implemented a new policy called Medical Amnesty because they encourage a living and learning environment that promotes the health and safety of all members of the UT community.

As such, students are encouraged to make responsible decisions and to seek medical attention in life-threatening situations that result from alcohol and/or other drug abuse.

If medical attention is required, students should immediately contact professional medical personnel (9-1-1), followed by the UT Police Department (419-530-2600) and University officials.

A student who seeks emergency assistance on behalf of themselves, another student or a friend experiencing an alcohol and/or other drug related emergency (as well as the individual in distress) will not be subject to disciplinary action nor mandatory alcohol and other drug sanctions under the UT Student Codes of Conduct, Residence Life or Greek Life. However, they may be subject for referral for assessment, counseling, and possible treatment.

With all of that being said, many students will still have questions and I would like to take a moment to answer some of the more common questions I have heard over the past few weeks.

Q. What happens after I call for help?

A. After making a call for help each student in the situation will have to meet with a conduct officer to ask for medical amnesty for their particular situation. Once Medical Amnesty is granted to the student they may be referred to another University staff member for further assistance.

Q. Will I get in trouble?

A. No, if you call for help for you or a friend you will not get in trouble with the UT Office of Student Conduct, Residence Life or Greek Life and the incident WILL NOT go on your academic record. We do however still have to notify your parents.

Q. Does this impact the role of the Police?

A. UT and other police still have the ability to cite or arrest you for violations of the law.

Q. Where can I read the policy?

A. You can read the policy by going to this website:
http://www.utoledo.edu/studentaffairs/reslife/ATODPC/pdfs/Medical_Amnesty_Policy_Signed.PDF

Q. What if I have more questions?

A. If you have any questions please contact Alexis Blavos at 419.530.8436 or alexis.blavos@utoledo.edu

Recommended: Articles that may interest you
New medical amnesty policy

By Sura Khuder
Published: Monday, October 18, 2010
Updated: Monday, October 18, 2010 06:10

Last year, 984 student conduct cases involved alcohol or drugs at the University of Toledo.

Twenty-nine of the students involved in these cases were transported to the emergency room for alcohol poisoning.

Those sorts of incidents are the basis of new measures taken by the Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Prevention committee to reduce high-risk drinking at UT, including the introduction of the Medical Amnesty Policy.

The policy allows students to call the campus police for themselves or other students who are in need of medical attention after a night of heavy binge drinking.

Under the policy, the student will not have the incident recorded on their academic record.

"Assuming you didn't do anything else — murder, rape, theft, burglary — nothing will happen, outside someone would talk to you if [thought] you were depressed or had underlying issues, they might recommend you see a counselor," said assistant professor of health education and public health Tavis Glassman.

UT Chief of Police Jeff Newton said although the UTPD has a lot of discretion with those issues, they do not trump underage drinking laws.

"The scope of this policy only applies to the student code of conduct. They could still get criminally charged," Newton said. "However, when the police arrive there, we have discretion. We could cite this person criminally or we could do nothing, just like in any situation."

According to the medical amnesty policy, the student's parents will be notified and each subsequent occurrence will be evaluated to determine whether the student qualifies for medical amnesty again.

"Even though their parents will get notified, if they were to get in trouble with the law anyway they would have all these other huge consequences and their parents to deal with," said Zach Reavor, a junior double majoring in bioengineering and chemistry. "This way, students can feel assured that their friend will get treated and they won't get in that much trouble for it."

Coordinator of the ATODPC Alexis Elavos said so far this year no one has asked for medical amnesty more than once.

As part of a research study, the ATODPC is embarking on a new social marketing campaign this year which aims to de-glamorize alcohol consumption with ad logos such as "don't be that guy" featuring images such as a male holding a female's hair as she vomits into a toilet.

Some students do not have faith in the campaign's efforts.

"I don't think these sorts of things will work because a lot of girls have firm beliefs on their views of alcohol," said Summer Lijang, a junior majoring in accounting. "Some girls will go to a party and they will not drink, but other girls have this belief that you need to drink alcohol to be social no matter what [is said by the ad] campaign. This won't even change them, unless something bad happens to them."

Another initiative the ATODPC is exploring involves getting UT to have more classes on Fridays and Saturdays to deter students from beginning their drinking early in the week, although Glassman said this has been a hard project since some professors do not want to teach on the weekend.

While only a third of students on campus are excessive alcohol drinkers, many are under the impression this number is nearly three times higher, according to a survey conducted by the ATODPC.

In recognition of Alcohol Awareness Week, several events including a mock DUI crash with a Life Flight rescue are scheduled to educate students on the effects of alcohol.
AlcoholEdu® for College

• The purpose of AlcoholEdu® is to help students make healthy and safe decisions about alcohol while at college.

• The program is customizable and includes UT specific information about medical amnesty, signs and symptoms of alcohol poisoning and who to contact on our campus in case of an emergency.
Red Watch Band Training

• Alcohol Bystander Training

• Three components:
  1. Informational presentation
  2. Practice responding during an emergency
  3. We ask for a commitment from students to respond to alcohol poisoning incidents in the future

• Targeted Student Groups:
  – Housing Staff
  – Greek Organizations
  – ROTC Students
  – First Aid Classes

http://www.stonybrook.edu/sb/redwatchband/
Other Marketing

- 64 Rocket Launch Presentations
- 2 International Student Orientations
- Paraprofessional Training for Residence Life
- New Greeks: Meet and Greet
- ATOD Website
- PartySmartUT Facebook page
- Student Organizations
- First Aid Classes
- Residence Halls
- 11 Dying for a Drink Series
- Red Watch Band Trainings
- Greek Council Meetings
- UT TV 10 Interviews
- Interviews with president
- UT Closed Circuit TVs
- UT Screen Savers
- Bulletin Boards
- Health Fairs
- Tower Views Interview
Evaluation

• University of Toledo Alcohol and Drug Survey

• Red Watch Band Training Evaluation Form

• University of Toledo Office of Student Conduct Report
Office of Student Conduct

• Reports were requested at the end of each semester for:
  – Alcohol transports
    • Did not increase
  – Students requesting medical amnesty
    • 2010/2011 = 14
    • 2011/2012 = 7
  – Students receiving medical amnesty
    • 2010/2011 = 14
    • 2011/2012 = 6
Research
Instrument

• Modified off the Core Alcohol and Drug Survey short form and National College Health Assessment II.

• Expert review by 2 content experts for face validity in October 2011, 1 in theoretical and 1 psychometric expert.

• Test/Retest in November 2011 with 50 undergraduate students to test for reliability and internal consistency (Cronbach’s Alpha).
  – Values indicated a reliable instrument.
UTADS

• Informational Questions
  – Do you know what Medical Amnesty is?
  – Does The University of Toledo have a Medical Amnesty policy?
  – If a stranger suffered from alcohol poisoning, would you call for help?
  – If a friend suffered from alcohol poisoning, would you call for help?
If a stranger suffered from alcohol poisoning, would you call for help?

- **Agree**: 95%
- **Disagree**: 5%
If a friend suffered from alcohol poisoning, would you call for help?

- Agree: 98%
- Disagree: 2%
Health Belief Model

• Used to predict intentions to help during an alcohol overdose.

• 6 Constructs (four items per scale)
  – Perceived Susceptibility
  – Perceived Severity
  – Perceived Benefits
  – Perceived Barriers
  – Self-Efficacy
  – Cues to action
How likely are you to get in trouble with the University if you call for help during an alcohol emergency?

Perceived Susceptibility
Perceived Susceptibility

How likely are you to go to a party where someone drinks too much, experiences alcohol poisoning, and needs someone to call 911 for help?

- Likely: 23%
- Unlikely: 77%
If someone is suffering from alcohol poisoning and I do not call for 911, he or she could die.

Perceived Severity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
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</table>
I consider getting my friend in trouble with the police for calling 911 on their behalf for alcohol poisoning to be serious.
Perceived Benefits

Others would think favorably of me, if I assisted during an alcohol poisoning.

Agree: 83%
Disagree: 17%
The victim of an alcohol-poisoning incident would be glad I called for help.
What Barriers Exist on Your Campus?
Perceived Barriers

If my friend was suffering from alcohol poisoning and I called for help, he or she would get mad at me.

- **Agree**: 27%
- **Disagree**: 73%
I would be reluctant to call for help, during an alcohol poisoning, because I am concerned I would get into trouble with the University.
I can recognize when to respond to an alcohol poisoning.

- Agree: 83
- Disagree: 17

Self-Efficacy/Knowledge
Self-Efficacy/Knowledge

I know what action to take during an alcohol poisoning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Path Model of Intention to Call for Help for a Stranger or Friend

Perceived Severity

Perceived Susceptibility

Knowledge

Perceived Benefits

Perceived Barriers

Intention

Note:
1. All path coefficients reached the p<.05 or more significant level.
2. * and # indicates the path coefficient when predicting to call for help for a stranger or a friend, respectively.
What Cues to Action would encourage college students to call for help?
UTADS Utilizing HBM Cont.

• Cues to Action
  – How often have you seen an educational flyer on medical amnesty? 67%
  – How often have you seen a computer screen saver on medical amnesty? 46%
  – How often have you attended an educational presentation on medical amnesty? 48%
  – How often have you seen information in the student newspaper, *The Independent Collegian*, on medical amnesty? 37%
Research Limitations

• Most of the data collected are self-reported data
  – Memory
  – Under/over report

• Social desirability

• Contamination effects

• No pretest data

• Concurrent interventions
What Should Be In A Policy?

- Policies should be inclusive of all substances AND sexual assaults.
- Clearly define the following:
  - Who
  - What
  - When
  - Where
  - Why
  - How
- Policies must also include what kind of educational programming a student will still be required to take.
Current Legislative Initiatives

• Some states have already addressed the need of Medical Amnesty or good Samaritan laws through their legislature.
  – Connecticut (2011)
  – Illinois (2012)
Future Legislative Initiative

• Other states are considering similar laws.
  – OH: Jan. 2014: OSU Student Government President testified before legislature
  – Rhode Island
  – Michigan
  – Massachusetts
  – California
  – Hawaii
  – Florida
Strategic Planning

• What is your next step?
  – Do you have a coalition/committee?
  – How can you reignite interest with this topic?
  – Look for *tipping point*
    • Statewide policy
    • Another (similar) school implemented the policy

• If you have a policy implemented, have you considered evaluating it?
Acknowledgements

- Alexis Blavos, M.Ed., MCHES
  330.607.5101
  alexis.blavos@rockets.utoledo.edu
Contact Information

• Tavis Glassman, PhD, MCHES
  419.530.2770
tavis.glassman@utoledo.edu
References


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