

**TITLE: The Relative Risk of Parent and Peer Alcohol Use on Underage Drinking**

**FSU Principal Investigator: Karen Randolph, MSW, PhD, FSU College of Social Work**

**PROJECT ABSTRACT:**

*Background and Purpose:* Traditional developmental theories posit that the influence of parent factors on important adolescents outcomes decrease and the influence of peer factors increase as youth age. However, findings of one recent study suggest that this pattern may not hold in explaining adolescent cigarette smoking. Building on that study, the aim of our research is to examine trends in the influence of parent and peer factors on another important behavior—adolescent alcohol use. We employ the stages of change framework to assess the relative risk of parent and friend alcohol use on three patterns of adolescent drinking across time—not drinking to drinking initiation, experimental drinking to increased drinking, and continued drinking.

*Methods:* The sample includes 11,051 youth who participated in the first two waves of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health and whose parents completed interviews at Wave I (WI). Cases were divided into four mutually exclusive groups based on WI drinking behavior—non-drinkers, experimental drinkers, moderate drinkers, and heavy drinkers. Reported alcohol use at Wave II (WII) was used to determine drinking initiation among WI non-drinkers, increased drinking among WI experimental drinkers, and continued drinking among WI moderate and heavy drinkers. Relative risk ratios (RRs) were calculated and plotted across five age points ( $\leq 13$ , 14, 15, 16,  $\geq 17$ ) to evaluate associations between parent drinking and friend drinking at WI and adolescent drinking initiation, escalation, and continuation at WII.

*Results:* The risk of all drinking patterns—initiation, escalation, and continuation—is strongly related to parental and friend alcohol use. However, risk ratios are generally higher for youth whose friends drink relative to youth whose parents drink. For instance, non-drinkers whose friends drank at WI were 1.6 times more likely to start drinking by WII, relative to non-drinkers whose friends did not drink at WI, whereas non-drinkers whose parents drank at WI were 1.4 times more likely to start drinking by WII, relative to non-drinkers whose parents did not drink at WI. Plots of the parent and friend RRs for drinking initiation, escalation, and heavy drinker continuation displayed parallel lines across age points. Plotted lines of moderate drinker continuation RRs displayed an increased slope for youth with friends who drank and a decreased slope for youth whose parents drank as youth aged.

**Funding Sources:**

None

**Co-Investigators:**

Ursula Weiss, MSW, FSU College of Social Work, Leah Cheatham, MSW, JD, FSU College of Social Work. Jaclyn Williams, MSW, FSU College of Social Work

**Community Collaborators:**

None

---