

Using Social Norms to Promote Health and Well-Being Among Student-Athletes

Nationwide survey data reveal significantly higher rates of heavy drinking among intercollegiate athletes than among other undergraduates. Nevertheless, athletes and the student body at large hold exaggerated perceptions of athlete drinking norms much like AOD norms in general are misperceived in student populations. This presentation demonstrates the applicability of a social norms strategy among student-athletes based on national data and provides strategies designed to identify and reduce harmful misperceptions about student-athlete alcohol norms. This approach simultaneously includes the promotion of more accurate perceptions of other positive social behaviors including participation in various forms of community service and academic involvement. This presentation also examines the impact of interventions with student-athletes using a web-based instrument from the HWS surveys online project to assess perceived alcohol norms, personal drinking behaviors, and program exposure in a variety of college settings. Evaluation analyses show the overall positive impact of the intervention across time and also demonstrates the association between the degree of exposure to social norms messages (measured across and within schools) and lower problem drinking rates.