DOES MEDIA INFLUENCE ADOLESCENTS' SUBSTANCE-USE BEHAVIORS AND ATTITUDES? HOW TO MINIMZE THE EFFECTS OF MEDIA

Amanda de Geus

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ATTITUDES? HOW TO MINIMZE THE EFFECTS OF MEDIA

A Senior Comprehensive Project
Presented by:
Amanda de Geus

Pledge: _____

Approved:

_____

Dr. Patricia Rutledge, Ph.D.

_____

Dr. Aimee Knupsky, Ph.D.

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Abstract

Research has shown that media influences adolescents' substance-use related behaviors and attitudes. Adolescents learn from observations and interactions with the world around them (Beauchaine & Hinshaw, 2008). This paper reviews current literature on media and adolescents' substance-use related behaviors and attitudes. An evaluation of the literature in which there is evidence supporting an influence of media on adolescents as well as an evaluation of the literature in which there is evidence disproving an influence on adolescents is presented. Ways to minimize media influence and prevent substance use are discussed. Future research of current media is needed to produce more effective ways to minimize the influence of media.

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Amanda de Geus

Allegheny College

Does Media Influence Adolescents' Substance-Use Behaviors and Attitudes? How to Minimize the Effects of Media

In recent years technology has advanced at a rapid rate (Halal, 2009). This increase has made an immense difference in the accessibility of media; we are now able to access television, movies, and other various forms of entertainment at all times of the day and in any location (Tucker, 2009). Throughout history parents have been concerned with what their children are surrounding themselves with (television, music, movies, and peers) including what is appropriate and at what age (Griffin, Samuolis, & Williams, 2011). The invention of parental controls which block TV channels or shows with a certain rating have done very little. TV and movies can be streamed online where parents have little to no control. Along with technology, the media has also changed (Anderson, Huston, Schmitt, Linebarger & Wright, 2001). Shows similar to *The Brady Bunch, Leave it to Beaver,* and *Legends of the Hidden Temple* are few and far between. Today's adolescents are bombarded by media with a less wholesome message. *Celebrity Rehab, Jersey Shore, Workaholics,* and *The Hangover* are only a few examples in which substance, both alcohol and drug, abuse is portrayed in a positive light; heavy drinking and drug use turns life into a never ending party (Roberts, 1993).

Beauchaine and Hinshaw (2008) state that by the time adolescents reach their senior year of high school four out of five will have started to drink alcohol. They go on to explain that adolescents have been found to consume alcohol in a hazardous manner. In one sitting they will consume, on average, 4.9 alcoholic beverages (on average an adult will only consume 2.6). Alcohol involvement broadens around the ages of twelve to fifteen. Half of high school seniors surveyed have reported lifelong use of (Beauchaine & Hinshaw, 2008).

Substance (drugs and alcohol) abuse is the premise of many television shows. It is

important that the youth understand that substance abuse can lead to serious health problems, life changes, and death. Drug abuse is the habitual taking of illegal or addictive drugs (St. Vincent's, 2012). Adolescents are taught in school through various programs (for example D.A.R.E) how addicting and unhealthy drugs can be. Their parents also teach them throughout their life the harmful effects drugs can have. Once addicted to drugs or alcohol there can be serious consequences. Adolescents today need more programs similar to D.A.R.E. There is a plethora of websites that have information on state programs which include police officers traveling to schools and giving a presentation on the effects substance abuse has on a person's life (The Official D.A.R.E. Website, 2012). There is also the Above the Influence campaign which hopes to educate adolescents on the importance of abstinence from drugs, alcohol, violence and sexual activity before marriage (TeensATI, 2012). It is important that adolescents are made aware of these websites and taught how to use them so that adolescents can educate themselves with information that they can understand.

Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

Alcohol-related problems are not as simple as a hangover (Wiese, Shilpak & Browner, 2000). It is important to note that there is a distinct difference between alcohol abuse and alcoholism. Abuse of alcohol can lead to a multitude of symptoms can occur including respiratory or heart failure, liver disease, central nervous system damage, and cancer. Alcoholism is defined as having a physical addiction to alcohol where the afflicted continues to drink regardless of the physical health, mental health, and social responsibilities (family, social, job, or other) (Zieve, 2011). Some people are predisposed to alcoholism if they have a relative with alcoholism. Men who drink 15 or more drinks in a week, women who consume 12 or more drinks in a week, and anyone who has 5 or more drinks per sitting in one week are at risk of

becoming alcoholics (Zieve, 2011). Data obtained from the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHSDA) which is conducted by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) states that 104 million Americans, age 12 and older, reported being current alcohol drinkers in 2000 (National Teenage Drug and Alcohol Abuse Statistics, 1999).

Drug Abuse

Drug abuse is the habitual taking of addictive or illegal drugs; including marijuana, cocaine, heroin, LSD, and barbiturates (Beesher, 2008). Drug abuse, in general, can lead to respiratory failure, coma, heart attack, and death. Each subset of drugs has their own side effects. Long term marijuana use can lead to memory loss, a weakened immune system, and possible lung damage. Cocaine can lead to heart or respiratory failure, tremors, seizures, and psychosis. Heroin can cause dizziness, impotence, respiratory and circulatory depression, and death. LSD can lead to psychosis, paranoia, and depression. Mixing barbiturates with alcohol can lead to death (Beesher, 2008).

Media

The youth have always been impressionable, learning from their environment around them. The average youth (8-18) spends approximately 10 hours with media at home (Dowshen, 2001). Today's media is formed of TV characters portraying drinking and drug use in a positive light. Children and teens are going to use these characters as a role model (Anderson et al., 2001). Their behavior will fall in line with what this role model does. Most of today's pop music idols are constantly pictured out at parties drinking or taking drugs. The main character in Hannah Montana (a show about a teen girl hiding her pop star identity), Miley Cyrus, was recently caught smoking a drug called salvia (its effects are similar to marijuana (Above the Influence, 2011)). Gold Medal Olympic swimmer Michael Phelps was also caught smoking

marijuana. There were no consequences for these actions, which conveys that drugs aren't as bad as the school programs, anti-drug commercials, and parents want them to believe.

Adolescents are around media all day long (Moreno, 2010). Media is a vast term which includes social networking (such as Facebook, MySpace, and StumbleUpon), television, news (whether it is online, in print, or on television), music, movies, the internet, and print (books, newspapers, and magazines). Most adolescents do not have a job or steady influx of money so buying books, magazines, and newspapers is mostly monitored by parents or guardians. This leaves television, social media, and movies. Social media sites are easily kept from parents. People constantly change their name and privacy settings so that they cannot be searched for. Adolescents are also computer savvy and can delete their browsing history or will just brows in a private session (the computer will not save the history) to keep their parents from knowing they have a social media account (Moreno, 2010).

On these websites, users post pictures (and unless the picture(s) is reported, it can have any content the user desires), update statuses about what they are doing/ what they did, and write on other user's "walls". There are constantly pictures of people passed out from drinking too much and groups of girls consuming pretty colored drinks or boys consuming large mugs of beer. The comments on these photos are always along the lines of praise and how cool the pictured are. This type of behavior soon becomes a status symbol; to be seen as cool you need to go to parties and consume large amounts of alcohol. The more pictures of this behavior and "likes" you have is equivalent to how cool and popular you are.

The media focuses so heavily on celebrities and fictional characters (Anderson et al., 2001) that have a drinking or drug abuse problem. The more the media talks about celebrities like Amy Winehouse, Lindsay Lohan, and Charlie Sheen, the more exposed adolescents are to

the popularity of substance abuse. Most prime time television shows in the past 15 years have made a reference to alcohol during multiple episodes (Will, Porter, Geller & DePasquale, 2005). Today's youth (ages 14-24) spends a decently sized portion of their day surrounded by media (music, television, or print). Advertisements have just as much, if not more, of an effect on adolescents' substance use-related behaviors and attitudes as television and movies do. According to Stratsburger (1995), in the United States children view approximately 20,000 commercials a year. This totals to 360,000 commercials by the time they graduate high school. The effects of these commercials are more detrimental the younger the child is. Children under the age of 8 believe that advertisers and advertisements tell the truth; they do not understand how advertising works. Older children and teenagers fall subject to advertisements where celebrities, popular music, humor, and attractive models are used (Stratsburger, 1995).

Adolescents who spend more time with media in which substance abuse is portrayed in a positive light are more likely to believe that substance abuse is acceptable; adolescents who are not around a broad array of media in which substance abuse is portrayed in a positive light are less likely to find substance abuse acceptable. This paper will explore the literature that has been written researching the influences of drug and alcohol abuse in the media on adolescents' risky behavior and perceptions of drugs and alcohol.

Goals of this Paper

The issue of drugs and alcohol abuse is extremely important if we want our future generations to flourish. Drugs and alcohol abuse are widely known to have a negative impact on a person's, young or old, life. This paper will explain how an adolescent learns and how the environment around them can have an influence. It is important to minimize adolescents' exposure to media. While there are age limits to which movies you can see and how old you

need to be in order to buy alcohol, adolescents still find a way around them. It is important that we educate the youth on the problems that come with substance abuse. It is also important that they know that what is portrayed in commercials, television programs, and other media is not always the healthiest or smartest way to live. Adolescents are at an impressionable point in their life; what they see and hear can alter the way they think or feel. The more they are exposed to media portraying alcohol and drug use in a positive light, the more likely they are to begin to view alcohol and drug use in a more positive light. Media in which alcohol and drugs are portrayed in a positive light will influence adolescents' substance use-related behaviors and attitudes.

In order to more closely examine these claims, a literature search, done using PsychINFO and EBSCO, and a review of scholarly, peer-reviewed journals and articles was conducted. In the first section of this paper, a review of the literature which supports the claim that exposure to media which portrays substance abuse in a positive light influences adolescents' substance-related behaviors and attitudes will be done. The second section will give a brief review of literature in which no correlation or a negative correlation between media and adolescents' substance use- related behaviors and attitudes has been found. The third section details how adolescents learn and how to minimize the effects of media's message. The paper will end with a discussion of the main points, important literature on this topic, and what should be done in the future in terms of research and preventative measures.

Media Influences Adolescents' Substance-Use Related Behaviors and Attitudes

The media tells us to be conscious of how we look, our socioeconomic status, and to take all that we can since we only live once (Chen, 2005). This has created a population of adolescents, who will soon be the adults running the government and high-power positions, who

lack social and environmental consciousness (Porterfield, Polette & Baumlin, 2009). The youth of today give in to their every want and desire, whether it be sexual escapades, substance experimentation, or indulging in the newest technology, regardless of future consequences. Literature by Ray and Chugh (2008) suggests that the media that adolescents watch has a significant influence over their actions. .Adolescents see their "peers" on reality TV doing whatever they please and believe that this is how they should live their life as well. Much of America's youth does not believe that these shows are scripted to include outrageous behavior so that the show will receive high reviews. Instead, America's youth wants to model their lives after their beloved "reality TV' stars; they come to expect that their life will play out such as their favorite stars' lives.

There have been many studies that have been conducted on the effects and social perceptions of alcohol in a social setting. Dal Cin et al (2009) conducted a longitudinal study telephone survey of adolescents in the United States. The researchers asked if the participants had ever watched 50 movies randomly selected from 532 contemporary top grossing movies and 32 movies grossing of $15 million US dollars. Next they were asked if they had seen 50 randomly selected movies from 161 top theater releases and movie rentals. Researchers then asked about alcohol consumption and controlling alcohol consumption. Age, gender, race, demographic, social influence, personality, parental education, household income, self-esteem, self-regulation, and how many of their friends drink alcohol were gathered and used in their calculations. Researchers found that friends' use of alcohol, alcohol prototypes, expectancies, and willingness all had an influence over alcohol consumption.

This study demonstrates the importance of expectancies and alcohol prototypes. The ideas and beliefs about alcohol and substance use adolescents see in movies and television shows

will, over time, start to mesh with the adolescents'. They adopt these belief systems and begin to form expectancies (Dal Cin, 2009). Movies and television are the two most influential forms of media (Tibbs, Parry, Stretch & Brice, 1994). However, movies are more influential in regards to alcohol consumption (Primack, Kraemer, Fine & Dalton, 2009).

Sargent, Wills, Stoolmiller, Gibson, and Gibbons (2006) conducted a study similar to that of Dal Cin and came up with similar conclusions. The researchers used a school- based, cross-sectional survey (with 4,655 participants). Participants (n=2,046) reported that they were "never-drinkers" and the researchers did a longitudinal follow up with them. The participants were ages 10-14. 601 popular contemporary movies were used. The researchers used screenshots from those movies where alcohol use was depicted. Participants were asked if they had seen any movies from a separate list of 50 randomly selected titles from a larger pool of movies. They summed the amount of time in which alcohol was depicted in the movies and found that for the 50 movie titles there was a total of 2.5 minutes of movie alcohol use and for the 601 movie titles there was approximately 8.6 hours of alcohol exposure. After collecting their data and running the statistics the researchers found that there was a moderate correlation between movie alcohol use and teen drinking.

Scull, Kupersmidt, Parker, Elmore, and Benson (2010) conducted "two cross-sectional studies investigating media influences on adolescents' substance use and intentions to use substances in the context of exposure to parental and peer risk and protective factors" (Scull, Kupersmidt, Parker, Elmore, and Benson, 2009, p. 981). There were a total of 729 participants (middle school students). In the first study there were 351 participants, of whom 59% were female and 52% were African Americans. In the second study there were 378 participants, 43% were female participants and 63% of the participants were Caucasian. After examining the data,

researchers found that there was a positive association between adolescents' current substance use and intentions to use substance in the future and media messages. Media message deconstruction skills and critical thinking about media messages were negatively associated with adolescents' intention to use substances in the future. Caucasian males had peers who used substances in the past, higher beliefs that alcohol and tobacco use were normal activities, and increased perceptions that media portrayed these beliefs. Caucasian females in a higher grade level with negative peer pressure and greater beliefs that alcohol and tobacco use were normal activities had increased intentions to use alcohol and tobacco in the future. Parental influence variables were found to be protective factors. Peer variables were found to be risk factors.

This study demonstrates the importance of media perceptions. The researchers did not show the participants commercials or a television show or both. They used self-report questionnaires to obtain their data. The ideas that media portray alcohol and tobacco use as normal daily activities and substance-use to be desirable were already what the participant believed (Ray & Chugh, 2008).

The influence of advertisements often is underestimated (Austin, Chen, & Grube, 2006). Chen, Grube, Bersamin, Waiters and Keefe (2005) conducted a study in which 253 children and adolescents watched a tape of television advertisements for beer and soft drinks. The tape was stopped after each advertisement and participants were asked to fill out self-reporting questionnaires about the likeability of each ad. The researchers were looking at youth responses to specific elements in alcohol advertising, advertisement likeability, and the influence it had on youth. These elements included characters (animals and human), music, and humor. The researchers found that advertisements that included legal drinking age and quality of the product were rated as less likeable. Advertisements that contained likeable elements were more

favorable. These ads evoked the desire to purchase the product being advertised.

In summary, the literature reviewed all supported the claim that media which portrays substance abuse in a positive light has an influence on adolescents' behaviors and attitudes. While correlations cannot explain causality, there is enough evidence that suggests that media and adolescents' substance-use related behaviors and attitudes do have a significant correlation. Adolescents are exposed to hours of alcohol advertisements and television programs and movies where alcohol is depicted in a positive light. Most of the time, these advertisements, movies, and television programs are rated for the adolescent population (Ray & Chugh, 2008). The studies mentioned above have taken into account other factors that may have had an influence on adolescents' substance-use related behaviors and attitudes such as peers who engage in substance-use and demographics. Since other factors were taken into account variables other than just media, the data collected was strong and therefore the researchers were able to make confident conclusions. Exposure to television and movies where substance-use is portrayed in a positive light can have an influence over adolescents' behaviors and attitudes.

Media's Influence on Adolescents is Minimal at Most

This chapter will explore some of the literature on studies in which media was either not related to or was found to negatively correlate with adolescents' substance use behaviors and attitudes. Most of the literature about adolescents and their substance- use related behavior reports that media does have a significant influence over their behavior, perceptions, and attitudes (Ray & Chugh, 2008). However there have been some studies in which a correlation between substance use and exposure to television and movies has been found to be negative. Some of the studies have hypothesized that media does significantly influence adolescents but their data does not support their hypothesis. In these studies, the researchers explain plausible

reasons as to why their hypothesis was not supported.

Anderson, Huston, Schmitt, Linebarger, and Wright (2001) conducted a study in which they compared type of television viewed (adult entertainment programs vs. informational programs) and alcohol use. Participants (adolescents) were asked how much beer or wine they normally consumed. The researchers then did an analysis of covariance with type of media (and how many hours were spent watching it). It was hypothesized that adult entertainment viewing and alcohol consumption would have a positive relation while viewing informational programs would have a negative relation to alcohol consumption. They found that there was no correlation. They did find a correlation between genders; females who watched more adult programming were less likely to consume alcohol.

When explaining their findings, the researchers came up with two possibilities as to why they found what they did. The first was that adolescents were spending more of their free time at home instead of with peers in social situations involving alcohol consumption. They believed this to be the best explanation. The other possibility that researchers thought could explain their findings was that soap operas in the 1990s started to become more likely to portray characters consuming alcohol in a more negative light than previous years. Alcohol was related to alcoholism and the problems alcoholism caused.

Yanovitzky and Stryker (2001) examined the relationship between news coverage and youth binge drinking. They hypothesized that because the news had increased perceptions of social disapproval, youth binge drinking would decrease. The results of their study produced evidence that social acceptability and policy actions mediated youth binge drinking however there were only null effects. This study shows how influence the world around adolescents can be. Because youth binge drinking is not socially acceptable, the rate of youth binge drinking

decreased. However this study doesn't take into account peer influences. These peer influence might explain why there was a null effect. Peers are one of the most influential components to substance use and abuse (Barnes et al., 2007).

van Hoof, de Jong, Menno, Fennis, and Gosselt, (2009) conducted a study in which media influences, defined as a Dutch soap opera and commercials advertising alcohol, and adolescents' alcohol-related attitudes and behaviors were observed. The researchers hypothesized that both forms of media would cause an increase in adolescents' alcohol-related attitudes and behaviors. They found that their hypothesis was only partially supported by their data. Advertisements did cause an increase in adolescents' alcohol- related attitudes and behaviors while the soap opera produces a positive attitude towards alcohol and lower drinking intentions. The researchers believe this was caused by the negative portrayal of alcohol.

Shaw, Whitehead, and Giles (2010) conducted a study researching adolescents' attitudes towards drug use in the media; more specifically how celebrity drug use influenced their perceptions of drug use. The main celebrity in the study was Amy Winehouse. They used Media Framing Analysis (MFA) to look at how the messages in the media are framed. Secondly they formed four focus groups of 4-6 participants each. In each group the researchers discussed celebrity drug use, Amy Winehouse, and the media. They found that adolescents were a lot more critical of Winehouse than the researchers believed they would be. Their responses demonstrated the youth's concern with the media portrayal of drug use and the effects the portrayal would have on health risk behavior on young people.

These studies did not account for outside factors such as peers, family relations, and alcohol expectancies. When researching the influence of media on adolescents' substance-use

related behaviors and attitudes it is necessary to not only account for one type of media (news and television) but to account for all the media that is included in them such as advertisements. While the Yanovitzky and Stryker (2001) study found that news coverage that portrayed social disapproval for youth binge drinking decreased this behavior in adolescents, their findings had a null effect; there was a null significance. This can be explained by the importance of advertising and the strong influence it has (Ray & Chugh, 2008).

How Adolescents Learn and Risk Factors

Adolescents learn by observing the world around them (Beauchaine & Hinshaw, 2008). The social learning theory believes that expectations, beliefs, and opinions are formed by observing and interacting with parents, peers, media, etc. (Beauchaine & Hinshaw, 2008). The expectancy theory is rooted in the idea that consequences motivate our behavior (Beauchaine & Hinshaw, 2008). A person will make a choice based on the expected outcome. In terms of substance use, adolescents will chose to engage in the use of drugs and alcohol if they believe the expected outcome to be favorable (e.g. they will gain popularity and friends) (Beauchaine & Hinshaw, 2008). Adolescents see via media how fun, cool, and exciting substance use is; all the actors are beautiful, fit, and have fun easy lives. Once the opportunity arises for adolescents to be able to drink, they will expect the outcome to be favorable and mimic what they see their favorite actors/characters do.

There are many risk factors that affect the behavior and beliefs of adolescents. Adolescents who have a family history of alcoholism or drug dependency are at a higher risk for also becoming dependent on substances. The expectancy theory also relates to an adolescent's caregiver. Parents, guardians, and caregivers who do not involve themselves with the adolescent can bring about this deviant behavior. In some cases, a child will act out for attention if their

parent(s) are not involved with the adolescent. Other adolescents have parents who are too overbearing or will excessively punish them; they get involved with drugs and alcohol as a way to deal with this stress. One of the most important risk factors is an adolescent's peers.

An adolescent's peers have a very important role in whether or not the adolescent will become involved with alcohol and drugs (Beauchaine & Hinshaw, 2008). Adolescents who have more friends (or perceive that more friends) are engaged with alcohol and drugs, they are more likely to follow suit and become involved as well; if their peers are doing it then they will adopt similar beliefs and values in order to fit in. They will engage in deviant behavior and change their attitude and beliefs to align with a substance-using lifestyle. These changes and involvement with high risk peers increases the stress in their life (Beauchaine & Hinshaw, 2008).

During adolescence, stress increases dramatically and there are heightened reaction to it (Beauchaine & Hinshaw, 2008). Adolescents need to find a way to cope and turning to drugs and alcohol is easy (if they are already involved with peers who engage in substance use). There is a strong correlation between stressful life events and substance use (Beauchaine & Hinshaw, 2008). When parents, academics, legal issues, and emotional and physical problems start to arise from drug and alcohol use, even more stress is added. The adolescent knows that drugs and alcohol make them feel relaxed and reduces stress so it is easier to deal with. This creates a cycle that is hard to break; as stress increases, substance use will increase as well (Beauchaine & Hinshaw, 2008).

Today's television and movies, alcohol and drugs are portrayed as fun and harmless. In every commercial there is a group of fun-loving, thin (Anderson et al., 2001) twenty-somethings having fun and enjoying their alcoholic beverages. Television shows such as *Workaholics* and *Archer* have main characters that drink nonstop, even when they are at work. The message that

underlies the humor of these shows is that drinking all day will not affect you; these characters are able to pay their bills, own a house, and maintain a job. These shows say that it is okay to be a functioning alcoholic; there are no consequences. Movies, such as *Project X* and *Animal House,* are about life being a nonstop party. The plots are about throwing the party of the year, one that will be remembered forever. *Animal House* and *Old School* both depict parties in which everyone is trying to drink the most. Those who do drink an excessive amount of alcohol receive cool nicknames, are known around campus, and have an increase in popularity.

These examples all show what media today is telling the youth. Adolescents see everyone else doing it and want to fit in, have a lot of friends, and be known in school as the coolest person to hang out with. The social learning theory and expectancy theory tell us that adolescents learn by observation. When adolescents see these characters and how thin and physically attractive they are, they believe that engaging themselves in similar activities (drugs and alcohol) will lead to looking like they do (Anderson et al., 2001).

Minimizing the Influence of Media

National programs have begun to take notice of the influence movies and television has on adolescents. These programs all aim to minimize the damage that television and movies do to an adolescent's perception of drugs and alcohol (Moon & Rao, 2011). There are informational programs that have been started and old programs which are still being used. There are new advertisements and commercials about staying above the influence of drugs and alcohol. These programs have the goal of getting the facts out in the open so that adolescents can see both sides of the story. Anti-drug campaigns have been found to increase preventative effects in regards to adolescents' substance-use related behaviors and attitudes (Moon & Rao, 2011).

During elementary school students are required to take a program called *D.A.R.E* (Drug

Abuse Resistance Education). In this program, an officer teaches children (grades K-12) about drugs, violence, and gangs. The program focuses on ways to maintain a healthy, drug-and-violence-free lifestyle and how to resist peer pressure. They have a webpage that is kid friendly which allows adolescents to continue their learning outside of the classroom and be active in their learning. This program has now been implemented in 43 countries around the world and about 75% of school districts in the United States have the D.A.R.E program (The Official D.A.R.E. Website, 2012).

The Above the Influence Campaign is geared toward high school students. Their mission is to teach adolescents to resist peer pressure and stay abstinent from drugs and alcohol. They have begun to post billboards on the side of the road showing a student, or group of students, smiling and laughing. Their slogan is always shown underneath saying that those people are above the influence and their website is given. They also have commercials that are a little more up front. The most recent commercial shows a girl vomiting into the toilet at a party. They do not show her vomit; instead they show trophies, papers in which she received an A on, journals, notebooks, and other meaningful objects in the toilet. An announcer comes on and says "You aren't the only thing getting wasted". They also have commercials about drugs. Most of them depict a person who has taken drugs being dressed and moved around by other people. The narrator then says something about being yourself and not letting others influence your decisions. These more edgy commercials push the point that when you go out and abuse substances your future is being wasted.

Carpenter and Pechmann (2001) examined the effects of exposure to the Above the Influence campaigns and adolescent marijuana use. Participants were males and females from grades 8, 10, 12. They used archival data from a cross-sectional, school-based survey from the

years 2006-2008. This survey includes information on demographics, race, parental education, and zip code (which was used to match each survey to media market). They found that lower rates of lifetime marijuana use and past-month marijuana use were associated with greater exposure to anti-drug campaigns for adolescent girls in the eighth grade. There was no significant correlation between anti-drug campaigns and eighth grade boys, tenth grade boys and girls, or twelfth grade boys and girls. The researchers explained that there was no significant effect of anti-drug campaigns on adolescents in grades 10 or twelve because adolescents have already decided if they are going to use drugs or not. If adolescents in grades 10 and 12 were exposed to the antidrug campaigns earlier, there might have been an effect. A possible reason that the anti-drug campaign had an effect on adolescent 8th grade girls is that during this time, girls are beginning to go through puberty and there are role changes within society, amongst peers, and within the family.

Anti-drug campaigns are not the only way to minimize the harmful effects of media. There are many parenting variables which can account for an adolescent's behavior and some have an impact on substance abuse (Wolfe & Mash, 2006). Strong ties to one's parents and siblings provide a strong support system. More often than not, adolescents chose a parent or other trusted adult as their personal role model (Anderson et al., 2001). In a study conducted by Anderson, Huston, Schmitt, Linebarger, and Wright (2001) participants were asked to list up to three people whom "they would like to be like" (Anderson et al., 2001, p. 111). Gender and type of person were coded for. Type of person included parent, sibling, peer, relatives (grandparents etc.), media figure (pop music star, actor/actress, fictional character, model, television personality), sports star, other, more than one person, qualities of several people, real public figure (Jesus, the President, Gandhi) and no one. They found that 43% of respondents listed a

parent or other personally-known adult as their first choice role model, 17% of respondents listed a media figure as their first choice role model, 12% listed sports stars as their first choice role model, and 9% listed a public figure as their first choice role model.

It is important that parents understand the implications of this study. Adolescents are more likely to follow their parents' behaviors and beliefs than any other celebrity (Stratsburger, 1995). If adolescents see their parents consuming large quantities of alcohol and/ or taking drugs they are more likely to mimic this behavior. Parents need to set boundaries (for their children as well as themselves) and keep deviant behavior out of the house (e.g. more than a glass of wine or two at dinner or using drugs inside the house). This ideology can relate back to how adolescents learn through the social learning theory. Adolescents see deviant behavior at home and begin to adapt this behavior to fit their idea of a norm (Beauchaine & Hinshaw, 2008).

One of the best ways to reduce the incidence of substance abuse within adolescents is to engage adolescents with each other (Beauchaine & Hinshaw, 2008). Adolescents who have poor relationships with their peers have been found to be more likely to have adult difficulties. These relationships have positive effects on moral development (Wolfe & Mash, 2006). Involving adolescents with peers who have similar interests is immensely important. According to Beauchaine and Hinshaw (2008), peers can be both a risk factor and a protective factor. Involving adolescents with extracurricular activities, such as sports and clubs (theatre, girl scouts, and boy scouts) is a good way to keep adolescents away from peers who do not have a structured day. School- related activities (such as homework and clubs) can act as preventative measures (Moon & Rao, 2011).

One study focused on the effects of risk and protective variables. Barnes, Hoffman, Welte, Farrell, and Dintcheff (2007) conducted a study where 606 adolescents were interviewed

during a six-wave longitudinal study. Time spent with family, in extracurricular activities, watching television, alone, and with peers was recorded. Researchers found that time spent in unstructured and unsupervised activities with peers were found to be a strong predictor of substance use and deviant behavior. Time spent with family was a protective factor. Adolescents involved in structured activities (sports) were less inclined to use illicit substances, alcohol, and cigarettes.

Discussion

As this paper has demonstrated, adolescents are easily influenced. One of the main sources of influence is media. Adolescents spend hours (Dowshen, 2001) with media (approximately 8-10 hours) daily. This statistic only accounts for time at home and includes all forms of media (television, movies, print, and internet). It does not account for hours spent outside of the home. Commercials, television shows, and movies all have fun-loving, attractive, popular characters that are consuming alcohol and taking drugs (Anderson et al., 2001). Technology today allows movies, television, print materials (such as books and magazines), and the internet to be streamed directly to phones and other handheld devices.

Adolescents learn from the world around them. The social learning theory holds the belief that expectations, beliefs, and opinions are formed by observing and interacting with parents, peers, media, etc. Through these observations and beliefs expectations are formed which is the central idea of the expectancy theory (Beauchaine & Hinshaw, 2008). Through the social learning and expectancy theories it can be concluded that media has an important role in an adolescent's formation of beliefs, expectations, and attitudes. As noted, adolescents spend a large portion of their day surrounded by media. Previous research has demonstrated that long exposure to media in which substance use is depicted in a positive manner does have an influence on

adolescents' substance-use related behaviors and attitudes (Ray & Chugh, 2008).

Anti-drug campaigns have been found to be preventative factor in adolescent substance-use related behavior (Moon & Rao, 2011). The D.A.R.E program and Above the Influence campaigns are two of the most well-known anti-drug campaigns. The D.A.R.E program is instituted at a young age when children are still impressionable (Stratsburger, 1995). This program uses officers who have been trained with regards to drugs, alcohol, gangs, and violence (The Official D.A.R.E. Website, 2012). Since an officer is someone to be trusted children will use them as a role model (Anderson et al., 2001). The Above the Influence campaign is geared towards older adolescents (Above the Influence, 2011). They use adolescents' peers in commercials so that adolescents will be able to relate. Adolescents have a strong desire to fit in with their peers (Beauchaine & Hinshaw, 2008). They see the negative way the peers who engage in substance use are portrayed and do not want to be seen in a negative way as well (Beauchaine & Hinshaw, 2008). These campaigns have been found to be highly effective and are important for the development of safe and healthy formation of adolescent substance-use related behaviors and attitudes (Carpenter & Pechmann, 2001).

Parents and peers are both risk factors and protective factors. Beauchaine and Hinshaw (2008) state that close relationships with peers can help an adolescent from engaging in substance use. However they go on to say that if these peers hold the beliefs that substance use is a normal activity, they become a risk factor. It is important that adolescents are involved with school-related and structured extracurricular activities (Moon & Rao, 2011). It has been found that these types of activities related to adolescents who were less inclined to use illicit substances (Barnes, Hoffman, Welte, Farrell & Dintcheff, 2007). Parents who give strict and excessive punishments, are uninvolved in their child's life, and do not mediate their child's behavior have

been found to influence an adolescent's substance-use related behaviors and attitudes making them more likely to involve themselves with substances (Beauchaine & Hinshaw, 2008). Parents are also adolescents' number one choice for a role model (Anderson et al., 2001). Parents who do not excessively drink or use illicit substances around their children will influence how their children think about drugs and alcohol.

The most recent forms of media need to be more adequately researched (Villani, 2001). In order to fully understand the influence today's media has on adolescents' substance-use related behaviors and attitudes, in depth research needs to be conducted. This paper serves as an overview of the current literature on media and its influence on adolescents' substance-use related behaviors and attitudes. With further analysis of the issues raised in this paper, more adequate resources related to substance use can be formed for adolescents. It is important that this happens swiftly as more adolescents are beginning to engage in substance use at an earlier age (Ray & Chugh, 2008).

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