

Influences of Cultural Heritage/Acculturation Status on Behaviors of Asian Americans on Substance Abuse

Summary

Existing data and literature show that less alcohol/drug dependence and prevalence of substance abuse for Asian Americans than other racial groups. However, some researchers had reported that once the cultural heritage get lost or the substance abuse once initiated, or acculturation established, substance use patterns of Asian Americans became similar to other racial groups. Sakai et al. (2005), USDE (2011), Tosh and Simmons (2007) and Coi and Lahey (2006) are among of these.

Article 1: Sakai et al. (2005) reported that Asians were significantly less likely to have tried alcohol and were about half as likely to have tried illicit drugs when compared with Caucasians. Asians had lower overall rates of alcohol dependence, **but when those who had never tried alcohol were excluded, prevalence of alcohol dependence was similar between Asians and Caucasians (2.6% and 3.1%, respectively). The same pattern is seen with drug dependence:** in the total sample, Asians are about one half to one third as likely to have illicit drug dependence but among those who have tried illicit drugs at some point in their lifetime, prevalence of drug dependence was similar between the two groups (Asians 2.9%, Caucasians 3.4%).

Sakai, J.T., P.M. HO, J.H. Shore, N.K. Risk, and R.K. Price. 2005. Asians in the United States_Substance Dependence and Use of Substance-Dependence Treatment. Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment. 29:75084.

Article 2: In an USDE's newsletter (2011), it is incated that much of the research literature focuses on acculturation and how that affects health risk behavior among AAPI college students. "**Dimensions of Acculturation: Associations With Health Risk Behaviors Among College Students From Immigrant Families**" addresses heritage practices and ethnic identity among first and second generation students from immigrant families in relation to alcohol and other drug abuse, and driving while impaired. The authors suggest that greater retention of heritage culture generally equals less risk. It does not suggest that adopting U.S. cultural practices is problematic, **but that the protective factors of the heritage culture, when lost, create an issue**

USDE. 2011. Prevention Update, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. The Higher Education Center for Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Violence Prevention. August 2011 issue.

<http://www.adp.cahwnet.gov/oara/pdf/Race-EthnicityAOD-relatedData090111.pdf>

Article 3: In a study on sexual activity and other Risk-taking behaviors among Asian-American adolescents, Tosh and Simmons (2007) reported that Asian-American adolescents have lower involvement with sexual activity than all other racial/ethnic peer groups. However, **once initiated, however, Asian-American adolescents have sexual behavior patterns comparable to other adolescent groups.** They also discussed the acculturation status/effect on alcohol use. Asian-American adolescents (the same for mixed-race Asians or Japanese-Americans) who appear more acculturated to the United States have rates of alcohol use similar to those of non-Hispanic white adolescents.

Tosh, A. and P. Simmons. 2007, Sexual Activity and Other Risk-Taking Behaviors among Asian-American Adolescents. *Journal of Pediatric and Adolescent Gynecology*. 20(1):29-34.

Article 4: In a study to test the stereotype that youth of Asian Pacific Islander ethnicity (API) are the model Minority, Choi and Lahey (2006) reported that immigrant status changes the results on racial differences on some of underage substance (alcohol) use. For example, when immigrant status is held constant, the substance use patterns of API American youth are found to become similar to those of white youth. Furthermore, the authors indicated that the mental health and social service needs of API American youth are at least as great as those of white youth. The need for such services increases with the length of residency in the United States.

Choi, Y., and B.B. Lahey, 2006. Testing the Model Minority Stereotype: Youth Behaviors across Racial and Ethnic Groups. *Soc. Serv. Rev.* 80(3):419-452.