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Jerry L. Mize II

*Virginia Commonwealth University*, [jlimize@vcu.edu](mailto:jlimize@vcu.edu)

Wendy Kliewer

*Virginia Commonwealth University*, [wkliewer@vcu.edu](mailto:wkliewer@vcu.edu)

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# Are Parental Involvement, Religiosity, and Relationship Quality Associated with Substance Use Messages in South African Families?



## Substance Use Messages in South African Families?

\*Jerry L. Mize II & \*\*Wendy L. Kliever, Ph.D.

Kliever Prevention Research Lab of the Department of Psychology, Virginia Commonwealth University

Contact \*jlmize@vcu.edu or \*\*wkliever@vcu.edu



### ABSTRACT

Using transcribed interviews from a GEO- and UKZN-funded study with a low-income, multi-ethnic sample in Durban, South Africa ( $N = 272$ ), messages regarding what caregivers recall saying to their children about drug use were coded into one of eight categories by a trained research team. Categories included: Just the Facts, Real Examples, Resistance Tactics, Drugs are Bad, Negative Consequences, Encouraging Abstinence, Zero Tolerance, and Use Responsibly. The contributions of 1) parent religiosity, 2) parental involvement, and 3) parent-adolescent relationship quality to the message content were examined. Few overall differences in message content were found across the predictors suggesting that alternative approaches to analyses might be beneficial.



### Background

- Communication with parents regarding use has a positive impact on adolescent adjustment (Zaharakis, Taylor, & Kliever, 2013).
- Lower adolescent substance use is associated with strong parent-adolescent relationships (Kliever & Zaharakis, 2014).
- Parent religiosity is associated with encouraging abstinence messages and implies negative messages about substance use (Zaharakis et. al., 2013).

### Methods

Participants ( $N = 272$ ) Low-income, Durban, South Africa	
Sex	64.8% Female
Age Range	9-18 years
Mean Age	13.12 years
Race	
Black/African	55.6%
Coloured	14.5%
Indian	23.1%
White	6.8%

Variables	Measure Used	Reliability
Messages	Qualitative Data (see Table 2)	.58 at midpoint
Parent Religiosity	Religious Commitment Index (RCI; Worthington et al., 2003).	.95
Parent-Adolescent Relationship Quality (Mom/Dad Support)	Network of Relationships Inventory (NRI; Furman & Buhrmester, 1985)	Mom = .89 Dad = .86
Parental Involvement (Solicitation & Control)	Parenting Practices Scale (Stattin & Kerr, 2000)	Solicitation = .80 Control = .93

### Analyses and Results

Table 1. Zero order correlations of the independent variables and sex

Variables	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1. Parent Religious Commitment	-				
2. Mom Social Support (Parent-Adolescent Relationship Quality)	.01	-			
3. Dad Social Support (Parent-Adolescent Relationship Quality)	.02	***.49	-		
4. Solicitation (Parental Involvement)	.01	** .15	.06	-	
5. Control (Parental Involvement)	0	.02	.01	***.56	-
6. Sex	-.01	0	*-.13	.01	-.06

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$

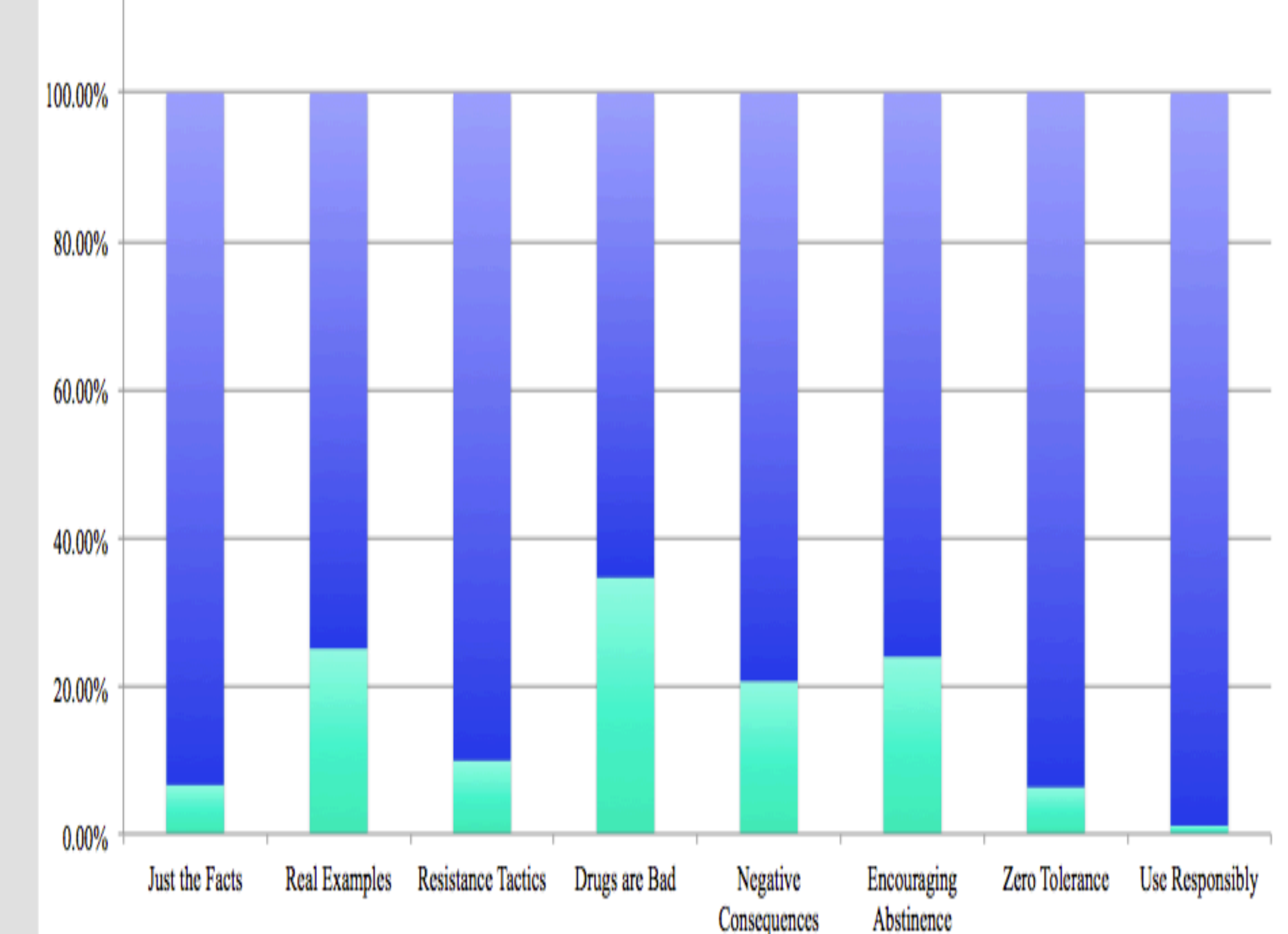
#### T-Tests and Chi-Square Analyses:

Table 2

Message Categories	Parent Religious Commitment	Parent-Adolescent Relationship Quality		Parental Involvement		Sex Differences
		Mom Social Support	Dad Social Support	Parental Solicitation	Parental Control	
Just the Facts	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant	$\chi^2(1) = 3.19, p = .08^1$
Real Examples	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant
Drugs are Bad	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant
Negative Consequences	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant
Resistance Tactics	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant
Zero Tolerance	Not Significant	$t(267) = -2.02, p = .05^2$	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant
Encouraging Abstinence	$t(235) = 2.01, p < .05^3$	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant
Use Responsibly	Not Significant	Not Significant	$t(256) = -1.86, p = .06^4$	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant

T-tests were conducted in order to assess mean differences in parent-adolescent relationship quality, parental religious commitment, and parental involvement as a function of whether or not parents suggested a specific message about alcohol or drug use to their son or daughter. In addition, chi-square analyses were conducted to assess differences across adolescent sex across the 8 message categories. All non-significant results had a  $p$  value of  $> .05$ .

Figure 1. Frequencies of absent and present messages in each category.



### Interpretations and Implications of Significant Findings

#### Interpretations (see Table 2):

- <sup>1</sup>Messages of *just the facts* showed a marginally significant difference of more males receiving this message than females.
- <sup>2</sup>Parents who relayed *zero tolerance* messages had youth who reported a better quality relationship with their maternal caregiver ( $M = 31.44, SD = 3.93$ ) than parents who did not relay this message ( $M = 28.09, SD = 10.21$ ).
- <sup>3</sup>Parents who *encouraged abstinence* reported higher levels of religious commitment ( $M = 39.25, SD = 12.01$ ) than parents who did not relay this message ( $M = 28.09, SD = 10.21$ ).
- <sup>4</sup>Parents who relayed a *use responsibly* message had youth who reported a marginally better quality relationship with their fathers ( $M = 34.00, SD = 1.00$ ) than parents who did not relay this message ( $M = 25.55, SD = 7.85$ ).

#### Future Research:

- Assessing the frequency of messages relayed, rather than prevalence alone, may be a better fit to this type of research question.

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