

Public Abstract

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Title:Change in High-Risk Behaviors During the First College Year Categorized by Gender, First-Generation Status, and Admission Index Demographics as Measured by the CIRP and YFCY.

This longitudinal study endeavored to measure changes in first-year college student high-risk behaviors. By surveying students at the beginning of the first year of college, using the CIRP Survey, and at the end of the first year, using the YFCY Survey, mean change scores were determined. The behaviors under study were smoked cigarettes, drank beer, drank wine or liquor, felt overwhelmed, and felt depressed. Demographic characteristics used as independent variables were: gender, first-generation status, and admission index. The study utilized a quasi-experimental, longitudinal design in evaluating the paired data.

This study was developed to gain understanding of changes in high-risk behavior during the first year of college. Smoking and drinking behaviors increased more than feelings of depression or being overwhelmed, however the results clearly indicate that these behaviors increased from the last year of high school. They did not begin during the first year of college. This finding is important to higher education administrators responsible for student development programs. Changing student behaviors is a different goal than preventing behaviors.

Males who are not first-generation students who were conditionally admitted to the institution under study showed the largest increases in high-risk behaviors. Some populations reported a decrease in feelings of being overwhelmed or depressed.