Effects of Parent Relationships on Cigarette and Marijuana Use in Adolescence

Research Questions

- How does the quality of one’s relationship with their parents associate with their use of drugs?
- Does the association between relationships with parents and drug use vary by gender?

Hypotheses

- Having a poor relationship with your parents will lead to higher levels of drug use.
- Parental relationships will have a greater impact on females.

Background

- Adolescents are especially susceptible to drug use and addiction (Gomez et al., 2018).
- Drug usage rates among adolescents have been declining (Vidourek et al., 2018).
- Positive attitudes toward marijuana have been increasing in the past several years (Stephens, 2019).
- Recent increase in vaping among adolescents (Vaping Rises Among Teens 2019).
- Negative interactions with parents increase risk of delinquent behavior (Hoeve et al., 2009).

Dependent Measures

During the past 30 days, on how many days did you smoke cigarettes?
- No days – 74.5%
- 1-5 days – 8.5%
- 6-15 days – 4.3%
- 16-30 days – 12.7%

During the past 30 days, how many times did you use marijuana?
- None – 87%
- 1-5 times – 8.1%
- 6-15 times – 2.2%
- 16+ times – 2.8%

Independent Measure

How much do you feel your parents care about you?
- Very much – 85%
- Somewhat or quite a bit – 14%
- Not at all or very little – 1%

Control Measure

Respondent’s Sex
- 52% female
- 48% male

Results

- 73.4% of males and 75.4% of females reported no use
- 85.7% of males and 88.2% of females reported no use

Data

- National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (AddHealth)
- Nationally representative of middle and high school students

Analysis

- Cross tabulation and Chi-square test using SPSS.
- All results statistically significant at $p < .05$.

Key Findings

- Most adolescents do not use drugs at high levels.
- Having a poor relationship with parents is associated with higher levels of drug use.
- Quality of parent relationship had greater influence on female drug usage.
- Adolescents are more likely to smoke cigarettes than use marijuana.
- A greater percentage of males use drugs (and with higher frequency) than females.

Limitations and Future Research

- Other variables could be predictors of parent-child relationships.
- Adolescents could be engaging in other risky behavior instead of drug usage.
- School based survey – could be missing individuals most likely to use drugs.
- Future study of vape, marijuana, and alcohol use.

References