Alcohol: Research Driven Responses to Moderate Behavior

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Context: U.S. student consumption of alcohol

Binge Drinking in the Last 2 Weeks

Graduate

- Three+
- Twice
- Once
- None

Undergraduate

- Three+
- Twice
- Once
- None

Healthy Minds Study 2015

*Binge intake = 4 female, 5 male, 4-5 other gender, or more drinks in a row
U.S. student perceptions of alcohol use

Daily Consumption
Peer Perception vs. Actual Reported

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Days</th>
<th>% Perceived Use</th>
<th>% Actual Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29 days</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-19 days</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-9 days</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Binge Behavior
Peer Perception vs Actual Reported

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Actual</th>
<th>Perceived</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nights per Week</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>3.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Drinks</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binge Drinking</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>3.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
News reports and descriptions from study abroad personnel highlight concerns about heavy drinking while abroad

"...some turn the entire school semester into one long spring break."

"Do Drinking Abroad Programs Have A Studying Problem?"

"Widespread binge drinking and rowdy behavior."

"The American image has been tarnished."

"Study Abroad – Major in Getting Drunk."

"Study Abroad Students Gone Wild."

"For my junior year abroad, I'm going to learn how to party in a foreign country."
Forum data supports concerns about alcohol misuse abroad

Types of Incidents

- ILLNESS
- BEHAVIORAL
- CLERY
- INJURY
- LARCENY
- TITLE IX
- OTHER
- SIMPLE ASSAULT
- HOSPITALIZATION
- CIVIL UNREST
- MV ACCIDENT
- MISSING PERSON
- NATURAL DISASTER
Prevalence of alcohol in incidents abroad

Contributing factors to all incidents

- Poor Judgement
- Alcohol
- Pre-Existing condition Undisclosed
- Cultural Difference
- Fatigue
- Pre-Existing condition Disclosed
- Failure to follow Program Policies
- Terrain
- Medications
- Illegal drugs
- Weather
Prevalence of alcohol in incidents abroad

20 total reportable incidents

50% indicated alcohol as a contributing factor
Research confirms that students greatly increase their drinking abroad.

Pedersen, Larimer, & Lee, 2010
Students face unique consequences abroad

- Legal problems with a foreign government
- Academic sanctions from both the home institution and the affiliated study abroad program
- Placing oneself in a dangerous situation with local people
- Social and personal consequences
- Contributing to negative stereotypes of Americans
Many students experience negative consequences while abroad

During the entire trip abroad...

- 44% had a hangover the day after drinking
- 25% found themselves in a situation where they did not remember all or parts of the night
- 21% embarrassed themselves by saying something or doing something they later regretted
- 20% ended up drinking on days that they had not planned on
- 14% passed out from drinking
- 12% missed class
- 10% injured themselves
- 9% found themselves in a dangerous situation they would not have been sober

Pedersen, Neighbors, Larimer, & Lee, 2011
Many students experience negative consequences while abroad

Within the past month while abroad...

- 58% reported drinking enough to have a hangover the next day
- 36% reported drinking on nights they had not planned on
- 35% reported taking foolish risks
- 35% reported embarrassing themselves
- 18% reported noticing changes in their tolerance level
- 17% reported a regretted sexual situation
- 17% reported blacking out
- 9% reported passing out

Hummer, Pedersen, Mirza, & LaBrie, 2010
We need more self-report data to better understand the prevalence of alcohol-related sexual assaults abroad

- 38% of a sample of women reported unwanted sexual experiences abroad
  - 27% reported unwanted touching
  - 6% reported attempted sexual assault
  - 5% reported completed sexual assault
- Female students are at 3x higher risk for attempted sexual assault and 5x higher risk for completed sexual assault abroad compared to back home on campus (where risk is already high)
- One-third of women and one-quarter of men report regretted sexual situations while abroad due to drinking
- Almost 1 in 10 women report pressure to have sex or forced sex due to drinking

Hummer et al., 2010; Kimble, Flack, & Burbridge, 2013
Heavier drinking students may self-select into study abroad programs.

Pedersen, LaBrie, Hummer, Larimer, & Lee, 2010
There are some characteristics of students that place them at greater risk than others:

- Student characteristics
  - Male students
  - Greek students
  - White students
  - Pre-abroad GPA
  - Students under age 21

Pedersen et al., 2010; Pedersen, Skidmore, & Aresi, 2014
There are some characteristics of students that place them at greater risk than others

- Student behaviors pre-abroad
  - Drinking intentions before departure
  - Heavier pre-abroad drinkers
  - High in sensation seeking

- Abroad factors
  - Students with more spending money
  - Cultural studies and language majors less likely to drink heavily

Pedersen et al., 2010; Pedersen, Skidmore, & Aresi, 2014
Where a student lives while abroad matters

- Living with roommates in an apartment (compared to living with a family)
- Urban setting (compared to rural)
- Region of study

![Drinks per week](chart)

- Europe
- Asia
- Oceania
- Latin America
- Non-traditional locations

Legend:
- Pre-departure
- Abroad
Desire to fit in and initiate and maintain friendships among peers is a major motivating force behind drinking behavior

- Direct pressure from peers to drink alcohol is normative in college
- During abroad trip, students may be motivated to consume alcohol in order to initiate new friendships and relationships with peers
- Social reasons for drinking during their trip predicted increased drinking from pre-departure levels and increased risk for alcohol-related consequences

Arnett, 2004; Cooper, 1994; Festinger, 1954; Pedersen et al., 2011
Young people want to fit in with their peers, but they are usually wrong about what they think others are doing.

- Perceived descriptive norms are beliefs about the behavior of others.
- Perceived injunctive norms are beliefs about the attitudes of others.
  - Usually how acceptable or unacceptable a behavior is.
- Specificity or salience of the normative group is important.
Misperceptions about social norms can encourage harmful behavior

When I go out, I notice people who are drinking a lot. Everyone drinks a lot. I think they have about 10 drinks when they go out.

I don't want to be the only one drinking 1 or 2, so I'll drink a bit more.

When I go out, I notice people who are drinking a lot.
Like college students in general, study abroad students misperceive the drinking behavior of their peers.
Misperceptions of salient abroad-specific groups influence drinking abroad

Drinks per week

- Low perceived general study abroad peer norms
- High perceived general study abroad peer norms
- Low perceived country-specific study abroad peer norms
- High perceived country-specific study abroad peer norms

Pedersen, Cruz, LaBrie, & Hummer, 2011; Pedersen, LaBrie, & Hummer, 2009
Perceptions about native people’s drinking norms may be more influential on behavior than perceptions of peers.
Positive adjustment into the foreign environment and engagement with the local culture may protect against problem drinking while abroad.

- Sojourner Adjustment
  - “The psychological adjustment of relatively short-term visitors to new cultures where permanent settlement is not the purpose of the sojourn” (Church, 1982, p. 540)
  - Possible protective factor
    - If one feels more connected to the environment, there is possibly less risk for heavy drinking and consequences.
We created a measure to capture study abroad sojourner adjustment.

- Six aspects specific to study abroad students
- Positive sojourner adjustment
  - Quality and quantity of interaction with local people
  - Trying to learn more about the culture and its people; developing one's own perspective
  - Learning to speak and using the local language; using local idioms and slang
  - Behaving in ways like members of the country; subscribing to their values
- Negative sojourner adjustment
  - Quality and quantity of interaction with Americans
  - Feeling anxious or sad about being far from home; feeling out of place within the country

Sojourner Adjustment Measure (SAM); Pedersen, Neighbors, Larimer, & Lee, 2011
Positive sojourner adjustment protects students from consequences, while negative sojourner adjustment contributes to drinking risk

- Less consequences while abroad
- Social interaction with host nationals
- Language development and use
- Host culture identification
- More consequences while abroad
- Social interaction with co-nationals
- Homesickness/feeling out of place
- Perceived norms and sojourner adjustment combine to contribute to risk

![Drinks per week](attachment:Drinks_per_week.png)
We can use what we know about risk and protective factors abroad to address study abroad drinking

**Code of Student Conduct**

Use, production, distribution, sale, or possession of alcohol in a manner prohibited under law or applicable university policy or facility policy.

- Students legal to drink where they are legally of age
- Unless there is another policy in place

Legal Use = Responsible Use

Behavior resulting from misuse can violate other standards of the Code

- Endangering behavior: Taking or threatening action that endangers the safety, physical or mental health, or life of any person, or creates a reasonable fear of such action.
- Actual or threatened damage to or destruction of university property or property of others, whether done intentionally or with reckless disregard.
- Disorderly or disruptive conduct that unreasonably interferes with university activities or with the legitimate activities of any member of the university community
Prevention strategies

Group Expectations Contract

Group Expectations augments the Code

- Simple = members of the group promise that they will not engage in behavior that leads to program delays, interruptions, or disruptions of the experience for other participants
- Rigid = agree to remain substance free (free of alcohol and illegal drugs) for the entire duration of the individual trip
- Moderate = parameters around times and locations for responsible use

**Workable**
“No possession of consumption of alcohol in residential premises”

**Concrete**; removes an opportunity for social clustering

**Tenuous**
“Participants may not be visibly drunk”

**Judgement call**
Prevention strategies

Program Design

Destination

Minimize options for group clustering

Maximize opportunities for engagement with local culture

Emphasis on cultural acquisition

Consider housing choices

Systematically reward participation in program activities
Prevention strategies

Admission Stage

Office of Student Conduct checks

– Students with active sanction of Disciplinary Probation are ineligible for admission for programs.

– Students with prior sanctions are reviewed by IRM, Office of Student Conduct, and Office of Legal Affairs to determine eligibility
  
  – Those with complete sanction for alcohol are usually eligible, but do receive a reminder of expectations and the Code
  
  – Those with more significant cases (e.g., repeat issues) may be required to meet to discuss expectations

– A second check is done prior to departure to detect any new occurrences of probation
Prevention strategies

Orientation Stage

Addressed in Student Online Pre-departure Orientation

- General information
- Applicability of the Code
- Responsible behavior

Program specific orientations

- Opportunity to counter the pre-conceive notions of drinking culture in location
- Establishing the social norms around consumption
- Increasing situational awareness
Pilot study of brief norms and sojourner adjustment feedback programs

- Correct misperceptions of study abroad peer and native adult drinking norms

According to the information you provided us during the survey...

You intend to drink **35 drinks** per week while studying abroad.

You think the typical UW student studying in Europe drinks **35 drinks** per week while studying abroad.

Based on recent research with UW study abroad students, students studying abroad in Europe actually report drinking a mean of **10.1 drinks** per week while studying abroad.
Pilot study of brief norms and sojourner adjustment feedback programs

• Promote positive and healthy sojourner adjustment
  • Reinforce goals of positive sojourner adjustment
  • Refocus goals of social gathering with American peers
  • Prepare students for potential difficulties with adjustment

Social interaction with local people in your host country

You indicated that during your time abroad, you will...

- Spend a good amount of time meeting and conversing with local people
- Socialize a good deal with people from your host country
- Have deep and meaningful conversations with local people
- Have meaningful social interactions with local people

Here are some quotes from UW students who recently completed study abroad programs. They describe their experiences with meeting goals and setting expectations of social interaction with local people during their trips.

"The best relationships I had with local people abroad were owners of business that I went to; local cafes and the shop I got my film developed at. Those were the people that it was the easiest and most natural to forge a relationship with because I was there on a regular basis actually doing things, so it was natural to build a relationship."

"The locals definitely want to speak to you more if you show that you are making an effort to learn the language and their customs."

"Home-stay opportunities are great. We could do home-stays as long as we wanted to. I stayed with a family for two nights, who I then met the wife's mother, who I ended up being very close to. She became my second mother and it was just from staying a couple nights with one family."
Pilot study findings revealed that norms correction worked best for lighter drinking students

Pedersen, Neighbors, Atkins, Lee, & Larimer, 2017
Pilot study findings revealed that norms correction enhanced with sojourner adjustment feedback worked best for problematic drinking students.
Why do we think the pilot intervention was successful?

PNF intervention

Student learns peers and locals drink moderately, but without engaging the new environment to observe these norms, changes in perceptions may be meaningless in a new context.

Addition of SAF intervention

Student engages their new environment, which allows them to observe the newly learned moderate norms.

Student drinks moderately and experiences few alcohol-related consequences while abroad.
Next steps

- Seeking funding to expand pilot study to 35+ study abroad programs
- Focus on reductions of specific consequences (e.g., sexual assaults)
- Two phases
  - Document risks and collect normative information
  - Test enhanced norms and sojourner adjustment feedback program
    - Brief, online, confidential
    - Videos of prior study abroad students
Further prevention and mitigation strategies

Quite simply: What has worked on your campus or program?

How have you made information resonate with students?

Have you placed alcohol awareness information in non-conventional settings?
Research on study abroad alcohol use


Research on study abroad alcohol use


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