

ABSTRACT

Problem of Alcohol Use Among Prince George Public Secondary School Students

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This study examined the nature, patterns and extent of drinking, and the attendant problems, among Prince George public secondary school students. The central reasons for students' initiation, noninitiation, cessation and continuation of alcohol use were also explored. Data were obtained through a 38-item student alcohol use survey, which was completed by a random sample of 513 students, as well as through interviews with a school administrator, a school-based alcohol and drug prevention worker and a few students from various grades.

The majority of survey respondents (77%) indicated that they were current drinkers, including 65% and 85% of grade 8 and grade 12 students respectively. The findings of the study reveal that approximately 38% of students began using alcohol "to see what it is like" and approximately 45% continued drinking because "it is fun." The findings also indicate that a significant number of students use alcohol frequently, heavily, in dangerous contexts and are experiencing a variety of problems due to their drinking, including home and school problems.

Two school-based alcohol and drug prevention workers, as well as counselors and teachers, have been attempting to educate students attending the 8 Prince George

public secondary schools about the safe use of alcohol through strategies such as lectures and the organizing of special events. There appears to be a need for the hiring of more prevention workers and for the setting up of committees comprising educators, parents and other interested community members in order to formulate methods to deal with some of the problem issues related to student alcohol use.

My supervisor and friend, Professor M.O.A. Durojaiye, for his guidance, support and suggestions for continued research include the examination of alcohol use among subgroups of the general student population, such as students of various ethnic groups, children of alcoholics and high school dropouts. Evaluation of current school-based alcohol education efforts is also needed.

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