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Drug Prevention Research Project

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Introduction to the Project

California State University, Fullerton has worked together with Orange County schools since summer 2005 in conducting a research project entitled *"Predicting Adolescent Tobacco and Alcohol Use."* This project is supported by the National Institute of Drug Abuse and is being carried out by a research team from CSUF in collaboration with Orange County middle schools. The

purpose of this project is to examine adolescents' attitudes and expectations regarding such risky behaviors as smoking, drinking, and marijuana use. We seek to better understand how adolescents perceive risks and why some of them choose to take up risk behaviors.

Many studies have found tobacco and alcohol use to be a gateway to other drug use among adolescents. This may result in serious behavior

problems. It is well known that differential knowledge regarding the harmful effects of drug use does not distinguish adolescent users from non-users.

We believe information gathered from this project will be very helpful in designing interventions to prevent youth in Orange County from starting these unhealthy habits.



Scientific value of this Project

What We Don't Know?

It is still a puzzle why adolescents choose to take up risky behavior at a time when the potentially harmful effects of these habits are well known. Unlike many other studies, this study is not only designed to examine adolescents' negative perceptions regarding drug use, but also to explore their positive evaluations of drugs. The underlying philosophy is that anticipated positive consequences play a prominent role in the decisions of adolescents who choose to initiate drug use.

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