Coordinated Strategy Has Impact on High-Risk College Drinking, Study Suggests

A coordinated strategy aimed at high-risk college drinking can be effective, a new study suggests.

The strategy addresses alcohol availability, policy enforcement and perceptions about the rate of high-risk drinking among peers, HealthCanal.com reports.

Campuses that implemented the strategy saw a 50 percent decrease in alcohol-related injuries, the researchers report in the journal Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research.

The study included five universities in North Carolina, which put together coalitions of campus administrators, faculty and staff, students and community members. Participants on each campus developed a strategic plan for their school. The universities were compared with five similar schools that did not implement an alcohol intervention.

"We realized that high-risk drinking is not just a campus problem, and it's not just a community problem. You have to look at the entire ecosystem," lead researcher Mark Wolfson, Ph.D., of Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center in Winston-Salem said in a news release.

Strategies included restricting access to alcohol by underage or intoxicated students, increasing or improving coordination between campus and community police, and establishing consistent disciplinary actions for those who violated policies.

Campuses with alcohol-reduction strategies found the percentage of students reporting severe consequences due to their own drinking decreased from 18 percent to 16 percent, while rates were unchanged on campuses without such strategies.

Those who reported injuring another person while drinking decreased from 4 percent to 2 percent on campuses with alcohol-reduction strategies, compared with a nonsignificant decrease at the

other universities. While the results were modest, the researchers said the strategies could help many students.

They estimated that on a campus of 11,000 students, these interventions would result in 228 fewer students experiencing at least one severe consequence of drinking over a one-month period, and 107 fewer students would injure others due to alcohol over the course of a year.

To learn more about Underage and College Drinking, click here.