RISK FACTORS FOR MARIJUANA USE AMONG MISSISSIPPI ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract: Adolescent marijuana use is a major public health problem. The consequences associated with use include high risk behavior, criminal activity, unintentional injuries and at times death due to overdose, all of which cause a great burden to society. In order to better understand the factors leading to marijuana use amongst adolescents this study examined the relationship between marijuana use and selected risk factors and the effect of having multiple risk factors on use, using data from the Mississippi SmartTrack Survey. Thirteen risk factors were identified that assessed various important social and personal aspects of life. A factor analysis was conducted to identify possible risk factors for marijuana use. Multivariate logistic regression analyses were carried out on marijuana use to determine possible predictors. Stepwise logistic regression analyses were conducted to generate model predictors of marijuana use. All analyses were carried out using SAS version 9.2 at the 0.05 alpha level. Factors such as peer drug use, school environment, exposure to school bullying, attitude toward school, academic performance, relationship with parents, parental discipline/monitoring, parental disapproval of drug use, perception of risk of harm from using the drug marijuana, perceived availability, and normative/delinquent behavior were significantly associated with marijuana use among adolescents. The number of risk factors reported also significantly predicted use after controlling for grade level, gender and race. Results suggest a multilevel approach to addressing marijuana use among adolescents.

Key words: Marijuana, adolescent substance use.