



# Where are the parents?: Newspaper coverage of parent strategies to address college drinking (1997-2006)

Natoshia M. Askelson, MPH

Shelly Campo, PhD

College of Public Health, University of Iowa

Teresa Mastin, PhD

Mary Slonske

College of Communication Arts and Sciences, Michigan State University



UI College of  
Public Health

# Overview

- Background
  - College & binge drinking
  - Parent & child communication
  - Parent strategies
- Research questions
- Methods
- Results
- Implications





# College & binge drinking

- **College binge drinking high** (Wechsler, Davenport, Dowdall, Moeykens, & Castillo, 1994)
- **Consequences: unintentional injuries, car crashes, health problems, suicides, problems with police** (Hingson, Heeren, Zakcos, Kopstein, & Wechsler, 2002), **unprotected sex** (Engs, Diebold, & Hansen, 1996)

# Parental strategies

- Parents can have positive impact on reducing college drinking (Booth-Butterfield & Sidelinger, 1998; Boyle & Boekeloo, 2006; Casper, Child, Gilmour, McIntyre, & Pearson, 2006; Cleveland, Gibbons, Gerrard, Pomery, & Brody, 2005; Kelly et al., 2002; Lau et al., 1990; White et al., 2006)
- Time between high school and college key for parents to be involved (White et al., 2006)



# Parent & child communication

- Parents do not realize their college students are involved in drinking (Bylund, Imes, & Baxter, 2005)
- Parents do not realize how powerful **they are** (Booth-Butterfield & Sidelinger, 1998; Lau, Quadrel, & Hartman, 1990)
- Parents do not talk (Bogenschneider, Wu, Raffaelli, & Tsay, 1998)





# Research questions

- RQ1: What parent strategies are covered in newspapers?
- RQ2: Do the frequencies of parent strategies change over time?
- RQ3: Do the frequencies of parent strategies differ by geographical region?
- RQ4: How does the amount of coverage of consequences compare to parent strategies?
- RQ5: How does the amount of coverage of other strategies compare to parent strategies?

6

# Methods

- 32 mainstream newspapers
- 1997-2006
- LexisNexis Academic (college drinking, college binge drinking, college alcohol abuse)
- 255 news articles, domestic
- 2 trained coders, inter-coder reliability established with random sample
- Holsti's formula: average 99.29 (SD .99), range 98-100





# Methods: Parent strategies

- Parents talking
  - Talking with children younger than 14
  - Talking with high school children
  - Talking with college-aged children
  - Talking with college freshmen
  - Discussing parent-imposed consequences of drinking
- Parental actions
  - Choosing college based on drinking culture of school
  - Monitoring children during high school
  - Staying involved in life of freshmen
  - Finding out more about drinking on their child's campus
  - Encouraging colleges to take action
- College role
  - Educating parents about binge drinking
  - Providing parents with strategies for preventing drinking
  - Notifying parents of children's behavior related to alcohol
  - Informing parents of alcohol rules and policies



# Results

- 255 articles total, only 49 mentioned a parental strategy



# RQ1: What parent strategies are covered in newspapers?

- Parents talking
  - Talking with children younger than 14: 8 (3.2%)
  - Talking with high school children: 16 (6.3%)
  - Talking with college-aged children: 17 (6.7%)
  - Talking with college freshmen: 8 (3.2%)
  - Discussing parental-imposed consequences of drinking: 0



# RQ1: What parent strategies are covered in newspapers?

- Parental action

- Choosing college based on drinking culture of school: 7 (2.8%)
- Monitoring children during high school: 3 (1.2%)
- Staying involved in life of freshmen: 4 (1.6%)
- Finding out more about drinking on their child's campus: 8 (3.2%)
- Encouraging colleges to take action: 6 (2.4%)



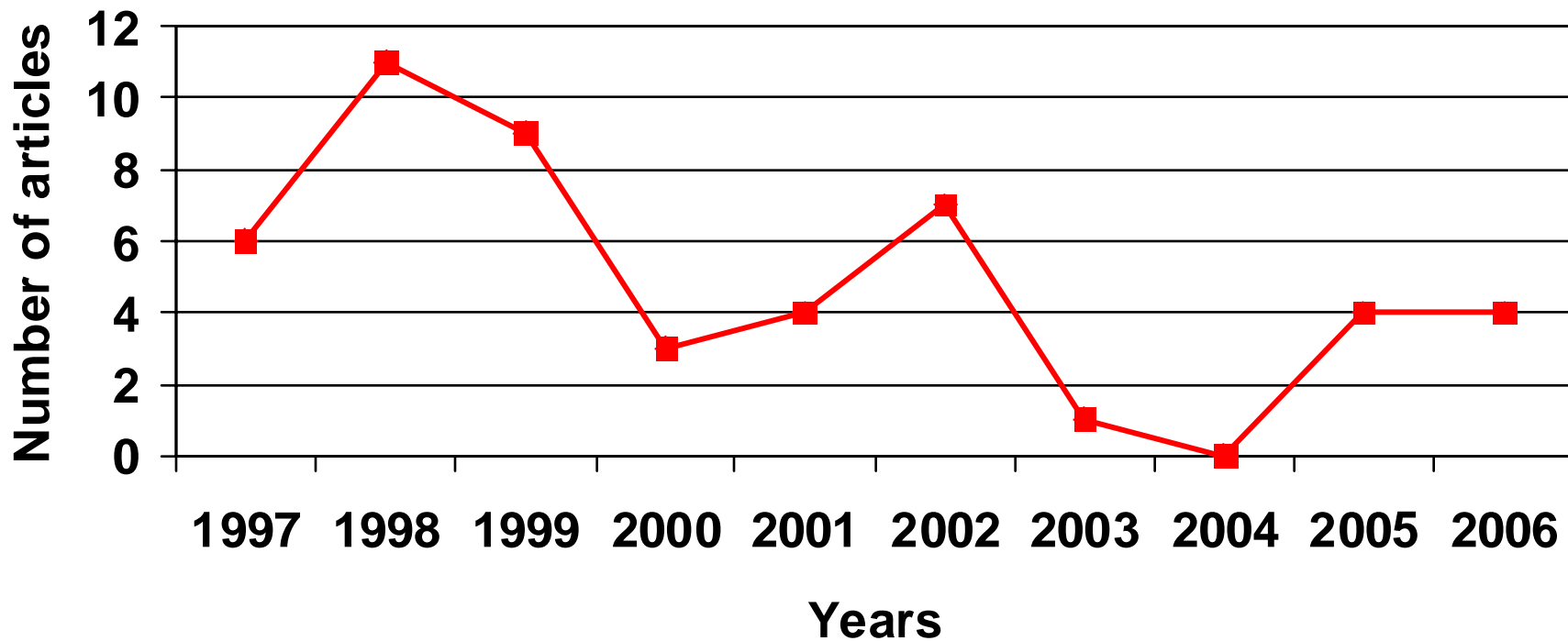
# RQ1: What parent strategies are covered in newspapers?

- College role
  - Educating parents: 10 (3.9%)
  - Providing parents with strategies for preventing drinking: 6 (2.4%)
  - Notifying parents of children's behavior related to alcohol: 6 (2.4%)
  - Informing parents of alcohol rules and policies: 24 (9.5%)

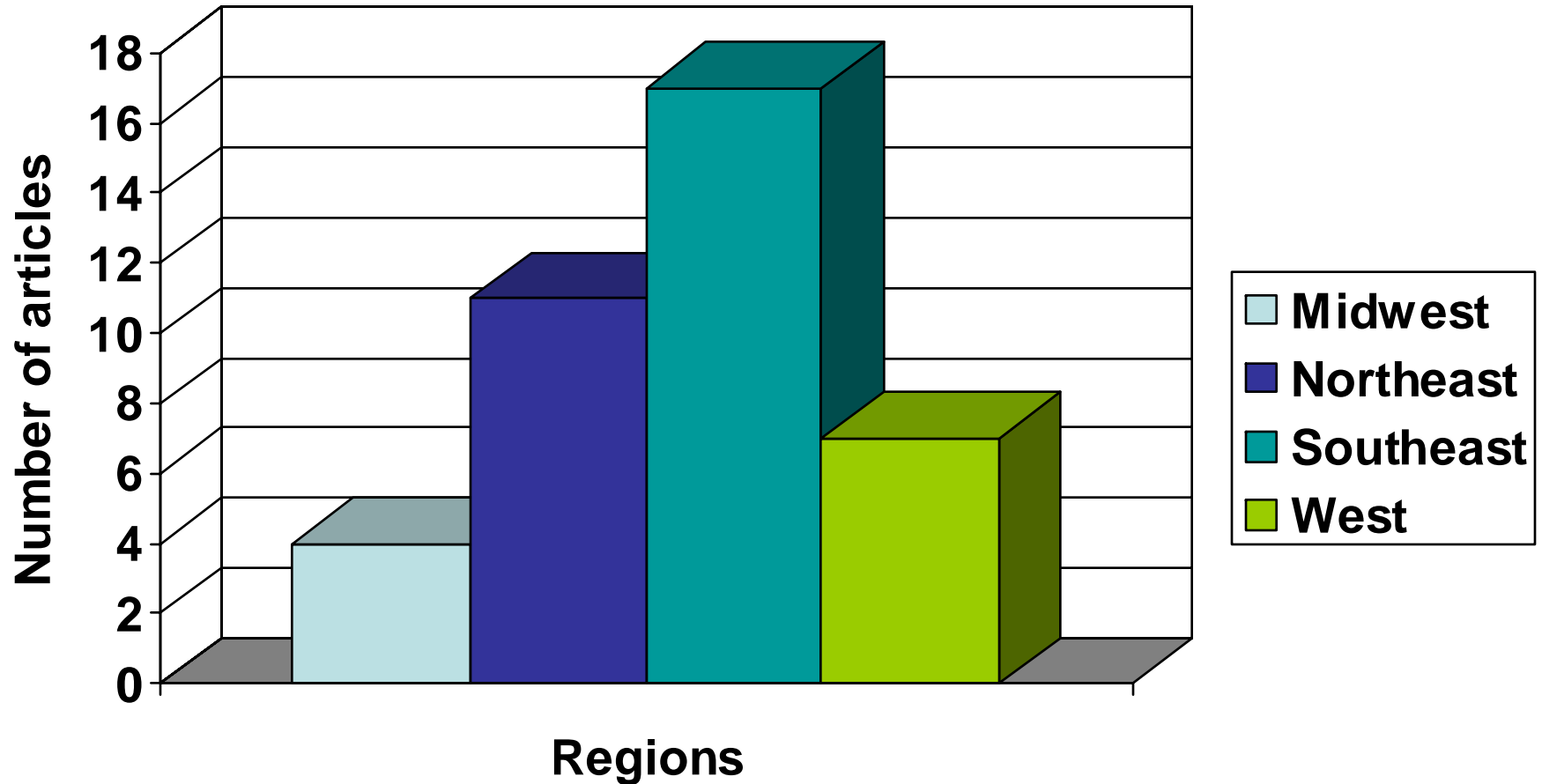


# RQ2: Do the frequencies of parent strategies change over time?

## Number of articles over time

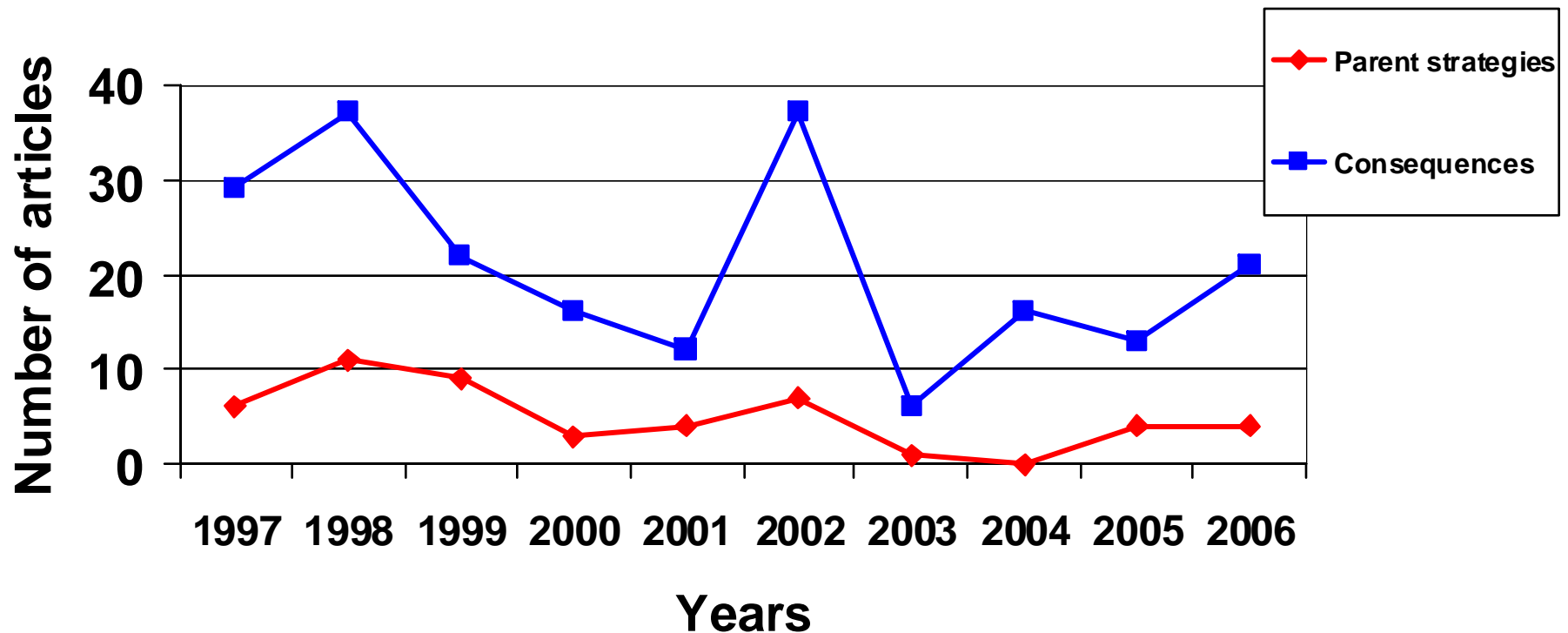


# RQ3: Do the frequencies of parent strategies differ by geographical region?



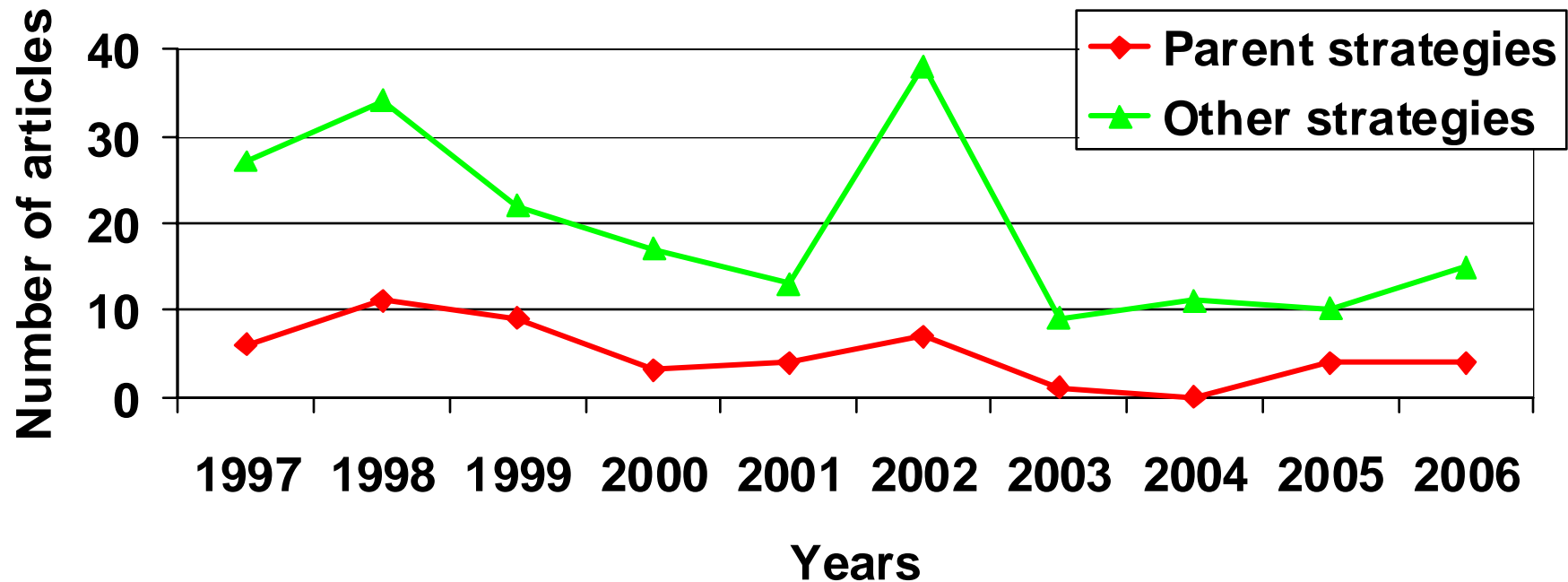
# RQ4: How does the amount of coverage of consequences compare to parent strategies?

## Frequencies of parent strategies and consequences



RQ5: How does the amount of coverage of other strategies compare to parent strategies?

**Frequencies of parent strategies and other strategies**





# Implications

- Minimal and declining coverage will not get message out to parents that they need to be proactive.
- Parents will continue to assume they have no role in reducing harmful drinking.
- Media advocacy should be used.



# References

- Bogenschneider, K., Wu, M., Raffaelli, M., & Tsay, J. C. (1998). "Other teens drink, but not my kid": Does parental awareness of adolescent alcohol use protect adolescents from risky consequences? *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 60(2), 356-373.
- Booth-Butterfield, M., & Sidelinger, R. (1998). The influence of family communication on the college-aged child: Openness, attitudes and actions about sex and alcohol. *Communication Quarterly*, 46(3), 295-308.
- Boyle, J. R., & Boekeloo, B. O. (2006). Perceived parental approval of drinking and its impact on problem drinking behaviors among first-year college students. *Journal of American College Health*, 54(4), 238-244.
- Bylund, C. L., Imes, R. S., & Baxter, L. A. (2005). Accuracy of parents' perceptions of their college student children's health and health risk behaviors. *Journal of American College Health*, 54(1), 31-37.
- Casper, M. F., Child, J. T., Gilmour, D., McIntyre, K. A., & Pearson, J. C. (2006). Healthy research perspectives: Incorporating college student experiences with alcohol. *Health Communication*, 20(3), 289-298.
- Cleveland, M. J., Gibbons, F. X., Gerrard, M., Pomery, E. A., & Brody, G. H. (2005). The impact of parenting on risk cognitions and risk behavior: A study of mediation and moderation in a panel of African American adolescents. *Child Development*, 76(4), 900-916.
- Engs, R., Diebold, B., & Hansen, D. (1996). The drinking patterns and problems of a national sample of college students, 1994. *Journal of Alcohol Drug Education*, 41, 13-33.
- Hingson, R.W. & Howland, J. (2002). Comprehensive community interventions to promote health: Implications for college-age drinking problems. *Journal of Studies in Alcohol*, 14, 226-240.
- Hingson, R. W., Heeren, T., Zakocs, R. C., Kopstein, A., & Wechsler, H. (2002). Magnitude of alcohol-related mortality and morbidity among US college students ages 18-24. *Journal of Stud Alcohol*, 63, 136-144.
- Kelly, K. J., Comello, M. L. G., & Hunn, L. C. P. (2002). Parent-child communication, perceived sanctions against drug use, and youth drug involvement. *Adolescence*, 37(148), 775-787.
- Lau, R. R., Quadrel, M. J., & Hartman, K. A. (1990). Development and change of young adults' preventive health beliefs and behavior: Influence from parents and peers. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 31(3), 240-259.
- Wechsler, H., Davenport, A., Dowdall, G., Moeykens, B., & Castillo, S. (1994). Health and behavioral consequences of binge drinking in college: A national survey of students at 140 campuses. *JAMA*, 272, 1672-1677.
- White, H. R., McMorris, B. J., Catalano, R. F., Fleming, C. B., Haggerty, K. P., & Abbott, R. D. (2006). Increases in alcohol and marijuana use during the transition out of high school into emerging adulthood: The effects of leaving home, going to college, and high school protective factors. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, 67, 810-822.

