

The background of the slide is a blurred photograph of a crowd at a sports event. People are wearing various colored clothing, including red, blue, and white. The focus is on the text in the foreground.

Sports Participation & Alcohol-Related Behaviors Among Adolescents in Southwest Georgia

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Author Disclosures

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 - No relationships to disclose



Adolescent Alcohol Use

- Adolescent alcohol use is a major public health problem
- Alcohol use is associated with the leading causes of injury and death among adolescents
- Early drinking increases the risk for alcohol-related problems
- Heavy or “binge” drinking is also associated with many other health risk behaviors and alcohol-related problems



Alcohol & Sports

- Sports represent important contexts of development
- Research suggests that sports participation is associated with adolescent alcohol use
- Many factors may influence this relationship:
 - Sports-specific factors
 - Differences between males & females
- Research on sports participation and alcohol use is hindered by several limitations



Objectives

- Examine the associations between sports-specific factors and alcohol-related behaviors among adolescents who participate in school-based sports
- Assess whether these relationships differ between male and female sports participants



Methods

- Conducted with the Institute of Athletic Health Care and Research, Inc., Hughston Orthopedic Hospital
- Administered an anonymous, cross-sectional survey to a convenience sample of adolescents
- Setting required very brief measures (5-10 min)
- Measures included items assessing:
 - Sports participation (Add Health index, original item)
 - Alcohol-related behaviors (YRBS)
 - Perceived peer drinking (MTF)
 - Demographics (YRBS)

Variables

- Alcohol-related behaviors (6 items):
 - Treated as dichotomous variables
 - Summed as a continuous variable, range 0-6 (KR-20 = 0.72)
- Sports-specific factors:
 - Different sports (e.g., basketball, football, cheerleading)
 - Level of participation (varsity, JV, freshman/other)*
 - Team only, individual only, both team and individual
 - “Collision” sports
 - Fall sports

Sample

Characteristic (n = 378)	Mean (SD)/Percent
Male	76.3%
Non-Hispanic Black	70.0%
Alcohol-Related Behaviors	0.82 (1.22)
Perceived peer drinking	1.85 (1.92)
Sports reported	2.53 (1.28)
Varsity sports	65.4%
Most frequent sports	Football (63%), track & field (35%), basketball (23%), and soccer (17%)
Collision sports	79.5%
Both team & individual sports	48.9%



Analyses

- Bivariate tests (t-tests, χ^2 , etc.)
- Regression models examining:
 - Relationships between sports-specific factors and alcohol-related behaviors (5 logistic, 3 linear)
 - Associations between participation in different sports and alcohol-related behaviors (10 logistic & 2 linear)
- Stratified some models by sex to examine differences between males and females

Bivariate Results

- Males and females differed significantly based on:
 - Different sports (soccer, tennis, other sports)
 - Participation in both team and individual sports
 - Varsity sports
- Among males, varsity sports participation associated with:
 - More alcohol-related behaviors
 - Greater perceived peer drinking
- Among females, softball participation was associated with early drinking, driving after drinking, and riding with a driver who had been drinking ($p \leq 0.10$)



Regression Results

- Varsity sports participants were more likely to report:
 - Ever drinking (OR 1.9, CI 1.1-3.2)
 - Drinking in the past month (OR 3.5, CI 1.4-8.5)
- Among females:
 - Softball participants more likely to report ever drinking, early drinking, drinking in the past month, and more total alcohol-related behaviors
 - Volleyball participants more likely to report ever drinking
 - The regression models were not significant overall



Discussion

- The prevalence of alcohol-related behaviors was strikingly low
- Differences in sports participation between males and females
- Relationships between varsity sports and alcohol-related behaviors may be due to sports-specific motives, social contexts of varsity sports
- Perceptions of female sports participants may explain the relationships between specific sports and alcohol-related behaviors among females



Limitations

- Convenience sample of adolescents
- Small sample size, particularly females
- Cross-sectional study design
- Self-reported assessments of sports participation and alcohol-related behaviors



Conclusions

- Sports-specific factors may be associated with alcohol-related behaviors
- Future research is needed to explore the factors underlying these relationships, in particular to inform intervention efforts