

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Substance Abuse on Campus: A Handbook for College and University Personnel**, by P. Clayton Rivers and Elsie R. Shore (Eds.). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997, 277 + xvi pages, \$69.50 (cloth).

Substance use on college campuses has become a topic of considerable concern in recent years. College personnel and administrators find themselves increasingly under pressure to do *something* about this problem, but they often have limited guidance in deciding *what* to do. This book is designed to serve as a resource for making decisions about appropriate responses to college student substance use.

The chapters are grouped into three sections, which provide an overview of the substance use literature relevant to college students. Part I, Basic Issues and Models, contains four chapters. In the first, Zucker addresses developmental issues in alcohol use, with particular emphasis on the need to consider the context of use on campus, the normative nature of experimental substance use in this context and the tendency for many students to "mature out" of substance use over time. In chapter 2, Woltersdorf reviews the neuropsychological effects of substances, focusing on those substances most likely to be abused (alcohol and caffeine), but also covering numerous other drugs of abuse. In chapter 3, Thombs provides a review of classical disease theory and the application of the theory to college students. His chapter covers both the strengths and the weaknesses of AA and the disease model, and gives college professionals some idea regarding what to expect if they refer a student to a disease-model treatment program. Calamari and Cox (chapter 4) contrast disease theory with alternative research-based theories of substance use. Their review illustrates the wide variety of alternative approaches to substance use prevention and treatment, many of which can be provided to students on campus, with minimal disruption to their academic routine.

Part II of the book, Policies, Programming, and Prevention, has three chapters. Chapter 5 is an overview of issues to be considered in campus policy development, including legal/political ramifications as well as campus-specific factors such as campus norms, demographics, mission and philosophy. In chapter 6, Berkowitz reviews the literature on the proactive prevention approach, focusing on normative re-education and social marketing strategies for promoting accurate perceptions of the low-risk drinking habits of most students. He also covers the use of assessment as a tool for developing and evaluating prevention efforts, and provides case examples from several campuses. Chapter 7 is a case study of the application of alcohol prohibition policies in residence halls and the impact of the different enforcement styles of resident assistants and resident directors on the rates of drinking infractions by their residents.

Part III, Assessment, Intervention, and Treatment, comprises four chapters that cover typical assessment issues with students, interventions with students, professional treatment and self-help groups. The assessment chapter, by Smith, Wells and Abdul-Salaam, will likely be a valuable resource for college administrators and others interested in the comprehensive evaluation of student substance use. The intervention chapter (Chapter 9) reviews current theories about motivation and the use of empathy and feedback in promoting a desire to change risky behavior. In Chapter 10, Gregoire covers traditional treatment, with an emphasis on Minnesota model programs. The chapter is a good description of the content methods of traditional treatment programs and also reviews some of the challenges and limitations of applying this model to students. It is important to note that most of the treatment outcome research summarized in this chapter is not research using college students, therefore the effectiveness of traditional treatment for this population remains unknown.

Finally, Chapter 11 covers self-help groups, including AA/NA, AL-ANON, and the many alternative self-help groups such as SMART recovery and Secular Organization for Sobriety. As the authors note, the research evidence for the effectiveness of self-help groups is limited; however, the review of these groups should be helpful for campus personnel in making referrals for additional support for willing students.

This book accomplishes many of its goals. It gives an overview of standardized assessment tools, provides references for many different prevention and treatment approaches and explores many of the issues that complicate substance use prevention and treatment for college students. These issues include the normative nature of substance use, the conflict between the norms and the law, the intricacies of policy development and implementation within this climate, and the difficulties and limitations of applying adult models of substance use and dependence to this population. It is perhaps unfortunate that the two chapters devoted to treatment cover only traditional treatment and self-help groups in detail, and the extensive coverage of the disease model is somewhat out of proportion to the evidence for its appropriateness for a college student population. A chapter covering cognitive-behavioral methods such as skills-training with this population might have broadened the utility of the treatment section. In addition, it is interesting that in a book on college student substance use only one chapter is devoted exclusively to prevention.

As with many edited volumes, this book suffers from a certain amount of redundancy. In particular, the DSM-IV criteria for substance abuse and dependence appear in each of the first four chapters, and the AA twelve-steps are included in three chapters. Also, the book suffers from another com-

mon problem: considerable variability in the writing style, depth of coverage and scientific basis (or lack thereof) for the material presented. However, taken as a whole the book should serve as a useful resource for academic personnel and college health center staff, who are faced with substance use every day. This book provides a starting point for developing more effective assessment, referral and intervention approaches for these students.

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**Fetal Alcohol Abuse Syndrome**, by Ernest L. Abel. New York: Plenum Press, 1998, 260 + xi pages, \$42.50 (cloth).

For many years, Ernest L. Abel has been one of the experts "writing the book" about fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS). His earlier reviews of the expanding literature on this phenomenon were basic reference volumes for the student and researcher. This volume continues this tradition but is more critical in its approach than its predecessors: Abel does not simply review the literature but argues that 25 years of research has led to a number of somewhat controversial conclusions. The first being that the current emphasis on negative effects of moderate and social drinking is misplaced and that the disorder associated with prenatal alcohol exposure should be renamed the "fetal alcohol *abuse* syndrome" to reflect findings that show that adverse effects occur only to children of alcoholic women or those drinking in an abusive manner during pregnancy (chapter 1). The second conclusion is that FAS does not occur uniformly across all population groups but is seen primarily among the economically deprived due to the presence of collateral conditions that permit or "provoke" its occurrence. Abel suggests that, in fact, alcohol is a necessary but not a sufficient condition and requires the presence of culturally related alcohol-intake patterns, maternal health status, nutrition and age, socioeconomic status, and/or other drug use, particularly smoking cigarettes (chapters 11 and 12). Third, he suggests that many of the negative outcomes, particularly the behavioral outcomes, attributed to prenatal exposure, result in fact from the postnatal environment and argues that experimental study of this factor has been neglected. In this context, he notes the relative lack of theoretically based research on cognitive processing deficits, as well as the over generalization of conclusions about emotional and social deficits based on observations in clinical samples (chapter 10).

In addition to these conclusions, the book contains discussion of current controversies in diagnosis of FAS (chapter 2), reviews of the status of knowledge about the teratological out-

comes associated with prenatal alcohol exposure, from spontaneous abortion (chapter 3) and perinatal problems (chapters 4 and 5) through growth retardation (chapter 6), malformations (chapters 7 and 8) and neurodevelopmental effects (chapters 9 and 10), as well as what is called the "American paradox" (chapter 11), a discussion of the skewed distribution of the incidence and prevalence of FAS, and a chapter (13) on possible biological mechanisms. These chapters demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of the field as well as careful interpretation of the research results and will be valuable to any reader who would like an update in these areas.

In making the argument that social and "moderate" drinking and drinking by women who are not at "risk" due to poverty or the effects of minority status are not associated with FAS, Abel places himself in opposition to the conclusions of a great deal of published research as well as current social policy. He argues cogently that studies that report negative physical and behavior effects of as little as one or two drinks per day (on average) misrepresent the actual situation due to their research designs, or statistical artifacts, or because alcohol use is misrepresented as daily moderate use rather than in the "binge" pattern that actually prevails. In reviewing a number of studies, he argues that there is a "threshold" of five to six drinks *per occasion* that is associated with measurable negative effects in exposed offspring. If this is the case, then prevention and treatment efforts, which are now directed more universally, could be focused on those women who are most likely to have affected children. Based on the literature, Abel suggests, these are poor, often minority, women who drink abusively, smoke cigarettes (and use other drugs), who are older than average and have had other affected children.

In discussion of the (neuro) behavioral outcomes attributed to prenatal exposure, similar issues are raised. Abel questions the generalizability of cognitive and behavioral findings that have been collected in minority populations as well as the lack of attention to the environmental contribution of parental alcoholism and suggests that all studies that attribute measurable cognitive effects "should be reassessed, addressing the question of whether those effects were . . . attributable to a few cases of children of . . . alcohol abusers" (p. 135).

While many will disagree with his conclusions, Abel's interpretation of the existing literature raises important questions about methodology and the focus of research in this area as well as the most effective way to direct efforts at prevention and treatment. As a result, anyone interested in this area of research or in working with women at risk or affected children will find this book provocative.

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