A NATIONAL RECOVERY STUDY IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN IRELAND

Professor. Jo-Hanna Ivers,
Associate Professor of Addiction & Dean of Civic Engagement & Social Innovation,
Trinity College Dublin
BACKGROUND

DUHEI: Survey of drug use among 3rd-level education students

- 11,500 participant responses
- 60% were female
- The median age was 21
- 81% undergraduates
- 9% were registered with a Disability Support Service
- 93% were EU students
- 56% have previously used illicit drugs
- 6.6% reported that at one time had a problem with drugs or alcohol but no longer did
Lifetime and recent illicit drug use was associated with a higher rate of previous drug problems.

Viewing drug use as a normal part of college increased the likelihood of having a previous drug problem.

Those who viewed drugs as having a neutral or positive effect were more likely to have a previous drug problem.
### How Long Ago Did Students Resolve Their Substance Use Problem?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-6 months</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-12 months</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5 years</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 years+</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DUHEI**

**Drug Use in Higher Education in Ireland Survey**
WHAT IS “RECOVERY” TO STUDENTS?

TOTAL ABSTINENCE
Abstinence from all substances

Favoured by:
• Women
• Have never taken illicit substances
• Those who believe drugs have a negative effect
• Students who consider themselves to be in recovery

PARTIAL ABSTINENCE
Abstinence only from the problem substance

Favoured by:
• Men
• Lifetime and recent drug users

MODERATE USE
Moderate use of all substances

Favoured by:
• Those with a neutral or positive view of the effects of drug use.
• Students who don’t consider themselves to be in recovery
LENGTH OF CURRENT RECOVERY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recovery Duration</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-6 months</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 months - 1 year</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5 years</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 years+</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of participants
WHO'S CURRENTLY IN RECOVERY?

ALCOHOL
Those who’ve never used illicit drugs were more likely to be in recovery

STRAIGHT ‘N’ NARROW
Those with no recent non-medical drug use were more likely to consider themselves in recovery

HARM PERCEPTION
Believing that drug use has a negative effects was more common among those in recovery

TOTAL ABSTINENCE
Believing recovery to be total abstinence from all substances was associated with being in recovery

SELECT PROGRAMME USE
- Faith-based Recovery Community
- National/local services
- Detox
- In/outpatient services
RESOLUTION OF A SUBSTANCE PROBLEM

FIGURES

- 7% of students have solved a previous problem they had with alcohol or drugs.
- Slightly more likely to be male (9% of males vs 5% of females)
- Higher in those with a disability (11%)
- They were more likely to see drug use as a normal part of college life.

RECOVERY

- Most (54%) did not use a recovery support programme
- Only 30% of these students would consider themselves to be or have been in recovery
- Those who consider themselves in recovery see it as total abstinence.
- Those who don’t associate with the term recovery see it as partial abstinence or moderate use.

HOW MANY ATTEMPTS DID IT TAKE

- 43% of students made one attempt
- 22% made two attempts
- 14% made three attempts
- 7% made four attempts
- 3% made five attempts
- 6% made more than five attempts
- 5% don’t know how many attempts it took
LENGTH OF PREVIOUS RECOVERY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-6 months</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 months-1 year</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5 years</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 years+</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Number of participants
RECOVERY FOR MALES VS. FEMALES

MALES
- Were more likely to consider drug use as normal
- More likely to have recently used drugs
- Were more likely to be a member of a sports club or society
- View recovery as partial abstinence

FEMALES
- Females’ previous recovery attempts took longer than males (average of 33 vs. 17 months)
- More likely to view drug use as having a negative effect
- Less likely to ever have used illicit substances
- View recovery as total abstinence

NO DIFFERENCE
- Utilization of a recovery service or programme
- Choice of said programmes
- Number of recovery attempts
College societies, but not sport clubs, were associated with less attempts at recovery than non-members.

Those who were currently in recovery had multiple previous attempts.

Viewing drugs as having an extremely negative effect on student life was associated with more recovery attempts than a neutral or positive view.

Older students were more likely to have more recovery attempts than younger students.

Not using a recovery programme is the most common way for students to approach each attempt, though this gap narrows with each attempt.
RECOVERY PROGRAMMES IN MULTIPLE ATTEMPTS

1st Attempt
Most commonly done with no programme or a sober living facility

2nd Attempt
Most commonly done with no programme or in a sober living facility

3rd Attempt
No programme still at the top but national/local services and school counselling join the common choices

4th Attempt
Outpatient treatment becomes one of the most popular choices, while no programme recovery is still much higher than the rest.

5th Attempt
National/local, inpatient, recovery community, and sober living services match no programme recovery attempts.

5+ Attempts
Most commonly done with no programme or a sober living facility

At 5+ attempts, national/local, inpatient, recovery community, and sober living services match no programme recovery attempts.
HOW THEY RECOVERED

THEIR COMMENTS

- Participants wrote why they no longer considered themselves in recovery
- Each of these were assigned to one of 8 themes

8 THEMES

1. Replaced addiction
2. Relapsed
3. Had a long period of abstinence
4. Removal of cause or triggers
5. Recovered so no longer in recovery
6. Reduced urge to take substance
7. Undeterminable
8. Change in relationship with substance

PROMINENCE

As a percentage of total
A wide range of factors affect recovery in 3rd-level students.

What recovery means differs among students.

Harder to reach students who are not as involved in university life, like asocial or older students are most at risk for having a drug problem.

Students are currently not/unable to use recovery services as much as would help them.

Survey shows many students were in the early stages of their recovery.
THANK YOU
Prof. Jo-Hanna Ivers
Twitter @Prof_Jo_Ivers