Substance Abuse Research Center (UMSARC)

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Substance Abuse and Welfare Reform Meeting at UMSARC

In December 2000, at the annual Substance Abuse Policy and Research Program (SAPRP) meeting in Santa Fe, New Mexico, a group of approximately 25 researchers discussed their shared interests in welfare reform and substance abuse. During this discussion, the group expressed a desire to reconvene in order to further discuss topics such as: the denial of benefits for those convicted of a felony drug offense; the prevalence of substance abuse among welfare recipients; mandatory drug testing and the interfaces among welfare and substance abuse services.

On July 11th and 12th, UMSARC invited the 25 researchers to come to a two-day event in Ann Arbor, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The purpose of the meeting was to explore issues relevant to substance abuse policy, including welfare reform. Participants spent time discussing their own research and making recommendations for future studies. The meeting ended with plans to disseminate the papers presented during the two-day sessions.

Substance Abuse Research Funding at the University

Researchers affiliated with the University of Michigan Substance Abuse Research Center (UMSARC) continue to attract extramural grants and contracts. In 2000, UMSARC researchers were awarded approximately 23 million for new grants and contracts. Over 30% of our researchers received awards in 2000.

When examining the data depicted on the graph, consider funding cycles, the effects of inflation and the number of investigators funded on various projects. For instance, the Survey Research Center’s “Monitoring the Future” was awarded in 1992 and 1997: this large NIDA funded project contributes to the peaks in those years. The graph does not depict the year investigators were given the award nor does it reflect the number of years a project is funded.

It is exciting to see the continued success of our researchers, particularly to witness the benefits of our interdisciplinary collaborations.
The University of Michigan Substance Abuse Research Center announces

A National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)
Pre-doctoral and Post-doctoral
Interdisciplinary Training Program

The University of Michigan Substance Abuse Research Center is accepting applications for pre-doctoral and post-doctoral fellows for the 2002-03 academic year beginning July 1, 2002. The purpose of the training grant is to prepare researchers and scholars to expand their work beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries.

The Substance Abuse Research Center is comprised of over 90 individuals from 29 departments at the University of Michigan who have significant interest in the study of alcohol, nicotine, and other drugs. The Center exists to stimulate the study of psychoactive substance abuse of all kinds and to extend the knowledge regarding substance abuse prevention.

Program components include: Research with two faculty mentors, an interdisciplinary pro seminar, course work, training in ethical conduct of research and research communication, a dissertation for pre-doctoral fellows and independent research for post-doctoral fellows. The pool of potential faculty mentors is comprised of established investigators working on projects involving behavioral, biological, psychosocial, or public health aspects of alcohol, nicotine, and other drugs. Research interests range from cellular investigations to policy development and evaluation. (Fellowships are for two years contingent on satisfactory completion of the first year).

Pre-doctoral applicants must have a bachelor's degree in a relevant discipline, have the promise of academic excellence, significant interest in research related to alcohol, nicotine and other drugs, and (by June 2001) have successfully completed their preliminary exams in a doctoral program at the University of Michigan. Applicants must work with two faculty mentors from different disciplines. The 12-month NIH stipend for 2002-03 will be $14,688. Funding is also available for tuition, travel, and other training related expenses.

Post-doctoral applicants must have earned a doctorate within the past eight years in an appropriate field such as: M.D., Dr.P.H., J.D., D.O., Psy.D., D.D.S., Pharm.D., D.N.S., or D.S.W. and have demonstrated research productivity and academic excellence as well as an interest in research related to alcohol, nicotine, or other drugs. The 12-month stipend for 2002-03 will be $26,256-$41,268 depending on years of post-doctoral experience. Health insurance and a dental assistance plan are provided. Funding is also available for travel and other training related expenses.

Applications will be reviewed beginning April 1, 2002. An Application packet is available from the Substance Abuse Research Center. Applications must include a goal statement, an outline of the proposed research program and the names of potential mentors. A list of the Substance Abuse Research Center members is included in the application packet. Also required with the application form: transcripts, curriculum vitae, three letters of recommendation, and a doctoral advisor form for evidence that the doctorate has been completed.

For further information and an application packet, contact the University of Michigan Substance Abuse Research Center, 475 Market Place, Suite D, Ann Arbor, MI 48108-1649; Telephone (734) 998-6500; Fax (734) 998-6508; E-mail: rachelha@umich.edu or visit our Web Site at http://www.umich.edu/umsarc.

The University of Michigan is an affirmative action, equal opportunity employer. Applicants must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents. Women and individuals from underrepresented minority groups are encouraged to apply.
Methodological Problems?

Come to the Social Statistics and Methodology Discussion Series

University of Michigan researchers, associated with the Social Statistics and Methodology Discussion Series, welcome presentations by faculty/graduate students with statistical questions and concerns! Their goal is to provide a supportive and exciting setting within which researchers can brainstorm about methodological problems.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PRESENTER:

You should begin with a 15-minute informal presentation that consists of the following:

1) A description of the scientific problem and data set.
2) The scientific, substantive question that motivates the methodological question.
3) The methodological/statistical question.
4) Descriptive statistics.

Following the brief, 15-minute, presentation, the participants and presenter will brainstorm for approximately 45 minutes with the hope of arriving at both quick, ad-hoc approaches and long term approaches to the problem.

For Fall 2001 Discussion Series faculty include:

Richard Gonzales, Psychology <gonzo@umich.edu>
Susan Murphy, Statistics <samurphy@umich.edu>
Vijay Nair, Statistics <vnn@umich.edu>
Steve Raudenbush, Education <rauden@umich.edu>
Yu Xie, Sociology <yuxie@umich.edu>

For more information contact Rhonda Moats at rmoats@isr.umich.edu

2001 Interdisciplinary Speaker Series

The interdisciplinary Substance Abuse Research Center (UMSARC) will present a series of presentations throughout the fall of 2001. Nationally renowned speakers, reflecting a variety of disciplines, will address issues related to substance abuse among . . .

Tonda Hughes, Ph.D., RN
University of Illinois, School of Nursing
“Sexual Identity and Drinking: Risk and Protective Factors for Drinking-Related Problems among Lesbians”
October 10, 2001 from 3-5 PM
Michigan Union, Anderson AB Room
Co-Sponsored by: Institute for Research on Women and Gender

Ellen Gritz, Ph.D.
University of Texas, Department of Behavioral Science
“Women and Smoking: Myths and Realities”
October 17, 2001 from 3-5 PM
Michigan League, Kalamazoo Room
Co-Sponsored by: University of Michigan Tobacco Research Network

Elizabeth Armstrong, Ph.D.
Princeton University, Department of Sociology and Public Affairs
November 7, 2001 from 3-5 PM
Michigan League, Kalamazoo Room

William Birdsall, Ph.D.
University of Michigan, School of Social Work
“Drugs, Disciplines, and the Dilemma of Prohibition”
November 14, 2001 from 3-5 PM
Michigan League, Kalamazoo Room

Marilyn Sommers, Ph.D., RN
University of Cincinnati, College of Nursing
“Screening versus Intervening after Alcohol-Related Injury: Do We Need Both?”
February 6, 2002 from 2-4 PM
Michigan League, Henderson Room

Chris-Ellyn Johanson, Ph.D.
Wayne State University, Department of Psychiatry
“Evaluation of the subjective, reinforcing and discriminative stimulus effects of MDMA in humans”
October 31, 2001 from 3-5 PM
Michigan League, Vandenberg Room
Dr. Sean Esteban McCabe won the 2001 Junior Investigator and 2001 Research Recognition Awards, awarded by the Research Society on Alcoholism at their annual meeting, June 28, 2001, Montreal, Canada. The honor was awarded for his research with Dr. Carol Boyd, “Gender Differences in Risk Factors for Heavy Episodic Drinking Among Undergraduates”. Congratulations to Dr. McCabe.

Dr. Christian Teter, one of UMSARC’s NIDA post-doctoral fellows presented his research at the 2001 New Clinical Drug Evaluation Unit (NCDEU) one of the premier scientific conferences in the NIMH. Dr. Teter was selected to present his work in a poster session as well as to participate in a special closed workshop for New Investigators. Under the general theme of treatment research, the NCDEU is one of the outstanding psychopharmacology research meetings in the world. Congratulations to Dr. Teter and his mentor, Dr. Sally Guthrie.

Meinee McPherson is one of UMSARC’s newest pre-doctoral fellows. The Dell Corporation has sited Ms. McPherson for her involvement in Social Work’s Interdisciplinary Child Welfare Training Program. The Dell Corporation nominated the ICWTP web site for its innovative use of technology in its application to social problems. The study involves professionals working with complex child welfare cases. The website allows professionals the ability to gain access to multimedia training materials over the Internet, improving care to vulnerable children in remote communities. The ICWTP Web Site was among the 2001 finalists earning a laureate medallion and is featured on the COMPUTERWORLD Honors Program website, A Search for New Heroes (www.cwheroes.org).

Luke Bergman, one of UMSARC’s NIDA pre-doctoral fellows was awarded the 2001 Judith and Howard Sims Medal. The honor was awarded for his research project entitled “Hustling Kids in Detroit, Dealing with the Community: City, Suburb and Ruptured Urban Space.” The study sheds new light on the complex interrelations among childhood, family, work, community, justice in Detroit and challenges of understanding home, family, work, and school as stable and separable categories. Congratulations to Luke Bergman.

Dr. James H. Woods, one of the faculty mentors for UMSARC’s NIDA training grant was given the 2001 Mentorship Award by the College on Problems of Drug Dependence (CPDD). The honor was awarded at the annual meeting of the CPDD in Scottsdale, Arizona, June 2001. Dr. Woods holds a position of Professor Pharmacology and Psychology at the University of Michigan and has a long-standing research interest in the behavioral pharmacology of opioids, stimulants and other drugs of abuse. During his teaching career, he has mentored many outstanding undergraduate, graduate and post-doctoral fellows. Congratulations to Dr. Woods!

New Post-doctoral Fellow to Train at UMSARC

Henia Johnson is our newest post-doctoral fellow. Dr. Johnson received her Ph.D. in Sociology from Syracuse University, writing her dissertation on the life of Evie Evans, an African American woman's journey through the world of drugs, crime and prison. Drs. Carol Boyd and Abby Stewart (Psychology/Women's Studies) will be the mentors for Dr. Johnson; she plans to study the lives of adult children of formerly incarcerated, drug-addicted women.
Last spring, UMSARC’s Executive Committee recommended that I write about the organization, DanceSafe, for our newsletter. The following are my initial, but evolving, observations.

I have been to my share of rock concerts and all-night parties, albeit, years ago. When I was in college, drugs were openly sold at rock concerts and “magic” brownies accompanied the banana bread at those ubiquitous potlucks. Like many in my generation, I often found myself at events where others were consuming - frankly - lots of drugs. I however, have a personal and quite visceral fear of the problems associated with drug use. By a mere 18 years, I had witnessed a friend’s psychotic break (at a rock concert) and lost classmates to amphetamine and heroin overdoses.

While acutely aware of the dangers of drugs, I am equally aware of their allure and thus, my career as a drug researcher. I have spent years studying heroin, crack, and the prisoners convicted of using these drugs. I am ready for a new venue.

DanceSafe is a volunteer organization and, according to their literature, has two operating principles: harm reduction and popular education. DanceSafe defines harm reduction as reducing the harm from ecstasy and other club drug use. Popular education, a loosely defined concept and not particularly well developed on the web site, is operationalized as programs aimed at educating potential or current ecstasy (or other club drug) users. For instance, one DanceSafe web site warns about PMA (Para-methoxy-amphetamine, 4-MA) a dangerous compound recently found in some ecstasy in Europe; PMA has been linked to dozens of deaths.

The relationship between criminal justice and DanceSafe is mostly hostile while the rave promoters generally embrace DanceSafe and appear to welcome the DanceSafe booths - well-stocked tables with drug information, colorful condoms, life-savers, lollipops and water. The young adults staffing the DanceSafe booth are committed to remaining abstinent for the evening, and thus, available to any dancer who needs assistance. The DanceSafe booths I visited did NOT have drug testing equipment.

After having been assigned the task of reporting on DanceSafe, I have attended high school presentations discussing the problems with ecstasy and other club drugs; listened to former policemen warn of the perils of DanceSafe; explored DanceSafe and related web sites; talked to ecstasy users, attended a techno-music concert (music was great) and went to a club rave as a guest of DanceSafe. I remain interested in the political and social discourse surrounding DanceSafe.

For more information on DanceSafe, ecstasy and/or club drugs I recommend the following websites:

- http://www.dancesafe.org/ (The website for DanceSafe)
- http://www.umich.edu/~newsinfo/BG/ecst.html (University of Michigan’s website)
- http://www.maps.org/research/mdma/mdmamemory.html (A review that challenges the dominant view of ecstasy)
- http://www.erowid.org/chemicals/mdma/mdma.shtml (A site that offers information covering all aspects of the drug and has many useful links)
- http://www.drugabuse.gov/meetings/MDMA/index.html (A NIDA site, check out the links)