

This issue of the journal presents four articles that speak to a common subject, namely, the nature, perception, and impact of alcohol or other substance abuse among Indian and Native people. However, each addresses a different level of concern. Mail and Johnson, in the first paper, entitled "Boozing, sniffing, and toking: An overview of the past, present, and future of substance use by American Indians," chronicle the history of alcohol and other substances in this special population, emphasizing current epidemiological data, patterns of use, and the development of policies of control. In this regard, the authors add new data from the Indian Health Service's Alcohol Treatment Guidance System (ATGS). Their contribution ends with a timely comment on recent programmatic examples of preventive interventions, further illustrating the planning and policy questions anticipated by May (1992) in a previous issue of this journal.

Kettl and Bixler's paper, "Alcohol and suicide in Alaska Natives," reports a retrospective review of hospital records from the Alaska Native Medical Center that paid particular attention to factors distinguishing individuals completing suicide from age-, sex-, and race-matched controls. A history of alcohol abuse and prior attempts proved to be strongly associated with completed suicide and was significantly more common among completers than matched controls. These findings suggest the need to develop and implement appropriate screening measures for individuals seen through primary care settings, and they underscore the importance of past attempts as among the best available, yet imperfect, predictors of risk for suicide. The authors' observations in this regard are congruent with those reported in an earlier special issue of this journal (see Volume 1, Issue 3) and a forthcoming monograph (Volume 4).

"Attributional antecedents of alcohol use in American Indian and Euroamerican adolescents" considers yet another facet of the subject at hand. Sage and Burns extend our understanding of the perceptions that Indian and non-Indian youth hold in regard to alcohol use and alcohol-related problems. Employing a widely used measure of antecedents to alcohol use, the authors surveyed several hundred students (grades 9 and 11) attending high schools located on the Salish-Kootenai Indian Reservation in northwestern Montana. The scale in question asked respondents to indicate the degree to which they attributed responsibility for alcohol use and related problems to the person, environment, stressful events, other people, heredity, disease, or fate. Important gender and ethnic differences emerged in the ensuing patterns of attribution that Sage and Burns argue have important implications for subsequent intervention. Their emphasis on

the application of these findings is consistent with state-of-the-art prevention efforts that increasingly acknowledge the complex nature of risk for alcohol use and abuse, thereby suggesting the need to anticipate multiple points of intervention, including cognition and affect, as well as behavior.

Finally, Lee, in her article "Differential deviance and social control mechanisms among two groups of Yup'ik Eskimo," returns us to the broader social and cultural context in which alcohol use and related social pathologies occur. The author shares her initial inquiries into the field's long-standing interest in the relationship among social disorganization, accompanying deviance, and mechanisms, formal as well as informal, of social control. In this report, Lee chronicles the history of sociocultural change among Alaska Natives and traces the gradual accumulation of considerable evidence in regard to the erosion of local control and the increase of social pathologies such as alcohol abuse and violence. By comparing the relative frequency of such deviance observed in Yupi'it and non-Yupi'it Nation villages, distinguished in terms of the adoption of local-option alcohol-control laws, the author tests a series of hypotheses about expected differences between them. The anticipated differences are indeed found. The former, who have assumed direct responsibility for control of alcohol and related problems, rather than assign it to external authorities, report significantly fewer alcohol-related incidents (e.g., public drunkenness and felonies) than their counterparts. Although Lee acknowledges several potential confounds of and alternative explanations for these findings, she provides an intriguing glimpse of a phenomenon that bears much closer scrutiny.

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