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# Prevention Research Quarterly

*Current  
evidence  
evaluated*

## Peer education

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• preventing drug problems •

  
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### Centre for Youth Drug Studies .....

The research presented in this publication represents work done on behalf of DrugInfo Clearinghouse by the Centre for Youth Drug Studies (CYDS) at the Australian Drug Foundation. The work of CYDS on this research is supported by an expert advisory group, the members of which are all highly regarded in their respective fields for their work in drug prevention research, led by Associate Professor John W. Toumbourou of the Centre for Adolescent Health, The University of Melbourne.

#### **Prevention Research Advisory Group**

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DrugInfo Clearinghouse is an initiative of the Australian Drug Foundation and the Victorian Premier's Drug Prevention Council.

## Reading and resource list

This list of selected recent resources does not aim to be comprehensive; rather it is intended to be a starting point in your research. The list is sorted chronologically and by author within each section. These selected resources are all available in the DrugInfo Clearinghouse. For more information please check the library catalogue, or contact us on email [library@adf.org.au](mailto:library@adf.org.au).

### Books

**Office for Standards in Education 2005** *Drug education in schools: A report from the Office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools*, London: Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools

The findings from this study suggest that interactive peer education programs are more effective than non-interactive interventions in preventing drug use. It was also found that, in peer-led interventions, the young person delivering the program tends to benefit most from the experience. Implications for further programs are discussed.

DrugInfo Clearinghouse no. vf OFSTED 05  
<http://image.guardian.co.uk/sys-files/Education/documents/2005/07/21/Ofsted.pdf>

**Fast Forward Positive Lifestyles 2004** *Exploring the depths. A resource manual for those wishing to develop peer education initiatives*, Edinburgh: Fast Forward

This is a resource pack designed to support peer education work. It maps out what peer education means, and takes the reader through all the steps to set up a peer initiative. It also offers practical ways to reduce workloads and includes practical exercises.

DrugInfo Clearinghouse no. JG25 FAS

**Fick S & Rowley D (eds) 2004** *Throne: Cracks in the porcelain*, Sydney: Western Sydney Drug and Alcohol Resource Centre (WESDARC)

This single issue, magazine-style publication was produced in the Blue Mountains as part of a peer support project for young women. Recommended for secondary schools and youth groups.

DrugInfo Clearinghouse no. ADF AN68 WES

**Loxley W, Toumbourou JW & Stockwell T 2004**

"Peer intervention and peer education" in *Prevention of substance use, risk and harm in Australia: A review of the evidence*, Prevention monograph, Sydney: Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing & National Drugs and Alcohol Research Centre, pp. 127-29

This paper discusses the evidence on interventions that may be improved by the peer-led process, and other research that may indicate peer communication between high-risk youth may be counter-productive.

DrugInfo Clearinghouse no. JP20 LOX  
[www.health.gov.au/pubhlth/publicat/document/metadata/mono\\_prevention.htm](http://www.health.gov.au/pubhlth/publicat/document/metadata/mono_prevention.htm)

**Baum F, Jolley G & Kyriacou M 2003** *Process evaluation of the Youth Drug Peer Action Project*, Community report no. 3, Bedford Park, SA: South Australian Community Health Research Unit

The first phase of this project consulted young people on their perceptions of drug problems, the effectiveness of current services and programs and what programs and services they believed were necessary for the future. This information was used to develop future youth drug strategies for the Onkaparinga, Adelaide region. The main outcomes of the project were consultation with young people, a literature review, recruitment and training of peer educators.

DrugInfo Clearinghouse no. JF24 BAU  
[http://som.flinders.edu.au/FU\\_SA/SACHRU/pubs/pubtns.htm](http://som.flinders.edu.au/FU_SA/SACHRU/pubs/pubtns.htm)

**McDonald J, Roche AM & Durbridge M 2003** *Peer education: From evidence to practice: An alcohol and other drugs primer*, Adelaide: National Centre for Education on Training and Addiction

This monograph addresses a number of important issues including defining peer education, evidence for effectiveness and the theoretical background of peer education. It also provides best practice guidelines for conducting peer education initiatives, particularly focusing on the practical considerations for planning, evaluating and implementing peer education initiatives.

DrugInfo Clearinghouse no. JG25 MCD  
[www.nceta.flinders.edu.au/pdf/peer-education/entire-monograph.pdf](http://www.nceta.flinders.edu.au/pdf/peer-education/entire-monograph.pdf)

**Morton C & Nelson S 2003** *Peer support program: A guide to help establish safe peer support networks for individuals facing addiction and abuse issues*, Brisbane: Cynthia Morton and Sarah Nelson

This program was written by people with addiction issues, for others with addiction issues. Recovery approaches are recommended by those who have been helped by them. The kit is designed for use by individuals and community groups who are planning safe peer support networks in their community.

DrugInfo Clearinghouse no. ADF JP25 MOR

**Bament D 2001** *Peer education literature review*, Adelaide: South Australian Community Health Research Unit

This literature review was conducted as part of the Youth Drug Peer Action Project (YDPAP). The review attempts to examine the various means whereby health promotion programs are carried out under the banner of "peer education" or similar terms. It also attempts to explore various justifications given for adopting this model and arguments for and against doing so.

DrugInfo Clearinghouse no. JB24 BAM

**Bleeker A 2001** "The 'Drug Stop' Project (DSP). The development and evaluation of a drug and alcohol peer education project for young people. Introduction, drug use and young people—Rationale for the DSP", in *2nd International Drugs and Young People Conference, Melbourne, Australia 4–6 April 2001*, Melbourne: Australian Drug Foundation

The Drug Stop Project aimed to meet the needs of young people in the Manly–Warringah area. The aims were to develop a sustainable local peer education project to better address drug and alcohol prevention issues. The results indicate that

this intervention is ideally suited to 15–20-year-olds who are exposed to drug use through their own or their friend's drug-using behaviour.

DrugInfo Clearinghouse no. JP20 BLE  
[www.peer.ca/ableeker.pdf](http://www.peer.ca/ableeker.pdf)

## Journal articles

**Bell ML, Baker TK & Falb T 2005** "Protecting you, protecting me: Evaluation of a student led alcohol prevention and traffic safety program for elementary students", *Journal of Alcohol and Drug Education*, 49:1, pp. 33–53

Results of this study demonstrate the utility of a multi-year curriculum approach targeted to elementary school students. The study provided initial evidence of positive cumulative effects of year-two exposure to the curriculum. The program generated positive feedback from classroom teachers and students about the peer leadership approach.

**Cho H, Hallfors DD & Sanchez V 2005** "Evaluation of a high school peer group intervention for at-risk youth", *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 33:3, pp. 363–74

The purpose of this paper is to examine the effectiveness of Reconnecting Youth, a prevention program for at-risk high school young people. A total of 1218 students participated; 50 per cent were male; average age was 15 years. Although mixed program effects were observed at immediate post-intervention, only negative effects were found at six-month follow-up. These effects included less optimal scores on measures of anger, school connectedness, conventional peer bonding, and peer high-risk behaviours. There was little support for the use of this model. (PubMed)

**Montoya ID 2005** "Effect of peers on employment and implications for drug treatment", *American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse*, 31:4, pp. 657–68

The results of this study showed that peer employment could positively affect employment behaviour. They also showed that while chronic drug use and education had consistent affects (negative and positive, respectively) on both hours worked and peer characteristics, age positively affected the number of hours worked but negatively

affected peer characteristics. Results also showed that positive peer relationships can increase future employment activity. Implications for drug treatment are discussed.

**Skinner N & Roche A 2005** "Peer education. Planning successful programs", *Of Substance*, 3:4, pp. 24-5

This Australian article highlights issues for consideration when setting up a peer education program. Discusses the planning and setting of program aims and objectives, and includes the processes of identifying and training peer educators.

**Treloar C & Abelson J 2005** "Information exchange among injecting drug users: a role for an expanded peer education workforce", *International Journal of Drug Policy*, 16:1, pp. 46-53

Quantitative results from this Australian study indicate that the majority of participants acquired information from formal sources such as pamphlets and needle syringe programs. Information acquisition occurred well after initiation and the majority of survey participants passed on information to their peers. These findings suggest a need to expand the scope and content of peer education activities by building on the demonstrated culture of information exchange between injecting drug users. Particularly useful may be a workforce model of peer education managed by non-government organisations. (Elsevier)

[www.hawaii.edu/hivandaids/Information\\_Exchange\\_Among\\_Injecting\\_Drug\\_Users\\_\\_A\\_Role.pdf](http://www.hawaii.edu/hivandaids/Information_Exchange_Among_Injecting_Drug_Users__A_Role.pdf)

**Butters JE 2004** "The impact of peers and social disapproval on high-risk cannabis use: gender differences and implications for drug education", *Drugs Education Prevention and Policy*, 11:5, pp. 381-90

This paper identifies a sub-group of adolescents already using cannabis, and estimates the effects of peers, social disapproval and perceived health effects on inhibiting the escalation of use to problem levels. The results suggest that the risk for problem cannabis use among adolescents may be attenuated by some of these informal control items. The findings also suggest that the effects of these factors may be different for males and females.

The implications for drug education initiatives are discussed along with the impact of peers and social disapproval on high-risk cannabis use.

**Graham JW, Tatterson JW & Roberts MM 2004** "Preventing alcohol-related harm in college students: alcohol-related harm prevention program effects on hypothesized mediating variables", *Health Education Research*, 19:1, pp. 71-84

The Alcohol-related Harm Program is a two-session program, aimed at correcting misperceived norms regarding levels of alcohol use, caring about friends, acceptability of risky behaviors and willingness to intervene. The program makes use of interactive discussions with students and a graded, peer interview assignment to identify and promote harm-prevention strategies. (Oxford)

DrugInfo Clearinghouse no. vf GRAHAM 04

**Moody KA, Childs JC & Sepples SB 2003** "Intervening with at-risk youth: evaluation of the youth empowerment and support program", *Pediatric Nursing*, 29:4, pp. 263-70

This study evaluated a community based intervention, and results of a one-year pilot study suggest that the multi-level interventions were associated with positive effects on at-risk young people. In particular, respondents at the post-test reported higher levels of self-esteem, mentor support, positive peer bonding, social skills attainment, and school attachment. Attitudes against under-age drug use decreased from pre-test scores revealing areas for strengthening the program.

DrugInfo Clearinghouse no. vf MOODY 03

**Sale E, Sambrano S, Springer JF & Turner CW 2003** "Risk, protection, and substance use in adolescents: a multi-site model", *Journal of Drug Education*, 33:1, pp. 91-106

These findings look at multi-dimensional prevention programming that stress the fostering of conventional anti-substance use attitudes among parents and peers. It discusses the importance of parental supervision, the development of strong connections between young people and their family, peers and school.

**Valente TW, Hoffman BR & Thomas W 2003**

“Effects of a social-network method for group assignment strategies on peer-led tobacco prevention programs in schools”, *American Journal of Public Health*, 93:11, pp. 1837–43.

This United States study examined peer-led tobacco prevention programs in Grade 6 classes. Outcomes of the programs following three different methods of selection of the peer leaders were compared. These were random selection, teacher selection and network selection where students chose their own leader. The results showed that network selection was the most effective.

**Hunter G & Power R 2002** “Involving *Big Issue* vendors in a peer education initiative to reduce drug-related harm: a feasibility study”, *Drugs Education Prevention and Policy*, 9:1, pp. 57–69

This paper reports findings from an action research project which examined the feasibility of involving vendors of the *Big Issue* magazine (sold by homeless people) in a peer education initiative to reduce drug-related harm. This multi-method study comprised formative evaluation to identify health promotion foci; to explore vendors’ opportunities for intervention and the “service environment” necessary to organise and support such work. The possibilities for further developing such initiatives are discussed.

**Komro KA, Perry CL & Williams CL 2001** “How did Project Northland reduce alcohol use among young adolescents? Analysis of mediating variables”, *Health Education Research Theory & Practice*, 16:1, pp. 59–70

Project Northland was designed to create, implement and evaluate multi-level, community wide strategies to prevent alcohol use among adolescents. At the

end of three years of intervention, there were significantly fewer students that reported alcohol use. It was found that important mediators of effect on alcohol use were: peer influence, attitudes and behaviours, rule violation and bad judgement.

DrugInfo Clearinghouse no. vf KOMRO 01

**Koumi I & Tsiantis J 2001** “Smoking trends in adolescence: report on a Greek school-based, peer-led intervention aimed at prevention”, *Health Promotion International*, 16:1, pp. 65–2

Presents a school-based, peer-led program aimed at smoking prevention among Greek adolescents. The intervention was based on the social influence approach, and utilised 28 students’ personal sensitisation for the development of audio-visual material, which was presented to students at two experimental schools. Program evaluation and the implementation of health education programs in the Greek school curriculum are discussed in the light of the findings. (PubMed)

[www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=pubmed&dopt=Abstract&list\\_uids=11257854&itool=iconfft&query\\_hl=9&itool=pubmed\\_docsum](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=pubmed&dopt=Abstract&list_uids=11257854&itool=iconfft&query_hl=9&itool=pubmed_docsum)

## Videos

2003 *Club Eyerus*, Windsor: Hawkesbury Film Project

This is the second video production of the Hawkesbury Film Project, an initiative of Hawkesbury District Health Service and Hawkesbury Police Command. The Project was aimed at involving young people in the creation of drug education videos that were relevant to their environment and experiences. This video was produced by a Year 10 science class at Colo High School and focuses on the consequences of drug use.

DrugInfo Clearinghouse no. vid JF24 HAW

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