

## In Consideration of an Effective Adolescent Health Program I

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Thanks in part to a special study grant from Hokkaido Asai Gakuen University, the authors of this report were able to travel to Minneapolis, Minnesota, in October of 2004 to learn more about the Project Northland.

Project Northland is a community-wide research program that was initially funded by the National Institute on Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse. The research was conducted by members of the Division of Epidemiology in the School of Public Health at the University of Minnesota. One of the people we were able to meet on this trip to Minnesota was Sara Veblen-Mortensen, MSW, MPH, the Intervention Director for Project Northland. Ms. Veblen-Mortensen generously gave up some of her valuable time to give us some background regarding Project Northland and to share with us information about how the program continues to develop.

The primary aim of Project Northland is to prevent or delay the onset of alcohol use among young adolescents, as well as to reduce the use among those young people who are already drinkers. In the first phase of their research, Project Northland members recruited twenty communities in northeastern Minnesota, an area referred to as the Northland region. This area was selected because of its high rate of alcohol related morbidity and mortality. Two of the counties surveyed from this region ranked number one and two in the state of Minnesota for alcohol related problems. In all, twenty school districts with a total of 2,400 students participated in the study. The twenty school districts were randomly divided into intervention and control groups of ten districts each. The study cohort consisted of a group of sixth graders representing the class of 1998. Surveys of these students, their parents, community leaders and alcohol merchants were the primary components of the program's evaluation. The project was designed using a community-wide model that addressed both supply and demand issues, rather than a single limited school based model. Intervention strategies were chosen that could address community level as well as individual level behavioral

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キーワード : health education

changes. The progress of the study participants was tracked until they graduated in 1998. The project had three study phases :

Phase One : From 1999-1994, programming was developed and implemented for grades six through eight. The research results were published in the American Journal of Public Health in the July 1996 issue.

Phase Two : From 1994-1996, programming lapsed due to funding cuts.

Continuing research showed an attenuation in the reduction of alcohol and drug use achieved in phase one.

Phase Three : With a restoration of funding, a high school component of the program was able to be developed.

The intervention programs were implemented during the study cohort's sixth, seventh, and eighth grades and in the intervention communities as a whole during the same period of 1991-1994. The intervention programs included parent involvement, education programs, behavioral curricula, peer leadership and participation, and community task force activities. Each intervention year had an overall theme that was designed to uniquely identify Project Northland's programs and each phase was tailored to the group's developmental level and school organization.

The sixth grade component of the project was titled the Slick Tracy Home Team Program. The goal of this component was to draw sixth graders and their families together in meaningful conversations about alcohol related issues through the use of comic books and other engaging activities. In the process, students learned about alternatives to alcohol, the influence of alcohol advertising, and the skills needed to resist peer pressure. This phase of the program consisted of nine learning sessions and culminated in a poster exhibition involving parents and community members. The topics and themes of the Slick Tracy portion of the program are listed below.

Week One : Myths and facts about alcohol.

Week Two : Evaluating alcohol advertising messages.

Week Three : Peer pressure and alcohol use.

Week Four : Consequences of drinking and alternatives to drinking.

Week Five : Program summation and completion of a time capsule.

Weeks Six-Eight : Creating project posters and exhibits.

Parent Evening : Poster exhibit and discussion with parents and community.

The seventh grade component of the program was titled *Amazing Alternatives!* The materials in this part of the course focused on the immediate negative social

consequences of alcohol use such as bad breath, saying embarrassing things, the possible loss of friends, as well as the known long term negative health consequences. This component of the program was comprised of eight 45 minute weekly classroom sessions focusing on the following topics.

Week One : Introduction and discussion of peer pressure.

Week Two : Facts about adolescent alcohol use and the negative consequences of using alcohol.

Week Three : Making positive choices about alcohol and finding positive alternatives to alcohol.

Week Four : Practicing resistance skills-Part One.

Week Five : Practicing resistance skills-Part Two.

Week Six : How the alcohol industry tries to attract young drinkers.

Week Seven : Alcohol advertising and developing advertising for alternatives to drinking.

Week Eight : Finding positive alternatives during the summer and establishing short term goals for the non-use of alcohol.

The eighth grade component of the course was titled PowerLines. The goal here was to reinforce the messages and strategies covered in the Slick Tracy and Amazing Alternatives! Portions of the program. PowerLines was designed to get kids to think about how community groups and organizations-parents, police, schools, media, liquor stores and bars, and local government-influence prevention efforts. This part of the program covered the following eight 45 minute sessions over an eight week period.

Week One : Review of refusal skills, personal goals and the consequences and alternatives to alcohol use.

Week Two : Understanding the community and community influences.

Week Three : Drinking and driving : outcomes, laws, and responsibilities.

Week Four : Effective ways the community can help prevent teen drinking.

Week Five : Identification of community responsibilities for underage drinking and individual and community consequences of teen alcohol use.

Week Six : Developing a community based project around the issues of teen alcohol use.

Week Seven : Community projects continued.

Week Eight : Presentation of community projects and setting personal goals around alcohol use.

Outcomes from this three year intervention showed that students who never drank at the beginning of sixth grade (baseline non users) showed a 28% reduction in monthly drinking and a 46% reduction in weekly drinking by the end of eighth grade. In addition, there was also a 37% lower rate of cigarette smoking and 50% lower rate of marijuana usage by the end of the eight grade.

Relative to the control group, students in the intervention group showed reduced levels of alcohol use by 30% in regard to weekly drinking and 20% by monthly drinking. Also, students in the intervention group reported feeling less peer pressure to use alcohol, indicated better parent-child communication about the consequences of alcohol use, understood the importance of reasons for not using alcohol and showed more realistic expectations about how many young people drink.

In the High School component of the Project Northland program, simulated civil trials were developed to challenge students to examine the real-world consequences, both legal and social, of teen alcohol use. In this course, entitled Class Action, students were divided into six legal teams to prepare and present cases in which someone has been harmed as a result of underage drinking. Using a casebook along with audio taped affidavits and depositions, the students built legal cases that they presented to a jury of their peers. In the process, they learned about how their personal choices regarding alcohol use could often have a "ripple effect" on their families and the community. The six Class Action cases were as follow.

Case One : Drinking and Driving on Trial. A case where parents provided alcohol to underage youths with disastrous consequences. Are the parents liable?

Case Two : Fetal Alcohol Syndrome on Trial. A case where a baby with fetal alcohol syndrome is born as a result of a teen drinking during pregnancy. Is the mother liable?

Case Three : Drinking and Violence on Trial. A keg party results in fighting and hospitalization of one young man. Is the store owner who sold the keg liable?

Case Four : Date Rape on Trial. A young woman is forced to have sex after she and the perpetrator get drunk at a party. Is the friend who gave the party liable?

Case Five : Drinking and Vandalism on Trial. Four teens drink at a town festival and then destroy a cabin. Are the festival planners liable?

Case Six : A star athlete has a drinking problem that the coach ignores. During a big game the athlete experiences an alcohol related injury that ends his career. Is the coach liable?

Results from this final phase were published in Health Education Research, vol. 17,

no. 1, 2002, pages 117-132. The article is entitled "Project Northland : Long-Term Outcomes of Community Action to Reduce Adolescent Alcohol Use." The results showed that the intervention was effective in continuing participant awareness of the consequences and responsibilities involved in using alcohol and showed a sustained reduction in alcohol consumption and abuse when compared with the control group.

In July of 2000, the research team submitted and received another grant from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism in order to apply their program in an urban setting. While the initial research was done in rural Northern Minnesota, the new research sought to apply the same principles of parent, peer, school and community involvement in urban communities in the Chicago area in an effort to change participants way of thinking about alcohol use. In the Fall of 2001, twenty schools were recruited to participate and the program was adapted and enhanced to match an urban environment. A full report of the outcomes of the urban project is expected in the Fall of 2005.

Fortunately the work of the Project Northland research group is applicable beyond the cohorts in their studies. Hazelden Publishing and Educational Services has packaged the components of Project Northland and offers training and support for potential users. Hazelden Publishing and Educational Services is a division of the Hazelden substance abuse center located in Center City, Minnesota. While in Minnesota we were able to meet Ms. Ann Standing, Hazelden's National Sales Manager. Ms. Standing brought samples of the Project Northland publications and explained how her company offers support in the way of grant writing and training for people like teachers, community leaders, parents, counselors and school administrators who would like to implement Project Northland in their schools and communities. For those readers who would like to know more about Hazelden Publishing and Educational Services, their website can be accessed at [www.hazelden.org/bookplace](http://www.hazelden.org/bookplace). After meeting with Ms. Standing we decided to purchase the complete Project Northland package that was modeled after the intervention in Northern Minnesota. Part two of this paper will describe how we intend to use what we learned on our trip and how we intend to apply the materials we purchased here in Japan.

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## 効果的な思春期健康教育プログラム I

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### 抄 録

筆者らは本学特別研究費をいただき、アメリカミネソタ大学で行われている飲酒予防教育プログラム（以下 Project Northland とする）<sup>1)</sup> の実際を見学させていただいた。本論はそのプログラムを参考に日本における健康教育プログラム，中でも特に思春期にある若者の健康に影響が大きいと思われる性と喫煙について考察するものである。健康教育は学校教育が中心となり展開されているが，効果的で実践可能なものにするためには，地域や家庭の連携が必要である。Project Northland プログラムは地域と学校と家庭の連携が具体的な行動レベルにまで高められているところが非常に参考になるところであり，それを基に日本の現状を分析し，今後の日本における健康教育プログラム内容を検討するものである。

キーワード： 健康教育