

NIAAA NEWSLETTER

FEATURING INFORMATION FROM THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON ALCOHOL ABUSE AND ALCOHOLISM

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NIAAA Funds New Center With Focus on Young People

NIAAA recently awarded a 5-year grant of nearly \$10 million to the Boston University School of Public Health to establish an Alcohol Research Center to Prevent Alcohol-Related Problems Among Young People. Boston University professor David Rosenbloom, Ph.D., is the center's director and principal investigator.

The center will investigate key questions about adolescent drinking's impact on health, screening and brief intervention for young patients in emergency department settings, and the impact of college binge drinking on academic performance.

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Survey Reveals More Americans With Diagnosable Alcohol Disorders

Highest Rates Seen in Young Adults—Data Will Shape Future Research

The number of American adults who abuse alcohol or who are alcohol dependent rose from 13.8 million (7.41 percent) in 1991–1992 to 17.6 million (8.46 percent) in 2001–2002, according to results from the 2001–2002 *National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions* (NESARC).

The NIAAA-directed study is a representative survey of American adults 18 years of age and older. The new data revealed that the rate of alcohol abuse increased from 3.03 to 4.65 percent across the decade, while the rate of alcohol dependence, commonly known as alcoholism, declined from 4.38 to 3.81 percent. The study also showed that the rates of alcohol abuse and dependence in 2001–2002 were substantially higher among younger study participants aged 18–29 and 30–44 years.

NESARC is the largest survey ever conducted on alcohol use and co-occurring conditions. The findings are based on face-to-face interviews with 43,093 individuals. The survey questions are based on diagnostic criteria for alcohol abuse and alcohol dependence contained in the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition* (DSM-IV). Those criteria have remained the same over the past decade, allowing the NIAAA study team to assess changes in the preva-

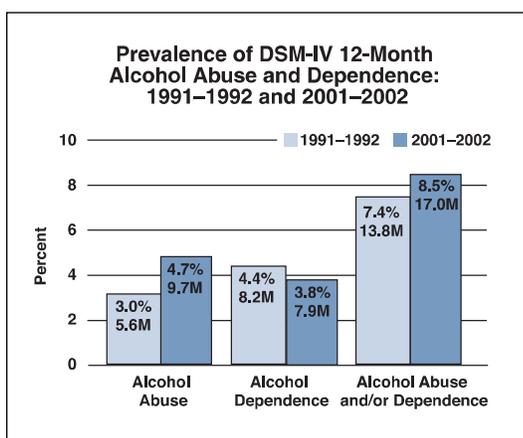
lence of alcohol disorders over the 10 years since NIAAA's previous survey, the 1991–1992 *National Longitudinal Alcohol Epidemiologic Survey* (NLAES).

“NESARC is a landmark survey that has already yielded a number of significant insights,” said NIAAA Director Dr. Ting-Kai Li. “The fact that alcohol

disorder rates are highest among young adults underscores the need for concerted research on drinking patterns that initiate in adolescence.” He noted that additional findings are scheduled for release over the coming months, including striking

data on the age of onset of diagnosable cases of alcohol dependence, cannabis use disorder, tobacco dependence, and major depression. “These data will fundamentally change the way we study and treat alcohol use, drug use, and psychiatric disorders,” said Dr. Li.

Dr. Bridget Grant, chief of the Laboratory of Epidemiology and Biometry in NIAAA's Division of Intramural Clinical and Biological Research, led the research team that directed NESARC. Dr. Grant published the prevalence findings in the June 10 issue of *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*. The NESARC scientific data file is now available on the NIAAA Web site at www.niaaa.nih.gov. The site features links to the study's methodology, codebook, and other resources.



Appointments



Mark Willenbring, M.D., was appointed director of the Division of Treatment and Recovery Research (DTRR). For the last 12 years he has been medical

director of the Addictive Disorders Section at the Veteran's Affairs Medical Center in Minneapolis, MN. He also is professor of psychiatry at the University of Minnesota School of Medicine, Minneapolis. Dr. Willenbring's research interests include pharmacotherapies for alcohol and other drug abuse, the treatment of co-occurring disorders, and integrating research findings into clinical practice. He brings to NIAAA expertise in a range of clinical research issues on alcohol and other drugs of abuse, including experience with medications development—an area of critical importance to NIAAA's research agenda. Dr. Willenbring is a Distinguished Fellow in the American Psychiatric Association, and a Diplomate of the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology and the National Board of Medical Examiners.

Retirements/Resignations

Anton Bizzell, M.D., has left NIAAA to become medical officer with SAMHSA's Center for Substance Abuse Treatment. At NIAAA, Dr. Bizzell was responsible for National Alcohol Screening Day and medical education grants.

Jan Howard, Ph.D., has retired from NIAAA after serving the Institute since 1987 as chief of the Prevention Research Branch in the former Division of Clinical and Prevention Research. Her leadership was central to the growth of NIAAA's portfolio of prevention research grants. During her tenure, funding for prevention research grew from about \$3 million to more than \$45 million. Dr. Howard won the Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Prevention Research Network in June 2000.

Geoffrey Laredo has left NIAAA to join SAMHSA as the legislative coordinator in the Office of Policy, Planning, and Budget. Mr. Laredo came to NIAAA in 1996 as deputy director and, after 1999, director of the Office of Policy and Public Liaison. He worked to strengthen collaborative activities with national groups, government agencies, and scientific societies across the alcohol research, prevention, and treatment field and to maintain strong relationships with Congressional offices and staff. In particular, he helped develop and oversee NIAAA's Research-to-Practice Initiative.

Forrest Weight, M.D., has retired after serving as chief of NIAAA's Laboratory of Molecular and Cellular Neurobiology since 1991. Dr. Weight made important contributions to our understanding of synaptic modulation and the molecular mechanisms of alcohol action in the nervous system. His work has advanced

knowledge about molecular mechanisms underlying acute alcohol intoxication and provided the basis for a more thorough understanding of the neuroadaptations that occur in response to the chronic alcohol exposure involved in tolerance and dependence. His laboratory made numerous seminal discoveries about ion channel function and modulation. His many honors include the PHS Outstanding Service Medal, the PHS Meritorious Service Medal, and the NIH Director's Award.

Research Note

NIAAA Publishes Position Paper on Moderate Drinking

In the June issue of *Alcoholism: Clinical & Experimental Research*, NIAAA researchers published findings from an extensive review of current scientific knowledge regarding the health risks and potential benefits of moderate alcohol consumption. The position paper, which focuses on cardiovascular disease, breast cancer, obesity, birth defects, breastfeeding, and aging, follows NIAAA's "State of the Science Report on the Effects of Moderate Drinking," which appeared online in December 2003 at www.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/ModerateDrinking-03.htm.

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Update on the NIAAA Underage Drinking Prevention Initiative

Members Meet Experts on Adolescent Development, Participate in Interagency Collaboration

NIAAA's Underage Drinking Prevention Team met on May 14 with several experts in adolescent development: Dr. Linda Spear of Binghamton University, State University of New York; Dr. Ronald Dahl of the University of Pittsburgh; and Dr. Ann Masten of the University of Minnesota. The meeting served to inform the team's effort to integrate research in child and adolescent development with alcohol research. "It was a successful and stimu-

Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

On April 30, Dr. Goldman made a short presentation outlining the Institute's increased focus on underage alcohol consumption at a planning meeting on adolescent decisionmaking and positive youth development. The meeting was held by the Committee on Adolescent Health and Development of the National Research Council, National Academies of Science.

The participants discussed how AHCs with well-established networks within rural and small urban community organizations—school systems, juvenile justice agencies, social service agencies, departments of health, chambers of commerce, faith-based organizations, and health outreach programs—could be engaged in NIAAA-supported research initiatives.

Representatives from more than 20 AHCs in 17 states attended the conference. In addition, members of the Association of Academic Health Centers, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and NIAAA staff participated in discussions. In preparation for the meeting, the American Legacy Foundation—whose goal is reducing tobacco use among young people—hosted a reception for the participants.

On another front, NIAAA has developed a memorandum of understanding with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) of the Department of Justice. Under the agreement, NIAAA will evaluate programs funded under an RFA, "Reduce Underage Drinking in Rural Populations," as a part of OJJDP's Enforcing Underage Drinking Laws (EUDL) Program.



Left to right: Dr. Linda Spear, Dr. Ronald Dahl, and Dr. Ann Masten

lating meeting," said NIAAA Associate Director Dr. Mark Goldman. The three experts agreed to continue working with NIAAA to help develop an initiative on understanding and preventing alcohol consumption by children and adolescents. A meeting with an expanded group of experts is planned for the fall.

Working With Other Agencies

NIAAA Director Dr. T.K Li and staff also are working with the Interagency Coordinating Committee (ICC) on Preventing Underage Drinking. Chaired by the administrator of SAMHSA, the ICC comprises principals from NIAAA; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in the Department of Justice; the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration; the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy; the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; the Office of the Surgeon General; and the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation,

intervention programs to help reduce underage drinking and other high-risk behavior in rural and small urban areas.

Addressing Rural Underage Drinking

On February 10–11, NIAAA co-sponsored an invitational conference with the Association of Academic Health Centers (AHCs) in Washington, D.C. The goal was to explore ways to partner with AHCs to conduct community-based participatory research on model longitudinal prevention/

NEW EDUCATION RESOURCES ON THE WEB

Educators can access free curriculum resources on the NIAAA Web site, www.niaaa.nih.gov.

"Better Safe than Sorry—Preventing a Tragedy: A Science and Health Curriculum" is a flexible, inquiry-based curriculum developed by researchers at the University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill. The kit provides a video with guided laboratory instruction, an interactive CD, handouts, color transparencies, slideshow, and additional material about Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS).

"Understanding Alcohol: Investigations into Biology and Behavior" has hands-on, inquiry-based lessons that fit into the 5Es Instructional Model

(Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, and Evaluate). The activities and lessons were field tested.

For professional social work educators, NIAAA offers **"Social Work Education for the Prevention and Treatment of Alcohol Use Disorders,"** a new curriculum developed by experts in alcoholism and social work research. The curriculum includes lecture-ready modules, slide presentations, handouts, classroom activities, and accompanying case examples to extend student interaction with the subject matter. Modules can be used individually or as a series, and modified to fit specific teaching objectives.

Calendar of Events

NIAAA will participate in or exhibit at the meetings and conferences listed below. For additional information or updates on these events, consult the sponsoring organizations.

JUNE

- ▶ *June 26–30 Research Society on Alcoholism (RSA) Annual Scientific Meeting*
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
Contact: www.rsoa.org
- ▶ *June 26–July 1 Teratology Society Annual Meeting*
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
Contact: www.teratology.org

JULY

- ▶ *July 28–August 1 American Psychological Association Annual Meeting*
Honolulu, HI
Contact: 800/374–2721;
www.apa.org/convention/

SEPTEMBER

- ▶ *September 9 Meeting of the National Advisory Council on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism*
Rockville, MD
Contact: Ida Nestorio, NIAAA,
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- ▶ *September 29–October 2 International Society for Biomedical Research on Alcoholism (ISBRA)*
Heidelberg/Mannheim, Germany
Contact: www.isbra.com

OCTOBER

- ▶ *October 23–27 Society for Neuroscience*
San Diego, CA
Contact: 202/462–6688;
<http://web.sfn.org/AM2004Splash.cfm>

NOVEMBER

Special Announcement: Koob to Give Keller Lecture November 9



The NIAAA Keller Lecture “The Neurobiology of Alcoholism: Dysregulation of the Brain Reward and Stress Systems” will be presented by George F. Koob, Ph.D., professor of Neuropharmacology and director of the Division of Psychopharmacology, The Scripps

Research Institute.

Lipsett Amphitheater (Building 10) NIH Campus, 9000 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, MD.

Time: 1:30–3:30 p.m.

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