The Impact of Religiosity on the Drug Use of High School Athletes: Can Parents Really Make a Difference?

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Introduction
- There are mixed findings on the impact of parents on adolescent drug use.
- Parents including adolescents in athletic programs reduces some but not all drug use.
- Parents’ religiosity is the number one predictor of adolescent religiosity.
- Current study: how religiosity affects the drug use of male high school athletes.

Method
Participants
- 53 men from 22 different colleges or universities that played high school sports within the last 10 years.
- No BYU students in the sample.
- Participants were separated into “highly religious” and “not highly religious” groups based on a religiosity questionnaire.
- Cronbach’s alpha was .901
- Drug use was measured for the participants’ high school years using a drug use questionnaire.

Results
- An independent samples t-test revealed that the not highly religious group used drugs significantly more than the highly religious group. (t(34) = 2.85, p<.01)
- None of the 18 highly religious athletes in this study used drugs in high school.
- However, 10 of the 35 not highly religious athletes used drugs in high school (28.7%).

Conclusion
- Religious activities such as praying, reading often from religious books, and discussing spiritual things with friends, parents, and other adults were associated with zero drug use among the highly religious athletes.
- As parents implement these practices, their children will be less likely to use drugs.

- Parents can sign their children up for Athletic programs to reduce drug use but this is not enough.
- As parents are more religiously devoted, the religiosity of their adolescents will increase, and in turn, their adolescents will be less likely to use drugs.
- Future research should look at the effect of religiosity among non-athletes.

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