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Area of Expertise

The focus of my work is to advance an understanding of social and environmental factors that influence health risk behavior decision-making in order to inform theoretically sound and efficacious substance use prevention efforts for adolescents and young adults. While much of health behavior is planned or rational, often decisions are based on social or situational factors.

My primary area of research explores the etiology of health-risk decision making among adolescents and young adults using a dual-process theory called the Prototype Willingness Model. Within this framework, I examine the role that a variety of social cognitions such as behavioral willingness, prototype favorability, perceived social norms and social comparison play in decisions to engage in health-risk behavior. My research extends the literature on dual-process theories by isolating specific components of the models to better understand the unique roles played in predicting health risk behavior among adolescents and young adults.

My current research aims to address questions related to the utility of including socially-based variables in prevention programming, particularly in respect to social images, social comparison, social norms (peers who abstain from alcohol and peers who use alcohol) and social networking sites. My hope is that my current lines of research will have important implications for refining health behavior theories, developing new clinical interventions and making important public health impacts related to alcohol use and abuse among adolescents and young adults. My program of research has been funded by grants from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

Qualifications

PhD in Applied Social Psychology, George Washington University

BA in Psychology, University of Miami

Recent Publications

Alcohol-specific social comparison as a moderator of the norms-behavior association for young adult alcohol use

Litt, D. M., Waldron, K. A., Wallace, E. C. & Lewis, M. A., 1 Mar 2019, In : Addictive Behaviors. 90, p. 92-98 7 p.

Consideration of future consequences as a moderator of the willingness-behavior relationship for young adult marijuana use and consequences

Lewis, M. A., Litt, D. M., King, K. M., Garcia, T. A., Waldron, K. A. & Lee, C. M., 1 Dec 2018, In : Addictive Behaviors. 87, p. 8-16 9 p.

#drunktwitter: Examining the relations between alcohol-related Twitter content and alcohol willingness and use among underage young adults

Litt, D. M., Lewis, M. A., Spiro, E. S., Aulck, L., Waldron, K. A., Head-Corliss, M. K. & Swanson, A., 1 Dec 2018, In : Drug and Alcohol Dependence. 193, p. 75-82 8 p.

Perceived vulnerability moderates the relations between the use of protective behavioral strategies and alcohol use and consequences among high-risk young adults

Garcia, T. A., Fairlie, A. M., Litt, D. M., Waldron, K. A. & Lewis, M. A., 1 Jun 2018, In : Addictive Behaviors. 81, p. 150-156 7 p.

An Examination of the Relative Associations of Prototype Favorability, Similarity, and Their Interaction With Alcohol and Alcohol-Related Risky Sexual Cognitions and Behavior

Litt, D. M., Lewis, M. A., Fairlie, A. M. & Head-Corliss, M. K., 1 Jan 2018, (Accepted/In press) In : Emerging Adulthood.

Prototype Willingness Model Drinking Cognitions Mediate Personalized Normative Feedback Efficacy

Lewis, M. A., Litt, D. M., Tomkins, M. & Neighbors, C., 1 May 2017, In : Prevention Science. 18, 4, p. 373-381 9 p.

Examining daily variability in willingness to drink in relation to underage young adult alcohol use

Lewis, M. A., King, K., Litt, D. M., Swanson, A. & Lee, C., 1 Oct 2016, In : Addictive Behaviors. 61, p. 62-67 6 p.

Examining a social reaction model in the prediction of adolescent alcohol use

Litt, D. M. & Lewis, M. A., 1 Sep 2016, In : Addictive Behaviors. 60, p. 160-164 5 p.

Evaluating College Students' Displayed Alcohol References on Facebook and Twitter

Moreno, M. A., Arseniev-Koehler, A., Litt, D. M. & Christakis, D., 1 May 2016, In : Journal of Adolescent Health. 58, 5, p. 527-532 6 p.

Understanding differences in alcohol consumption and depressed mood between U.S.- and foreign-born Asian and Caucasian college students

Yeh, J. C. J., Hsu, S. H., Mittmann, A. J., Litt, D. M. & Geisner, I. M., 2 Apr 2016, In : Journal of Ethnicity in Substance Abuse. 15, 2, p. 160-175 16 p.

Sponsored Projects

A longitudinal measurement burst study to examine the ecological validity of the prototype willingness model of hazardous young adult alcohol use.

Lewis, M. & Litt, D.

NIAAA: Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

1/08/18 → 31/07/23

Experimental Test of Facebook Social Drinking Norms on Adolescent Alcohol Use (R21AA024163)

Litt, D. & Lewis, M.

NIAAA: Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

1/01/18 → 31/07/18

Informing Alcohol-Related Risk Intervention with the Prototype Willingness Model

Lewis, M. & Litt, D.

NIAAA: Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

1/01/18 → 30/06/19

Refining and piloting a text messaging intervention to delay alcohol initiation and reduce alcohol use escalation among abstainer and lighter drinker college students

Litt, D. & Lewis, M.

NIAAA: Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

1/09/18 → 31/08/21