

FINDINGS Your selected document

This entry is for a study added to the Effectiveness Bank but not (or not yet) fully analysed. Usually the entry consists only of the reference and if available the original abstract with no comments or material changes. The original study was not published by Findings; click on the [Title](#) to obtain copies. Free reprints may also be available from the authors – click [prepared e-mail](#) to send a ready-made e-mail message or compose your own message. Links to source documents are in [blue](#). Hover mouse over [orange](#) text for explanatory notes.

Send email address for updates

your.email@address

SEND About update service

► [Title and link for copying](#) ► [Comment/query to editor](#) ► [Tweet](#)

► [Sport participation and alcohol and illicit drug use in adolescents and young adults: a systematic review of longitudinal studies.](#)

Kwan M., Bobko S., Faulkner G. et al.

Addictive Behaviors: 2014, 39(3), p. 497–506.

Unable to obtain a copy by clicking title? Try asking the author for a reprint by adapting this [prepared e-mail](#) or by writing to Dr Cairney at cairnej@mcmaster.ca.

Does getting involved in sport divert adolescents from getting involved in drug or alcohol use? Perhaps with respect to the less normalised illicit drugs, but maybe not cannabis, and drinking actually seems to increase.

SUMMARY Participation in sports can play an important and positive role in the health and development of young people. One area recently receiving greater attention is the role participation might play in preventing drug and alcohol use among young people. The featured review found 17 studies (all but one from the USA) published in English examining the relationship between sport participation and alcohol and drug use among adolescents. [All simply documented the strength of these relationships as the they naturally developed without allocating young people at random or in some other way to sports opportunities created and controlled by the study. Such studies cannot establish whether sport caused changes in substance use, only whether for that, or for some other reason, the two are associated.]

In 14 of the 17 studies participation in sports was significantly associated with greater alcohol use. However, sport participation appears related to reduced illicit drug use, especially use of drugs other than cannabis; 80% of the studies found participation associated with decreased illicit drug use, while 50% found participation associated with reduced cannabis use. Further investigation revealed that participation in sports reduced the risk of overall illicit drug use, particularly when substance use was assessed while the children were still in high [secondary] school, suggesting this may be a critical period to reduce or prevent the use of drugs through sport. One study found participants in team sports [eg, football] had greater increases in alcohol use than those who engaged in individual sports [eg, tennis]. Despite the small number of studies examining the moderating impact of gender, race and socioeconomic status, and conflicting results with regard to sex, there is at least provisional evidence that the effect of sport participation on drinking depends on these factors, having in some studies a greater effect among white than non-white athletes, and among participants living in richer rather than more deprived neighbourhoods.

The authors concluded there was compelling evidence suggesting sport participation is a risk factor for alcohol use throughout adolescence and into early adulthood, yet that it may be protective against illicit drug use; the literature on cannabis use is less clear. Links between participation in sport and drinking may be related to peer-group interaction and/or a culture of drinking associated with many sports. Drinking is a socially acceptable form of celebration, and in sport there may be many opportunities for celebration or commiseration.

Last revised 15 August 2015. First uploaded 15 August 2015

- [Comment/query to editor](#)
- [Give us your feedback on the site \(two-minute survey\)](#)
- Open Effectiveness Bank [home page](#)
- Add your name to the [mailing list](#) to be alerted to new studies and other site updates

Top 10 most closely related documents on this site. For more try a [subject](#) or [free text search](#)

- NASTY SURPRISES 2004 [Confident kids ... like to party](#)
- STUDY 2010 [Are effects from a brief multiple behavior intervention for college students sustained over time?](#)
- STUDY 2005 [High-risk youngsters respond to coherent, consistent and interactive after-school activities](#)
- STUDY 2011 [Cluster randomised trial of the effectiveness of motivational interviewing for universal prevention](#)
- STUDY 2012 [Brief intervention for drug-abusing adolescents in a school setting: outcomes and mediating factors](#)
- STUDY 2010 [A brief image-based prevention intervention for adolescents](#)
- REVIEW 2012 [An overview of prevention of multiple risk behaviour in adolescence and young adulthood](#)
- STUDY 2014 [Web-based alcohol screening and brief intervention for university students: a randomized trial](#)
- HOT TOPIC 2014 [‘Everyone’s not doing it’ message offers hope for prevention](#)
- STUDY 2010 [Project SUCCESS’ effects on the substance use of alternative high school students](#)