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► [Reducing adolescent use of harmful legal products: intermediate effects of a community prevention intervention.](#)

Gruenewald P.J., Johnson K., Shamblen S.R. et al. [Request reprint](#)
Substance Use and Misuse: 2009, 44(14), p. 2080–2098.

Alaskan Native communities were mobilised to educate their children and parents about, and to reduce the availability of, volatile substances, over-the-counter medicines and other legal substances used as intoxicants by young people. Preliminary results were encouraging.

Original abstract *Purpose* Preliminary results are presented from a feasibility study of a comprehensive community prevention intervention to reduce the use of inhalants and other harmful legal products (HLPs) among adolescents in three Alaskan frontier communities conducted in 2004–2007. The legal products used to get high include over-the-counter drugs, prescription drugs, and common household products. Community mobilization, environmental and school-based strategies were implemented to reduce access, enhance knowledge of risks, and improve assertiveness and refusal skills.

Methods Pre- and post-intervention survey data were collected from 5–7th grade students from schools in three communities using standardised instruments to assess knowledge, assertiveness, refusal skills, perceived availability, and intent to use. The intervention consisted of community mobilisation and environmental strategies to reduce access to HLPs in the home, at school, and through retail establishments. In addition, the ThinkSmart curriculum was implemented in classrooms among 5th grade pupils to increase the knowledge of harmful effects of HLPs and improve the refusal skills. Data were analysed using hierarchical linear models that enable corrections for correlated measurement error.

Results: Significant increases in knowledge of harms related to HLP use and decreases in perceived availability of HLP products were observed. The environmental strategies were particularly effective in reducing the perceived availability of HLPs among 6th and 7th graders.

Discussion Although limited by the absence of randomised control groups in this preliminary study design, the results of this study provide encouragement to pursue mixed strategies for the reduction of HLP use among young people in Alaskan frontier communities.

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