Description of Measure

Purpose

To assess child’s exposure to, and use of, alcohol and other drugs.

Conceptual Organization

The instrument consists of 9 items. The first 8 items pertain to specific types of drugs (cigarettes/chewing tobacco, inhalants, beer/wine, hard liquor, marijuana, cocaine/crack, LSD, other). For each of these 8 items, the respondent is asked three yes/no questions: 1) Has anyone ever offered you [the drug]; 2) Have you ever tried [the drug]; and 3) Have any of your friends tried [the drug]. The last questions asks the children (a) if anyone has asked them to sell drugs, (b) if they have ever helped anyone sell drugs, and (c) if any of their friends are involved in selling drugs.

Item Origin/Selection Process

Items were selected to cover the drugs most frequently used by youth. The intent of the instrument was to probe not only whether the child tried each drug, but also their exposure to each drug via friends or others in their immediate living environment.

Materials

Non-copyrighted LONGSCAN form is included in this manual.

Time Required

Less than 5 minutes

Administration Method

Interviewer-administered

Training

Minimal
Scoring

Score Types

Individual items can be used as binary indicators. The number of drugs offered to the child, tried by child, and used by the child’s friends can be obtained by summing positive responses.

Score Interpretation

Higher mean scores indicate more drug exposure.

LONGSCAN Use

Data Points

Age 8

Respondent

Child

Mnemonic and Version

SXA

Rationale

The likelihood of adverse outcomes such as poor school performance is increased with early onset of risk behaviors such as substance use (Kandel & Yamaguchi, 1993; Tonkin, 1987), especially when combined with socioeconomic disadvantage (Elliott, et al., 1989). Early use of substances that are legal for adults (i.e., cigarettes and alcohol) increases the risk of later use of illicit drugs (Kandel & Yamaguchi, 1993).

Results

Table 1 shows the percentages of children reporting exposure to tobacco, alcohol, other drugs, and to drug dealing at the Age 8 interview. Alcohol was the substance with the most frequent endorsements of exposure, followed by tobacco. A larger percentage of White children than children of any other race reported exposure to cigarettes and alcohol. Multiracial children
had the highest exposure to other drugs and the second highest exposure to alcohol. Black and
children of Other races reported more exposure to drug dealing than children of other races.
When examined by site, exposure to alcohol and cigarettes was reported most frequently at the
NW site, while the highest exposure to other drugs was reported by children at the EA site.
Exposure to drug dealing was high at the MW site relative to other sites, though it was highest at
the SW site.

Table 1 about here

References and Bibliography


13-20.
Table 1. Child's Exposure to Substances by Race and Study Site. Age 8 Interview

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Source. Based on data received at the LONGSCAN Coordinating Center by 8/24/01.