

Health and Mental Health among College Students: Toward a Better Understanding of the Impact of Sexual Assault, Alcohol Use, and COVID-19

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Abstract : Introduction: This study investigated the development of college experiences, COVID-19 pandemic experiences, alcohol use, and sexual violence. The longitudinal study includes 656 college students living in the same dormitory. Students' alcohol use and social network structure were investigated to better understand the relationship with sexual violence risk. Basic Methodologies: Over two years, students repeated five web-based surveys, including a pre-college survey and surveys during four consecutive semesters. Questions were added in the fourth wave to assess students' experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic, administered from November-January 2021, including mental and behavioral health. Analyses include the impact of COVID on living arrangements, drinking behaviors, and daily life; experiences of COVID symptoms, testing, and diagnosis, responses to COVID such as social distancing, quarantining, not working, increased health care needs; experience of fear, worry, stigma, emotional well-being, loneliness, and mental health; experiences of financial loss, lack of basic supplies, receiving emotional and financial support, and comparison with academic disengagement. Concluding Statement: Findings and discussion will include strategies to strengthen mental and behavioral health programs and policies.

Keywords : COVID, mental health, substance abuse, college students, sexual misconducts

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