Negative Urgency, Parental Monitoring, and Substance Use among At-Risk Adolescents

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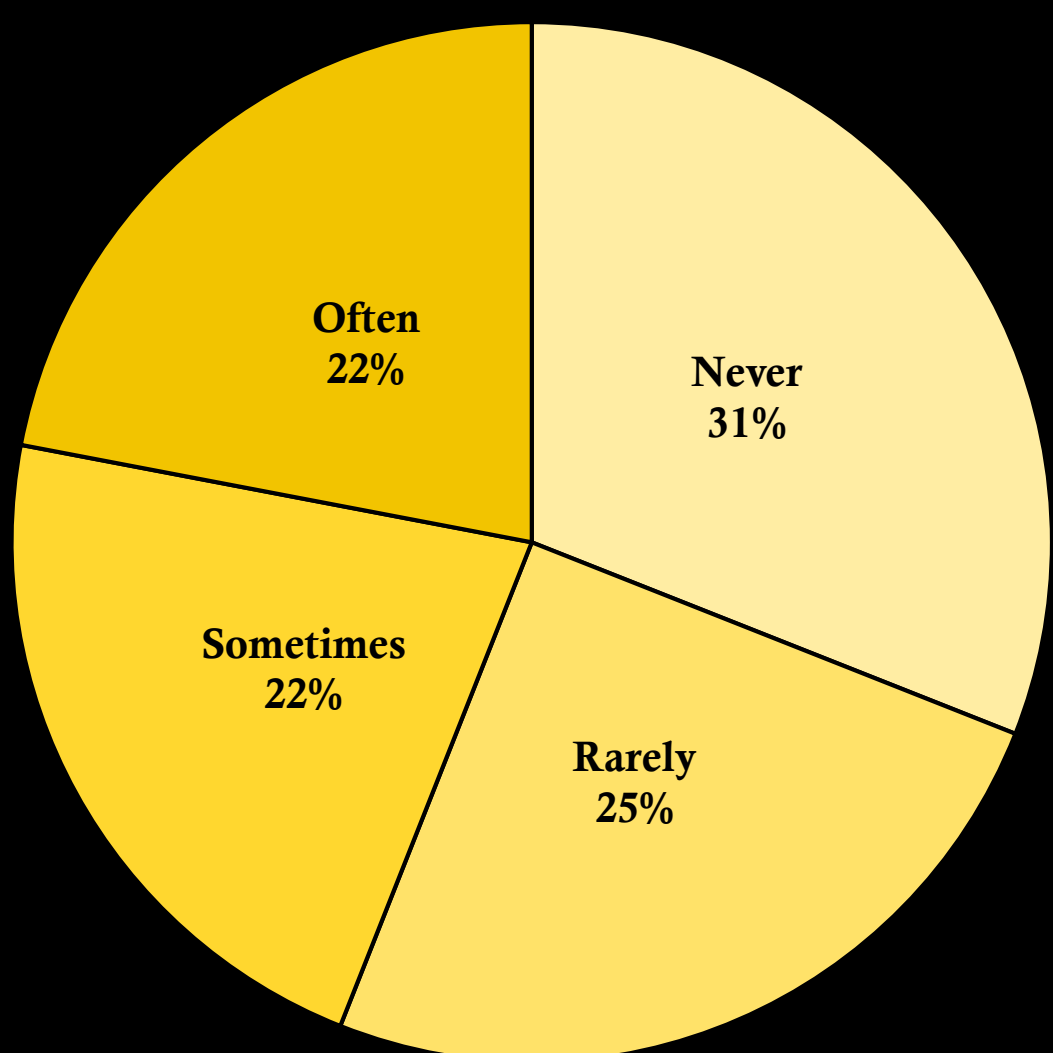
[1] The University of Southern Mississippi
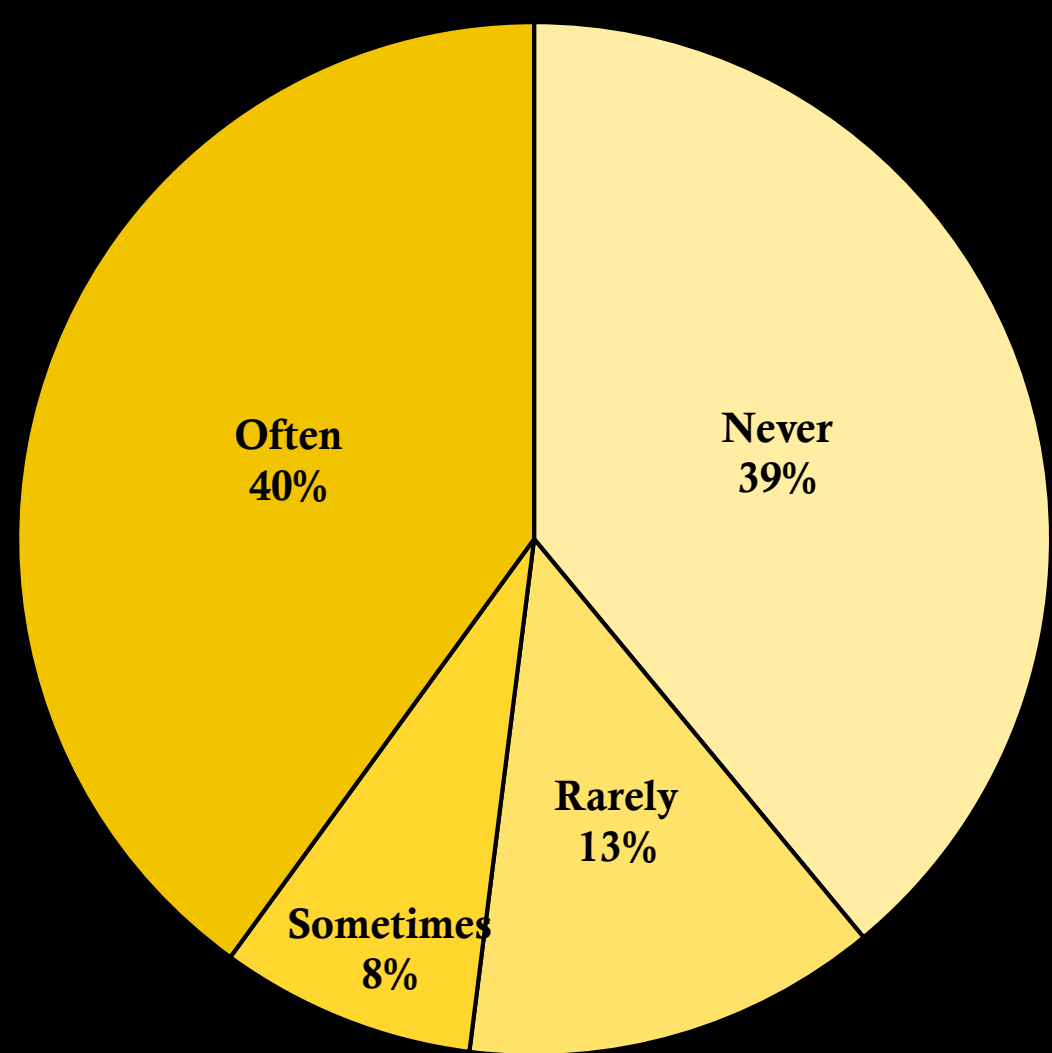[2] Washington State University

INTRODUCTION

- **Negative urgency (NU):** the tendency to act impulsively when experiencing unpleasant emotions

- NU strongly associated with problematic substance use among adolescents[1,2]

- **Poor parental monitoring (PPM)** also strongly associated with problematic substance use among adolescents[3]

- No known research has examined negative urgency and poor parental monitoring as simultaneous predictors of adolescent substance use

ALCOHOL USE FREQUENCY

- Often 22%
- Never 31%
- Sometimes 22%
- Rarely 25%

MARIJUANA USE FREQUENCY

- Often 40%
- Never 39%
- Rarely 13%
- Sometimes 8%

ALCOHOL	Wald χ^2	p-value
Race (White)	2.697	.101
PPM	1.794	.180
NU	5.891	.015
MARIJUANA	**Wald χ^2**	**p-value**
PPM	.029	.864
NU	**18.511**	**.000**

DISCUSSION

- Only NU was significantly associated with frequency of both alcohol and marijuana use

- Consistent with literature stating that NU is an important factor[1,2]

- Inconsistent with literature on the importance of parental monitoring[3]

- When examining NU and PPM simultaneously, higher NU may be more predictive of substance use than PPM

- Higher NU may be predictive of substance use despite parental efforts to monitor the child's engagement in risky behavior

METHODS

Participants:
- 183 adolescents in a residential facility
- Ages 16-19 years (M = 16.72 years)
- 81.9% male ••• 59.0% White, 28.4% Black
- 68.9% use alcohol ••• 61.2% use marijuana

Measures:
- UPPS-P Impulsive Behavior Scale[4]
- Alabama Parenting Questionnaire (APQ)[5]
- Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)[6]

Procedures:
- Data collected as part of larger study
- Participants completed surveys via Qualtrics

RESULTS

- Sex and race considered as covariates using nonparametric tests
- Two separate ordinal logistic regression models, with alcohol and marijuana use frequency as outcome variables
- NU and PPM entered as predictor variables
- Significant difference in alcohol use frequency across racial groups (χ^2 (6) = 16.50, p < .05)

Alcohol Model:
- Overall model was significant (χ^2 (3) = 13.31, p < .01)
- NU was only signifcant predictor (χ^2 (1) = 5.891, p < .05)

Marijuana Model:
- Overall model was significant (χ^2 (1) = 20.78, p < .001)
- NU was only significant predictor (χ^2 (1) = 18.511, p < .001)

IMPLICATIONS

- Can use objective measures of impulsivity (specifically focusing on NU) to assess for the likelihood of problematic substance use

- Target NU in substance use treatment and prevention efforts for adolescents by discussing negative emotions and building skills for coping with those emotions

- Future studies may examine the relationship between NU, PPM, and other risk-taking behaviors (e.g., risky sexual behavior, illegal activity) among adolescents

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