these findings can improve quality of care and healthcare efficiency among an underserved population in a post-pandemic world.
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PLATFORM RESEARCH PRESENTATION IV: FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

36.

PREDICTORS OF DIVERSION FROM THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM AMONG FIRST TIME JUVENILE OFFENDERS

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Purpose: First-time juvenile offenders are increasingly diverted from the justice system post-arrest. Although widely researched, programs frequently differ in how they define diversion, with two broad categories of program emerging in the literature: formal and informal diversion programs, which differ in the level of monitoring youth receive post-arrest. Reports on diversion programs frequently emphasize their relationships to recidivism, however, few describe differences between diverted and non-diverted youth. In this investigation, we 1) describe the characteristics of youth diverted after first arrest from a large, urban juvenile justice system over an 11-year span, and 2) describe demographic and criminal charge predictors of formal and informal diversion in this sample.
Methods: This was a secondary analysis of data on 22,065 Medicaid-enrolled youth arrested for the first time in one urban Indiana county between 2005 and 2016. Youth's diversion status was identified according to their case status; decisions were made in collaboration with county juvenile justice officials and in consultation with literature on other diversion programs. To examine predictors of diversion, we performed a multinomial logistic regression with age at first arrest, gender, racial identity, and charge type as predictors of entry into informal or formal diversion programs, or court-processing. Two-way interactions between predictor variables were all entered into the model and were removed using backward deletion until only statistically significant interactions were included, with alpha < .01 to account for multiple interaction tests.
Results: Among 22,065 youth, 7,749 (35.1%) were informally diverted and 4,041 (18.3%) entered formal diversion programs, while 10,275 (46.6%) were processed in court. Youth who were younger at first arrest (B=-.21, P<.00) white youth (compared to black youth or youth of color; B = .71, P = .01), and youth arrested under drug (B=3.1, P<.00) or status offenses (B=-2.7, P<.00) (compared with violent or property offenses) were most likely to be formally diverted. Meanwhile, younger youth (B=.18, P<.00) and female youth (compared to male youth; B=.16, P=.01) were most likely to be informally diverted. Interactions between predictors of diversion were also significant. Most significantly, female youth arrested for violent or property offenses were more likely to be diverted (either formally; B=.81, P<.00) or informally; B=.10, P<.00) compared to male youth arrested for similar offenses. Black youth and youth of color who were arrested for violent offenses were also less likely to be informally diverted (B=-.49, P<.00) compared to white youth arrested for similar offenses.
Conclusions: Existing research suggests that formal diversion programs lead to improved behavioral health outcomes and reduce future delinquency. Meanwhile, informal diversion programs can limit deeper involvement in the criminal justice system. Given these outcomes, it is important to better understand differences in which youth get diverted, either informally or formally, and which youth are more likely to be adjudicated in court. Individual jurisdictions may differ in their guidelines on when to divert youth or may allow for significant individual decisions for police or probation officers; investigations like these may highlight problematic demographic patterns in youth diversion, allowing jurisdictions to identify and set clearer policies.
Sources of Support: No sources of financial support.

37.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PREVENTING IMPAIRED DRIVING AND RIDING WITH AND IMPAIRED DRIVER: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF YOUTH EXPERIENCES DURING AND AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

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Purpose: Despite greatly reduced roadway travel during the COVID-19 shelter-in-place orders, alcohol and drug use among seriously and fatally injured roadway users in the U.S. increased in 2020. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for U.S. youth. As travel resumes to pre-pandemic levels, it remains essential to identify novel strategies to prevent driving while impaired (DWI) and riding with an impaired driver (RWI). This qualitative study explored how youth avoid DWI and RWI during and after high school to inform prevention efforts.
Methods: In 2020, virtual in-depth individual interviews were conducted with a geographically diverse sample of 105 young adults. Participants were purposively sampled from the NEXT Generation Health Study, a nationally representative longitudinal cohort study, and had varying levels of experience with DWI/RWI during and after high school (mean age 26.36±0.52 y/o, 47.7% ♀). A semi-structured interview guide explored pre-pandemic experiences with DWI/RWI. Using directed content analysis approaches, guided by ecodevelopment theory, a six-member multidisciplinary team systematically applied inductive and deductive codes to each transcript; agreement was achieved by team consensus. Themes were derived using data immersion (with coded data and transcripts), investigator reflexivity and team dialogue. We present themes derived from the codes "Chose not to DWI", "Chose not to RWI", and "Missed Opportunities for Prevention".
Results: Participants avoided DWI by trusting their self-assessment of impairment, defined as poor physical ability to drive, "I knew I could barely stand up and coherently walk through the sand …. [it's] probably not the best idea for me to get behind the wheel." Some relied on trusted, close friends to intervene: "My perspective is like 'I'm good to drive but I'm swirling'. [My friends] will make those decisions for me to prevent what could happen". Perceived police presence on the roadways also prevented potential DWI, "You always consider that there's gonna be more cops on the road or not".