

## **Research Enhancement Grant Summary Report: 2004**

### **The Race/Ethnic Age Crossover Effect in Substance Abuse**

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#### **Abstract**

In the summer of 2004 I received a Research Enhancement Grant for the project titled, "The Race/Ethnic Age Crossover Effect in Substance Abuse." Age crossover refers to the findings that African Americans (and to some extent Hispanics) have lower rates of substance use in adolescence but by age 35, use rates match or exceed those of whites. It is unclear why African Americans and Hispanics (despite their socioeconomic and cultural disadvantages) have lower rates of alcohol and drug use in their youth and more importantly, why those advantaged positions are not sustained over the life course. I proposed to study this issue using the National Household Survey of Drug Use and Health (existing survey data). The goals of this research were 1) to offer descriptive information on the age crossover effect by race/ethnicity and gender, and 2) to identify the factors contributing to racial/ethnic variations in substance abuse observed at different ages in order to offer insight into why minorities are protected at certain age groups while uniquely vulnerable at others. During the summer I made considerable progress on this study. I completed a literature review, downloaded and merged four years of NHSDA data and conducted preliminary analyses. These preliminary analyses confirmed the age crossover effect for African-Americans and revealed that it is most dramatic for African-American females. It, however, revealed that the age crossover effect cannot be used to describe the substance use patterns for Hispanic males and females relative to whites. With this preliminary work I was able to submit an R03 grant proposal to the National Institute of Health (NIAAA) to study this topic in the fall of 2004. I will receive notice of funding within the next month. I will conduct the second portion of the analysis in the summer of 2005.