



Random Student Drug Testing:  
*The Research*

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*March 15, 2006*

# The Current State of Knowledge

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- New Jersey Study
- Indiana Studies
- OHSU Studies
- Michigan Study
- IBH Studies
- Conclusions
- Additional Resources

# Hunterdon Central Regional High School

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- 1997 - Rocky Mountain Behavioral Sciences survey
- After the survey, mandatory random drug testing was implemented for student athletes
- ~ 50% of the school participated in athletics

# Hunterdon Central Regional High School

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- Prior to random testing: student counseling and education program and drug searches
- For 2 years, no changes in school's anti-drug program except the addition of random drug testing
- 1999 – drug survey was conducted again

# Hunterdon Central Regional High School

- Results:
  - Decrease in drug use in 20 of 28 categories
  - In high-risk “multi-drug users”:
    - 9<sup>th</sup> grade, 57% decrease
    - 10<sup>th</sup> grade, 100% decrease
    - 11<sup>th</sup> grade, 14% decrease
    - 12<sup>th</sup> grade, 52% decrease

# [ Indiana Study ]

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- Effectiveness of mandatory, random, suspicionless drug testing
- 2000 – Indiana Court of Appeals ruled testing unconstitutional
- 2002 – Indiana Supreme Court reversed the ruling

# [ Indiana Study ]

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- 83 of 94 eligible high school principals responded to survey
- Principals asked to contrast 1999 – 2000 and 2000 – 2001 school years regarding indicators of drug problems

# [ Indiana Study ]

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- Results:

- 85% reported increase in either drug or alcohol use after drug testing was stopped in 2000 – 2001
- 80% reported increase in illicit drug use in 2000 – 2001
- 59% reported increase in alcohol use in 2000 – 2001



# [ Indiana Study ]

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- Principals' answers based on:
  - 83% - direct information from students
  - 79% - information from teachers and staff
  - 59% - information from law enforcement
  - 23% - formal survey of students

# [ Indiana Study ]

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- 352 students in 1999 – 2000 vs. 518 students in 2000 – 2001 suspended or expelled for drug or alcohol related incidents
- 89% of principals believe drug testing undermines the effects of peer pressure by providing a legitimate reason to refuse drugs and alcohol

# [ Indiana Study – 2005 ]

- Survey conducted on high school principals in April 2005 (86% response rate)
- 2/3 of principals report their responses to survey are based on formal written surveys answered by students regarding drug usage
- Evidence of changes in student drug use since RSDT program began (since 2002-03 – present)
  - Positive drug results for students have:
    - 41% decreased
    - 3% increased
    - 56% remained the same

# [ Indiana Study – 2005 ]

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- “Critics of RSDT claim that testing has a negative impact on the classroom. Based on your experience, do you believe this is true?”
  - 100% of principals said “No”

# [ Indiana Study – 2005 ]

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- Intent is not to “catch and punish”
- RSDT is effective in reducing temptation
- Use of formal written surveys are providing “hard” evidence that RSDT programs are effective as one tool to deter and prevent drug usage among students
- Per student drug testing costs are reasonable
- RSDT programs do not cause reductions in student participation in sports or extracurricular activities

# [ OHSU Study ]

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- 1999 – Acceptability and potential deterrent effects of drug testing
- Surveyed 1299 students from 28 high schools
- < 9% said they would use drugs if randomly tested
- 12% said they would use alcohol if randomly tested

# [ OHSU Study ]

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- 1999 – 2000: Study comparing drug use in two high schools; one with student drug testing program and one without
- Student athletes (135) at Wahtonka HS were subject to random drug testing; student athletes (141) at Warrenton HS were not tested
- Drug use determined by confidential, voluntary surveys at the beginning and end of the academic year

# [ OHSU SATURN Pilot Study ]

## ■ Findings

- Wahtonka reported drug use rate  $\frac{1}{4}$  that of Warrenton; 5.3% vs. 19.4%
- Wahtonka student athletes were  $< \frac{1}{3}$  as likely to use performance-enhancing substances



# [ OHSU Study ]

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- 2000 – 2001: SATURN Study
- 13 participating schools
  - 7 conduct random testing of athletes, 50% random test rate
    - 5 schools test during the entire school year
    - 2 schools test during athletic season only
  - 6 do not randomly drug test athletes

# [ OHSU SATURN Study ]

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- Preliminary findings

- 11% increase in sports-activity participation
- Users categorized as: non user, experimenter, moderate user and heavy user
- Heavier alcohol & drug users may decrease past year use when subject to random drug testing when assessed at 2 years
- Non user category increased after 2 years in drug testing schools
- Students believed there was a strong likelihood of being tested with a 50% random test rate

# [ Michigan Study ]

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- “Student Drug Testing Not Effective in Deterring Student Drug Use”
- Cross-sectional design

# [ Michigan Study ]

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- 1998 – 2001: Compared drug use rates of 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders from a sample of 722 of the nation's middle and high schools
- “In the school year, did your school test any students for illicit drug use?”
  - 18% of the schools answered yes
  - 82% of the schools answered no

# [ Michigan Study ]

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- The perils of generalization:
  - Compared schools that had any testing (18%) with those that had none (82%)
  - Finding: No statistically significant difference in drug use rates

# [ Michigan Study ]

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- Problems:
  - The population of schools using drug testing was too heterogeneous
    - Some used only for-cause testing
    - Some used random testing
    - No common program
    - Similar to comparing schools using any drug abuse prevention program with schools using none and finding no difference

# [ IBH, Inc. Pilot Study ]

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- 2001 – 2002: Survey of 9 schools (7 public, 2 private) that were pioneers in the field of student drug testing
- Schools' student drug testing programs had been in place for at least 3 – 4 years

# [ IBH, Inc. Pilot Study ]

- Variations in programs
  - Categories of students tested: ranged from student athletes only to all extracurricular activities and student drivers to all students
  - Consequences of positive test results: only private schools expelled students after 2<sup>nd</sup> positive test
  - Substances tested for: Most schools included 5 core drugs
    - Marijuana
    - Cocaine
    - Amphetamine/Methamphetamine
    - Opiates
    - PCP



# [ IBH, Inc. Pilot Study ]

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- Common elements in programs
  - All programs were based on health and safety rationale, with purpose of prevention rather than punishment
  - Student drug testing program was just one part of a larger initiative to keep students off drugs
  - None reported positive drug tests to police, instead focused on counseling and treatment

# [ IBH, Inc. Pilot Study ]

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- Programs successes indicated by:
  - Reduced positive test results
  - Decreased disciplinary problems
  - Self-report survey data
- Despite some legal challenges from certain groups, drug testing programs have persisted and have won increasing support

# [ IBH, Inc. Study ]

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- Demonstration Grant for Student Drug Testing
- Funded by the Department of Education late 2003

# [ IBH, Inc. Study ]

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- 8 public schools with mandatory, random student drug testing programs across the country

# [ IBH, Inc. Study ]

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- Program Interventions:
  - Condition A: Increased Testing Frequency
  - Condition B: ATLAS & ATHENA Program(s)
  - Condition C: Combination of Conditions A & B
  - Condition D: Control (no interventions added)

# [ IBH, Inc. Study ]

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- Currently exploring what happens to students who test positive
  - Are they referred to treatment?  
Counseling?
  - Are they thrown back into the general testing pool or tested on a more regular basis?
  - How is their life affected by a positive test result?

# [ Conclusions ]

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- What have we learned from research
  - RSDT has been successfully integrated into comprehensive drug abuse prevention programs in more than 1,000 schools
  - RSDT, while it does not eliminate student drug use, is a powerful new tool to reduce drug use in this particularly vulnerable population
  - For students who are identified as current drug users, RSDT provides a useful way to help schools and families keep students in school and off drugs

# [ Conclusions ]

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- What future research can provide
  - Who to test and how often to test
  - What to test and for which drugs
  - How a positive test should be handled
  - How to handle repeated positive tests for a student
  - How to integrate RSDT with other drug abuse prevention programs



# [ Resources ]

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- [www.PreventionNotPunishment.org](http://www.PreventionNotPunishment.org)
- *Drug Testing in Schools*, written by Robert L. DuPont, M.D. and Lisa Brady, available at [www.hazelden.org](http://www.hazelden.org)
- *The Selfish Brain*, written by Robert L. DuPont, M.D., available at [www.hazelden.org](http://www.hazelden.org)
- *Smarter Random Student Drug Testing*, written by Robert L. DuPont, M.D. and Harvey Graves, Ph.D., available at [www.ibhinc.org](http://www.ibhinc.org)
- *Family Guide to Drug Testing*, written by Robert L. DuPont, M.D. and Richard Bucher, Ph.D., available at [www.ibhinc.org](http://www.ibhinc.org)