



Teens who participate in Sunnybrook's P.A.R.T.Y. Program have less chance of traumatic injury

TORONTO, ON (March 9, 2010) - A Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre study has found that students who participate in the Hospital's Prevent Alcohol and Risk-Related Trauma in Youth (P.A.R.T.Y.) Program are less likely to incur traumatic injuries than those who do not.

The P.A.R.T.Y. Program is a 1-day injury awareness and prevention program for youth ages 15 years and older. It was created at Sunnybrook in 1986 with the goal of teaching teens to recognize their injury risks and make smart decisions to reduce them.

"We created the program to take teens through the grim realities of a trauma patient," says Joanne Banfield, lead author on the study, and Manager of the Trauma Injury Prevention program at Sunnybrook. "Over the day they hear from paramedics, police officers and nurses as well as injury survivors. The students also walk through the trauma room and Critical Care Unit. It is a very powerful way to communicate the importance of making informed choices."

The study looked at data from a 10-year period (1993-2002). Of 3,905 P.A.R.T.Y. participants, 1,281 were randomly matched on four variables (same age, gender, residential area, and initial year in Ontario's driver's license database) with 1,281 teens who did not attend P.A.R.T.Y. There were fewer traumatic injuries in the group that attended the program (43.3 per cent vs. 47.4 per cent). This result indicates that those in the group who did not attend were at a 21.8 per cent greater risk of a traumatic event than those in the group who did attend.

"These results show us that exposing teens to this kind of learning has tangible benefits and applicability in the real world," says Banfield. "It is very rewarding to release these findings during the 25th year of the Program. We wish to continue to expand and inform young people around the world about making good decisions."

The effectiveness was stronger among females and before the driver licensing system was implemented on April 1, 1994.

The study "*Effectiveness of the Prevent Alcohol and Risk-Related Trauma in Youth Program in Preventing Traumatic Injuries: A 10-Year Analysis*" was published in the March issue of the Journal of Trauma.

The P.A.R.T.Y. Program is currently offered in Canada's 10 provinces and 3 territories, and 5 other countries including USA, Japan, Brazil, Australia and Germany.

About Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre

Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre is inventing the future of health care for the 1 million patients the hospital cares for each year through the dedication of its more than 10,000 staff, physicians and volunteers. An internationally recognized leader in research and education and a full affiliation with the University of Toronto distinguishes Sunnybrook as one of Canada's premier academic health sciences centres. Sunnybrook specializes in caring for Canada's war veterans, high-risk pregnancies, critically ill newborns, adults and the elderly, and treating and preventing cancer, cardiovascular disease, brain disorders, orthopaedic and arthritic conditions and traumatic injuries.

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