Abstract

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the relationship between ethnic identity, drug use, and sexual risk behaviors in late adolescents. It varies from other studies by evaluating this specific population, and by studying ethnic identity, drug use, and sexual risk behaviors as a unit. The study is a secondary analysis on data collected by Dr. Rew. A total of 256 12th grade students (ages 17-19 years old) of varying races took surveys on ethnic identity, drug use, and sexual risk behaviors. The surveys were conducted in rural communities surrounding Austin, Texas. The study found a positive relationship between ethnic identity and marijuana usage ($p = .015$), as well as drug use during sexual intercourse ($p = .048$). Similarly, in this study there was an inverse relationship between ethnic identity and negative or health-risk behaviors like drug use and sexual risk behaviors, which means that health-risk behaviors were more likely to occur when the participant had a poor sense of ethnic identity. The current study also found a positive relationship between marijuana ($p = .000$), cocaine ($p = .001$), and inhalant ($p = .041$) usage and sexual encounters with multiple partners. There was also a positive relationship between marijuana ($p < .01$) and cocaine ($p = .034$) usage and whether or not the participant used condoms. Overall, the findings indicate ethnic identity, drug use, and sexual risk behaviors are interrelated.

*Keywords*: ethnic identity, drug use, sexual risk behaviors, health-risk behaviors