



University of the  
West of England

## Health: The Design, Planning and Politics of How and Where We Live

- **Paper / Proposal Title:**

Examining the role of neighborhood problems on nonmedical use of prescription drugs, marijuana use, and alcohol use among urban youths: A cross-sectional study in Florida

- **Format:**

Presentation (in-person)

- **Author(s) Name:**

Martha Coulter, MSW, DrPH,

Abraham A. Salinas-Miranda, MD, Ph.D.,

Yingwei Yang, M.Sc.

- **University or Company Affiliation:**

Department of Community & Family Health, College of Public Health, University of South Florida, USA

- **Abstract (300 words):**

### **Objective**

This study assessed the role of neighborhood problems on nonmedical use of prescription drugs, marijuana use, and alcohol use among urban youth in Hillsborough County schools in Florida.

### **Methods**

This is a secondary cross-sectional analysis based on the 2015 School Board of

Hillsborough County Youth Outreach Survey, conducted with youths in grades 6th–12th (N=26,515) who attended public schools in Hillsborough County, Florida, USA. The independent variable, neighborhood problems was a composite variable from ten questions about social and environmental problems in the neighborhood (computed through principal component analyses). The dependent variables were nonmedical use of prescription drugs, marijuana use, and alcohol use. Binary logistic regressions were conducted to calculate crude and adjusted odds ratios controlling for gender and race.

## **Results**

Youth reporting a high level of neighborhood problems were more likely to report nonmedical use of prescription drugs (OR=2.72, 95%CI=2.43, 3.03), marijuana use (OR=2.38, 95%CI=2.16, 2.61), and alcohol use (OR=1.77, 95%CI=1.64, 1.91), compared with those reporting a low level of neighborhood problems. After adjusting for gender and race, the odds ratios remained statistically significant (OR=2.72, 95%CI=2.42, 3.05; OR=2.31, 95%CI=2.10, 2.54; OR=1.83, 95%CI=1.69, 1.98; respectively). A dose-response gradient was found between the number of times of taking prescription drugs non-medically and neighborhood problems. The greatest odds for neighborhood problems were reported among youths who took prescription drugs non-medically for 40 times or more in their lives (OR=4.01, 95%CI=3.12, 5.16).

## **Conclusions**

This study identified that youth's substance use is negatively influenced by neighborhood problems prevailing in the community. Our findings should provide further impetus for the elimination of adverse neighborhood conditions and the creation of safe neighborhood environments as critical strategies to reduce the nonmedical use of prescription drugs, marijuana use, and alcohol use among youths.

### **• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):**

**Martha Coulter, MSW, DrPH** is the founding Director of the Harrell Center for the Study of Family Violence, a research center founded in 2002 devoted to the prevention and understanding of family and community violence. She also directs the Maternal and Child Health concentration in the Department of Family and Community Health in the USF College of Public Health and direct the HRSA Maternal and Child Health (MCH) leadership training grant (since 2010), and co-direct the MCH/Epi training grant (since 2009). Her research interests have focused on the areas of intimate partner violence and child maltreatment with particular attention to the impact of interventions such as batterers' interventions programs and dependency mediation. Dr. Coulter have served on numerous professional advisory committees such as the Family Violence Prevention Caucus of the American Public Health Association (current president), the Hillsborough County Child Fatality/Domestic Violence Review Committee, the Florida Center for

Survivors of Torture/Refugees Family Violence Intervention Advisory Board, and the American Public Health Association's MCH section Family Violence Prevention Committee. Her graduate teaching interests have focused in the content areas of MCH and family and community violence.

**Abraham Salinas-Miranda, MD, PhD** is a Visiting Research Scholar for the Harrell Center for the study of Family Violence, Community and Family Health Department, College of Public Health, University of South Florida (USF). He is the Associate Director for the USF Center of Excellence in Maternal and Child Health Science, Education, and Practice. In addition, Dr. Salinas coordinates the MCH Epidemiology Doctoral Traineeship program at USF. His research interest are diverse, including juvenile violence prevention, adverse childhood experiences, community-based participatory research, maternity care, and child development.

**Yingwei Yang, M.Sc.** is a doctoral student at the University of South Florida (USF) and has been serving as the Research Associate in the Harrell Center for the Study of Family Violence since 2015. She gained her master degree from the Peking University, Beijing, China in 2012. During her master program, Yingwei Yang participated in several programs in violence, injury, obesity and child immunization. As the Primary Investigator, she conducted the violence and bullying intervention program by using school-based life skills education. Since August 2015, she has been on the USF team for Safe and Sound, a violence prevention program in Florida, and been participating in the data analysis and manuscript preparation for Youth Outreach Survey.