Hypothesis 1: Students who drank alcohol in the last two weeks will be more likely to have employed protective behavioral strategies.

Method

Participants

Administrators at five universities sent an email with information about the study to parents of all incoming freshmen. The first two hundred and seventy and seventy parent-child dyads were enrolled in the study.

Results

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed in two ways. (1) Braver & Braver’s method to assess baseline sensitization and an effect of treatment immediately post-intervention, and (2) mixed models were run to assess differences between conditions over time (condition-by-time effect) for all outcomes of interest, only using data from participants measured at baseline. Two mixed model analyses were run on each outcome, with the first analysis testing for mean differences between conditions at each assessment point relative to baseline (time treated as a categorical variable) and the second linear trend analysis (LTA) testing for differences in linear trends across all time points (time treated as a covariate).

Hypothesis 1: Parents who reviewed MyStudentBody-Parent will be more likely to have read the college alcohol and drug policy.

Braver & Braver Analytic Approach

Greater increase in having read the alcohol/drug policy among MSB group (50% to 89%) than controls (62% to 95%) (NS)

Mixed Models Analytic Approach

No baseline sensitization.

No effect of treatment immediately post-intervention

Hypothesis 2: Parents who reviewed MyStudentBody-Parent will demonstrate increased confidence for communicating about alcohol and other drugs with their children.

Braver & Braver Analytic Approach

No baseline sensitization.

No effect of treatment immediately post-intervention

Mixed Models Analytic Approach

No overall change in PTCs

Hypothesis 3: Students whose parents reviewed the MyStudentBody website will be more likely to read the college alcohol and drug policy.

Braver & Braver Analytic Approach

No baseline sensitization.

No effect of treatment at post-test

Mixed Models Analytic Approach

No treatment effect at post-test

Hypothesis 3: Students whose parents reviewed the MyStudentBody website will be more likely to have read the college alcohol and drug policy.

Braver & Braver Analytic Approach

No baseline sensitization.

No effect of treatment at post-test

Mixed Models Analytic Approach

No treatment effect at post-test

MSB students report slower increase in binge drinking (25% to 39%) compared to controls (16% to 36%) (NS)

Conclusion

We conducted a randomized controlled trial to test the efficacy of an online parent-based college alcohol and other drug use prevention program. We found that parents who reviewed the MyStudentBody-Parent website in the weeks before their children began college were more likely to discuss protective behavioral strategies related to drinking (e.g., “avoid drinking games”) than parents in the control group. Moreover, we found that students whose parents reviewed MyStudentBody-Parent were more likely to use protective behavioral strategies when “partying.” In particular, students were more likely to use protective behavioral strategies associated with “manner” (e.g., avoiding mixing different types of alcohol) of drinking, as well as “stopping/limiting” drinking (e.g., having a friend let you know when you’ve had enough). Teaching parents the skills to discuss issues related to alcohol and other drugs, using a program such as MyStudentBody-Parent, in the weeks prior to the beginning of freshman year may be an effective way to increase the likelihood that students employ strategies to stay safe.