Title of Paper/Presentation: Maltreatment and Alcohol and/or Other Drug (AOD) Use among African American and Hispanic Adolescent Girls: The Impact of Ethnicity Related Constructs

Authors: Calonie M. Gray and Marilyn J. Montgomery

(a) Background: A small but emerging literature has documented significant associations between adolescent girls’ AOD use and maltreatment experiences. However, few researchers have undertaken empirical studies evaluating explanatory models on maltreatment experiences and AOD problems among adolescent girls. Additionally, there is a virtual absence of literature addressing ethnicity-specific links between maltreatment and adolescent AOD use, yet research has shown significant relations between some ethnicity-specific factors and adolescent AOD use (Amaro, Blake, Schwartz, & Flinchbaugh, 2001). However, the associations between ethnicity-specific constructs and adolescent AOD problems have not been explored among maltreated girls.

(b) Method: Using SEM analyses, this study investigated the links between maltreatment (Childhood Trauma Questionnaire-Short Form; Bernstein et al., 1994); trauma symptoms (Trauma Symptom Checklist-40; Elliott and Briere, 1992); AOD problems (Drug Use Screening Inventory-Revised; Tarter & Kirisci, 2001 and Composite International Diagnostic Interview; Kessler et al., 1994); and ethnicity-specific constructs (measure adapted from Williams, Yan, Jackson & Anderson, 1997 [perceived discrimination] and Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure; Phinney, 1992 [ethnic identity]) in a sample of 170 African-American and Hispanic adolescent girls.

(c) Results: Results of this study revealed that maltreatment experiences were positively related to trauma symptoms, which were positively related to AOD problems, including AOD diagnoses. Perceived discrimination moderated the relation between sexual abuse and trauma symptoms, such that more perceived discrimination resulted in a stronger effect of sexual abuse on trauma symptoms. Ethnic identity moderated the relation between sexual abuse and AOD problems, such that ethnic identity demonstrated protective properties in the relation between sexual abuse and AOD problems.

(d) Conclusions: The results underscore the importance of investigating the risk and protective effects of ethnicity-related constructs related to girls’ AOD use and maltreatment. Moreover, the results on the co-occurrence of AOD use and maltreatment suggested that interventions addressing AOD use and maltreatment concurrently may hold promise with girls (Najavits, 2002).