

B.R.A.D. Card Survey 2001-2002

Preliminary Analysis of Survey Results



Background Information

After Bradley McCue, a Michigan State University (MSU) junior, died of acute alcohol poisoning while celebrating his 21st birthday, his parents and friends founded the B.R.A.D. (Be Responsible About Drinking, Inc.) Foundation. The organization is a Michigan non-profit corporation dedicated to providing students and parents information about alcohol's effects and how to deal with excess use.

In April of 1999, MSU and B.R.A.D. began sending birthday cards to students just before their 21st birthday, reminding them to

celebrate responsibly. A laminated wallet sized card with information about alcohol poisoning is included with the birthday card. (Appendix A: *birthday card*) Over the last three years 15,000 MSU students have received one of the birthday cards.

As part of a study by MSU Olin Health Center and the Department of Communication, funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, 1731 students were surveyed within two weeks of their 21st birthday during the 2001-02 academic year. The survey data for the project were collected by the Office for Survey Research (OSR), a division of the Institute for Public Policy and Social Research (IPPSR) at MSU. OSR conducted the survey on behalf of Drs. Dennis Martell and Charles Atkin, the principal investigators. (See Appendix B: *Methodological report*)

“Of the students who recalled receiving the cards, 12% reported they changed their plans for their birthday celebration: 3% by drinking less; 8% by being more aware/cautious of their drinking; 1% by having someone watch over them...”

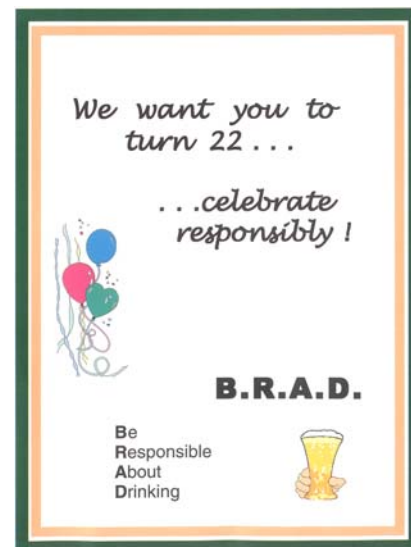
Of all students turning 21 during the study, students were randomly selected for each group. A control group received no card. All others received the standard B.R.A.D. card or a card with a gender specific or gender neutral insert of alcohol facts. All of the students also received the laminated wallet size insert.

Within two weeks after their 21st birthday, the students were asked an extensive set of survey questions on how they celebrated their birthday. Included were a series of questions about the B.R.A.D. birthday card, its wallet insert and the additional inserts. (See Appendix C: *Card Distribution*)

As an additional part of the study, parents of some students received a letter congratulating them on the upcoming birthday of their son or daughter. That letter also asked the parents to have discussion with their child about the dangers of drinking large amounts of alcohol as part of their birthday celebration.

A preliminary analysis of the survey results follows with supplemental data. (See Appendix D: *Charts on Selected Data*). A more detailed analysis of the extensive data will be completed and a comprehensive report issued later this year.

Continued



Highlights of the survey:

Of the 1731 students surveyed:

- 93% celebrated their 21st birthday;
- 80% celebrated with alcohol;
- 48% “got drunk” on their birthday;
- 11% got sick on their birthday; and,
- 10% did not recall parts of the celebration.

Students who received the birthday and wallet cards (versus those who did not):

- Drank less (average number of drinks);
- Were less likely to get drunk;
- Were less likely to drink shots;
- Were less likely to report parts of the celebration they cannot recall;
- Were more likely to stop drinking when they “had enough;” and,
- Were more likely to have someone watch out for them during the celebration.

Of the students who recalled receiving the cards:

- 74% saved part of the card:
 - 3% of those took the wallet card with them on their birthday;
- 22% reported thinking about the card during their celebration;
- 12% reported they changed their plans for their birthday:
 - 3% by drinking less
 - 8% by being more aware/cautious of their drinking;
 - 1% by having someone watch over them during/afterwards;
- 15% reported learning something new about alcohol poisoning;
- 65% shared the card contents with family or friends; and,
- 98% felt that MSU and B.R.A.D. should continue sending cards to students.

For More Information:

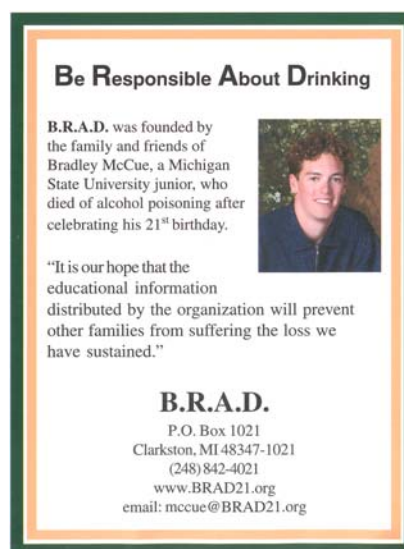
For more information related to the study, utilize the following sources:

- Survey results are available on the web at www.brad21.org and www.ippsr.msu.edu.
- Information on how the survey was conducted or interpreted is available by contacting: Charles Atkin, MSU Department of Communication, at (517) 353-3259; Dennis Martell, MSU Olin Health Center, at (517) 432-1031; or Larry Hembroff, MSU Office for Survey Research, at (517) 355-6672.
- Information related to the grant or media requests can be directed to: Jasmine Greenamyre, Olin Health Center, at (517) 353-4344 or Kristan Tetens, University Relations, at (517) 432-0921.

Appendices:

Several appendices are attached. They are as follows:

- **A: Birthday Card**
Scanned images of the B.R.A.D. Birthday Card and inserts. If you are interested in receiving copies of the actual items, please contact B.R.A.D. at mccue@brad21.org.
- **B: Methodological Report**
The survey research methods as well as the complete questionnaire used in the study.
- **C: Card Distribution**
Quantitative information on the distribution of cards, inserts, and letters to various groups of the sample.
- **D: Charts on Selected Data**
Selected charts highlighting additional data collected. Some information is included earlier in the text of this executive summary, other data appear in Appendix D only.



Permission to use information related to the study is granted only if the source is cited: "The B.R.A.D. Card Survey, 2001-2002," Office for Survey Research, Institute for Public Policy and Social Research at Michigan State University, May, 2002. Principal Investigators: Drs. Dennis Martell and Charles Atkin. Funding: U.S. Department of Education.

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