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- S1 00:00 Hi, this is Tim Lightfoot, the Director of the Huffines Institute for Sports Medicine and Human Performance. I am so excited to let you know that the Huffines Institute now has apps for your smartphones and your tablets. We have apps for the Apple products and for Android products. You can go to iTunes or go to Google Play, either one, download those Huffines apps and you can pull in our content every week. Now on to the podcast.
- S2 00:26 Welcome to the sports medicine podcast brought to you by the Sydney & J.L. Huffines Institute for Sports Medicine and Human Performance in the Department of Health and Kinesiology at Texas A&M University. At the Huffines Institute we're always working to facilitate, apply, and bring you the most up-to-date coverage of the wide world that is Sports Medicine and Human Performance all in a language you can understand and share with your friends. And now here is our host, the Director of the Huffines Institute, Dr. Tim Lightfoot.
- S1 00:56 Hello and welcome to the weekly edition of Huffines Institute for Sports Medicine and Human Performance podcast. I'm your host Tim Lightfoot and I want to thank you all for taking the time to download and listen. As we do every week, we've brought another interesting individual in the world of Sports Medicine and Human Performance. We're pitching a big tent today actually and you'll learn a little bit more about that. But anyway, we have another interesting wonderful guest with us today, Doctor Adam Barry from here in Texas A&M. Welcome to the board. Adam.
- S3 01:26 Thanks for having me, Tim.
- S1 01:27 It's great to have you on. I'm going to tell the audience a little bit about you first and then we'll just kick into some conversations. Doctor Barry is currently an Associate Professor here in Health and Kinesiology. He is in Health Education division. He is the chair of the Graduate Education Programs here in our department. He got his PhD in health education here at Texas A&M. We didn't keep him actually. He's gone to some couple other places. But he got his bachelors and masters in Health Education from Florida State University initially. He got his PhD in 2007 and only the reason I tell you that is because at this point this outstanding scholar has already published 68 articles. I don't think he sleeps at all in the meantime, so in a total of eight years he's got an amazing amount of production. As a matter of fact, it's so amazing he was actually named the outstanding new faculty here at Texas A&M this year. So we're real pleased to have you here, and all the words of wisdom that you'll bring with you. Adam's research interests are all alcohol related.
- S3 02:24 That's right.
- S1 02:25 I find alcohol helps my research as well, but that's not the way that you're--
- S3 02:29 Not my research, no, sir [laughter].
- S1 02:31 But in a variety of different ways - harm reduction of alcohol, industry marketing, driving and intoxication. And we could go on what the list, and we're actually going to go on with a little bit of the list. Population is primarily college students, and [does?] military veteran work. So we start off often with how did you get interested in this whole area? Is there some like tragic background to this that...?
- S3 02:55 It's funny, usually you talk to addiction counselors or someone that works in the alcohol or addiction field and they're either overcome addiction themselves or have never touched it. And I fall somewhere in the middle. Never experienced addiction myself, but I just find alcohol really interesting. And when I was at Florida State University as an undergraduate, there was a time that was noted the Princeton reviews top party school in the nation. And so I was [?] in college and I'd go back home and I went to a magnet school that was focused on health professions among undergraduate-- excuses me, in my high school. And I was exposed to some amazingly smart people in high school. Way smarter than I am. It was astounding how smart they were, 1600 kind of SAT people just based on everything.
- S3 03:43 And I go back home and - on breaks - undergrad, they'd kind of be bums. Weren't really making much of themselves and it was really disappointing to see. And so that kind of stayed with me. And then came to grad school and you kind of have to find a topic relatively early that interests you. And I figured if I could find something that was easy to read about, fun to read about, fun to learn about, it'd kind of make my job easier to do. And then have some family history with alcohol use that also kind of gave me some interest. Kind of social, interpersonal factors kind of pushed me that way and then I was able to kind of find something I liked to read about.
- S1 04:22 Yeah. the media makes a big deal often about the amount of alcohol in college campuses in particular. Is that true? Or is it just hype and overblown or...?
- S3 04:33 No. I would say it's definitely not overblown. So, if you look at binge drinking, and you can argue what's the proper way to define binge drinking. But the typical way that's been done is four for females on occasion, and five for males on occasion.

- S1 04:49 I'm per occasion.
- S3 04:50 Right. And then they try to attach a time frame for that within two hours and then try to attach a level of intoxication to it. But regardless just four or five drinks basically in a sitting. So, the rate of that in college camps is in 1993, can you guess what that was, Tim?
- S1 05:06 I will guess, rate was 2%.
- S3 05:09 It was 45%, so about 2010, 2012, what do you think the rate was?
- S1 05:14 That will almost go up 75%.
- S3 05:16 It was 45%.
- S1 05:17 Oh, still 45%.
- S3 05:18 Yeah. So you can either go, "Hey, we're doing such an amazing job that the rate is not going up."
- S1 05:22 So, you can tell the host knows nothing about this, [chuckles] which is good.
- S3 05:25 I feel really smart. So either we're doing such a banged-up job that nothing's going up and the trend's staying pretty level, or we can say, "Man, we spent, probably, billions of dollars on this problem and haven't really made a dent." So in college, you have a time, where you're transitioning in life, so a lot of changes are happening - freedom's happening. You're exposed to a lot of things that maybe you weren't in the cocoon or shelter of home, and so you are out on your own. And so drinking rates definitely raise in college, and it's typically the highest points they are in someone's life. So they have this thing called "developmental alcoholism." So basically, during that period - 18, 24, 25 - 26 if you're kind of taking two victory laps in your undergraduate [chuckles] - you have people that are drinking at very, very high rates. So they call it developmental alcoholism. But when they leave college, rates drop off tremendously. And so they call it maturing out of problem drinking. College interests me in terms of alcohol use because it seems to be this environment that is promoting alcohol use. And National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism actually calls it a culture. So there's something about the culture of college, whether it's-- I was walking the halls earlier and saw the John Belushi-- we're in the college from animal house, that culture of college at somehow drinking go hand-in-hand. That's kind of one of reasons that interest me. But also, I think it's still very much relevant. Media might say college students are drinking. And you can say, "Well, yeah. They're going to mature out. That's no big deal." But from my perspective and why I think harm reduction is important, it's the consequences that go along with it. So, I don't think you're going to eliminate college students from ever drinking again. But if you can keep them as safe as possible, I think, maybe that's where our dent can come in.
- S1 07:10 You get to this matured, out of the addiction-- I don't use all the phrases right, but now the matured, out of the addiction once they graduate from college, what are the rates then? You've told me the rates have been about 45%, do they-- how much do they drop?
- S3 07:23 They drop pretty significantly. Then you really start to get in to some social factors, demographic characters, that are really going to influence those rates: types of jobs, SCS, things like that.
- S1 07:37 I'm just trying to get a sense of how much it dropped off. So what is it about the university or college culture that causes that? I know you talked a little bit about John Belushi, and is it because they are coming to grips with their independence and students are able to do what they want for the first time; and they're experimenting to try it and lack of responsibilities the next day, other than classes?
- S3 08:00 You're touching on a number of them. If you want to keep it pretty light person [?], the Twisted Sister, We're Not Going To Take It. The Beastie Boys, Fight For Your Right To Party mentality a little bit, I can do what I want, I'm on my own. There's colleges that are pushing to increase Friday classes early, 8:00 AM Friday classes. Because if someone does has something or a responsibility whether it's school or work related, that would be something that would prevent them from engaging in excessive amounts of alcoholism or even maybe drinking at all. But factors in terms of college that are pertinent to college, but not maybe necessarily pertinent or associating with social institutions outside the college.
- S3 08:39 One in particular is athletics. It's big on campus especially one like ours, any SCC campus really. Football is sort of culture, religion way of life and so in terms of sports, sports medicine, alcohol really overlap with that when you start to look at what some have dubbed beer and circus which is alcohol and football.
- S1 09:03 Tailgating and all the social aspects that go around the sporting events that we know about.
- S3 09:07 Sure, and I know there are some campuses-- I used to work at an institution in the Big 10 and, you know, one of the lower Big 10 schools that I was familiar with in terms of football performance. Tailgating happened, but not a lot of football game watching happened. So they would go tailgate outside the stadium and never step foot in it.
- S1 09:24 So one of the things you talked about, and you said a while ago, about the universities keeping the students safe during this. And I see harm reduction. That phrase is interesting to me. Harm reduction. So what do universities and colleges do to reduce the harm and keep students safe?
- S3 09:42 Well, there's a lot of things that are going on. So there's actually a document that was just put out called College AIM - College and then capital A-I-M - through the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, and what they did is they took basically

any prevention and intervention strategy that's used on a college campus and tried to make it so a university president could pick that up and look at, see is it effective, is it evidence-based, is there anything to support it? So, when you ask what are campuses currently doing, man, they're doing a lot.

- S1 10:14 A lot of stuff.
- S3 10:14 Some of it that's just not working and some of it that has a little bit evidence-based support, and then others that seem to be effective. But like I said earlier, binge drinking is still around. So, we're doing everything from sending birthday cards at these window of risk periods like in someone's 21st birthday, which isn't effective. We're doing strategies like online programs, hour and a half, two-hour interventions where a student comes to campus and that's part of the required-- a requirement before they can register their freshman year. There was debate over whether that's effective. I'm of the mindset that an online intervention probably isn't best in terms of changing behavior. Some of our researchers pointed out that students will either simply click through it or these intervention videos they're supposed to be watching will be turned on while they go and use the bathroom, make a sandwich, come back when it's over.
- S1 11:05 Watch football on the TV.
- S3 11:07 I tend to think they have to be present for an intervention to have it work. Then there's other things like brief motivational interviewing where you trying to establish, "Look are your behaviors in line with what you want your quality of life to be, with what you think others in the social norms are?" And there's a little bit better evidence based to support things like brief motivational interviewing.
- S1 11:29 You've talked a little bit about some of the industry marketing that's some of your research. Does industry target college kids? Is that another factor that drives the drinking, right?
- S3 11:42 Absolutely, if you were to go to a bar on a Friday, Saturday night, why do they have young women dressed in Miller Lite outfits passing around Miller Lites or Bacardi outfits passing around free shots--
- S1 11:57 It's not just a distribution outlet?
- S3 11:59 No, I don't think so. I think there's a little promotion there. The alcohol industry has started to-- or has for some years now, tried to present itself as interested in harm reduction, or interested in "responsible drinking." If you've ever seen a beer advertisement, [?] reminds you, "Please, drink responsibly." Right after they showed you a party scene and a really raging good time, it looked like. So this dichotomy what you're saying with your visual verbal cues, and then telling me to drink responsibly, what does that mean? And I mean, to have an industry, their goal, and their number one priority is revenues. In order to make more money, they have to sell more products. They need you to, therefore, drink more. So to have them present themselves as prevention partners is, I think, counter-intuitive, especially when you start to look into some other practices. Do they promote it to college students? I would say absolutely. A few years ago, they came out with a fan camp promotion where they took really top football schools, LSU, University of Texas. Basically had Bud Light cans specific to those camps. "Why you doing that? Who is that for?" I mean it's not for the 50 year old drinker. It's for the college student. I think they absolutely target college students, and I venture they actually target kids much younger than college.
- S1 13:24 That's interesting we talked about this, because it strikes me that-- the legal drinking age at least in Texas is 21. I went to school when legal drinking age was 18. You mention earlier that the binge drinking rates haven't changed over the years. Even with the adoption of these higher age limits. Because we see freshman when they're 18, 17 - 18 so forth. They can't drink until they're 21 which means they're junior third year here.
- S3 13:55 I graduated two weeks after I turned 21.
- S1 14:00 My thought is if the binge drinking rate hasn't changed, the legal drinking age has changed. We still have industry marketing alcohol to all students. Isn't it all a moot point? All these programs, should we just not worry about and let it be and it will be okay or...?
- S3 14:18 You're sort of touching on something that was a hot button issue there for a few years. Something called the Amethyst Initiative.
- S1 14:24 Okay. Tell us about that.
- S3 14:26 What that was--
- S1 14:27 I'm just stumbling around blindly here.
- S3 14:28 [chuckles] Right. You're kicking a lot of things here. What that was was basically a former college president said, "Look, college drinking's an issue. We need to do something about it." And they were recommending and had like a 140-some other college presidents sign onto this initiative that said: "We want to lower the drinking age to 18." So what does that effectively do for college drinking when you look at underage drinking, you effectively define it out as a problem. You eliminate it because then you go, "Oh, well know they're of age they can drink." And another part of the initiative was trying to say, "Well they'll have to do some things to earn this sort of--"
- S1 15:09 Privilege.
- S3 15:09 --privilege or a card to drink." And this initiative got a fair amount of traction in play in the media but when you look at sort of

alcohol policies the minimum legal drinking age is one of the ones that has been examined very well and I haven't come across any literature that doesn't support it simply because when you look at-- you can say, "Well you went through when it was 18 and now it's 21, why is that?" Well really it's because of the alcohol related traffic.

- S1 15:41 The driving issues.
- S3 15:41 Yeah, it was the driving issues. You got alcohol related traffic fatalities are just skyrocketing because some people are still in high school when they're 18. And so you have high schoolers and people with very limited drinking experience and very limited driving experience. Combining those two things together which was extremely problematic. You had those huge spikes, so then the only change that happens is they raise it back to 21 and then what happens, man, rates just go right back down.
- S1 16:08 That's certainly something we haven't talked about, is the effect on the driving. And I know that's another area of research that you've done, is on that. So it's great that you jumped in there with that because there is a reason for the alcohol ages. If we're looking at just rates of drinking, doesn't seem to make a difference, but if you're talking about fatalities in traffic, in particular.
- S3 16:28 Right.
- S1 16:29 Now one of the other things that you hear about sometime, is that alcohol is a gateway drug to other things.
- S3 16:35 That's right.
- S1 16:37 True, not true?
- S3 16:39 Man, so I guess when you talk about gateway drugs, the first thing that comes to mind is what?
- S1 16:43 Marijuana.
- S3 16:43 Marijuana, reef for madness. When you talk about gateway drugs, some people immediately started to roll their eyes a little bit because they think back to that reef for madness and then, others will go, you know, true gateways there's, sort of, linear progression but the research has been sort of mix where some say it's Marijuana, some say, no, the gateway's tobacco, others say it's alcohol. And I'm one of the others who would say it's actually alcohol. So if you look at when people actually initiate their very first substance use, alcohol is the first substance the vast majority use. National studies that we've done, alcohol is one of the first substances that are ever used, and typically it's initiated around sixth, seventh grade. And so that's problematic because the earlier someone drinks, the more likely they are to develop alcoholism, alcohol dependence later in life. So we talked about minimum legal drinking age earlier. 21 is no magic number. I know people in their 30s I wouldn't trust to watch my dog, much or less handle their alcohol.
- S3 17:45 So 21 is not a magic number but the longer you delay to 21, the more likely you will not become dependent on alcohol later in life. So there is research support that 21 or at least delaying is good. So the early you initiate, the more problematic that is. And typically you don't see people that use heroin as the first substance they have ever done. You don't see people ever using cocaine as the first substance they have ever done. More people follow a linear progression of alcohol, tobacco and marijuana than they do tobacco, alcohol, marijuana or marijuana, alcohol, tobacco. The progression of alcohol first is actually from the national studies we have done and looked at, that's the first substance people are typically using. So when you think about schools, they have got a limited - K through 12 - you've got a limited budget. Perhaps, why don't you focus that money on delaying the initiation of alcohol versus smoking cessation or even DARE which isn't that effective anyway. Focus your resources and time there, because if you can delay alcohol abuse, you're probably more likely to delay other substance use as well.
- S1 18:45 Interesting stuff, before we get out of here, we have to talk about physical activity. It almost goes without saying that if someone is drinking alcohol, they certainly cannot perform at their best, when we talk about the sports, recreation or anything.
- S3 19:00 Yes, depending on how much they're drinking and what type of movement you're talking about.
- S1 19:04 Tell us about the gray area here.
- S3 19:08 Let's say you and I, we want to go to the gym. We've had a long day. Let's leave work and we're going to go bench press, okay? Full pros and associate pros usually do together.
- S1 19:18 Yeah, absolutely. There's a good thing there's not video with this because they can see how much we really do bench press, usually.
- S3 19:25 I'll flex right now and show everyone. Let's say we say, "Okay, were going to go head up the gym, but before that we're going have two beers." We have two beers when we go to the gym. That's not going to prevent us from lifting a bar up and down. It will impact our fine motor skills though, but you're not doing fine motor movements when you talk about just lifting a barbell. So alcohol does absolutely impact performance, but depending on what performance we're talking about. If we talk about driving, for instance, any deviation from zero is starting to influence your driving skills because that is very much fine motor skills in tracking and keeping the car straight. So I think you asked earlier about alcohol and activity?
- S1 20:03 Yes.
- S3 20:04 Okay, so if I were to ask you, who do you think drinks more, people who are inactive or people who are active?

- S1 20:12 I would guess people that are inactive.
- S3 20:14 I would say you are wrong.
- S1 20:16 Okay, excellent. I love being wrong.
- S3 20:18 People who drink, from what we found, is people who drink are more active and there seems to be this almost linear dose response relationship where as activity increases, drinking increases. So when we talk about college students specifically, we found that drinking is going to happen and so they recognize that, "Man, alcohol has got a fair amount of alcohol related calories in it and I'm concerned with how I look, maybe perhaps my athletic abilities." So some have said, "I'm going to workout to kind of earn my drink." So do this proactive extra activity to create this caloric deficit that they'll then fill with alcohol. Some have said, "I'm going to drink my dinner, I'm not going to eat it. Recognizing that I will be drinking alcohol." You know if you look at a Bud Light, it's probably about 120 calories. So if someone says, "I'm going to have five Bud Lights tonight," that's 600 calories.
- S1 21:12 Yeah, you have to walk five miles to get rid of that.
- S3 21:14 And that's more than a Big Mac. This relationship between alcohol activity is really interesting, because college students have said, "We're not going to give up our alcohol so we're going to engage in this pro-active and re-active behaviors." And re-active being, "I'm going to kind of binge and purge because I still want to make sure I drink."
- S1 21:36 So as regular listeners of our podcast know, this is time we usually give our guest, to give us their take home message. What's the one thing you want people to remember after they've heard this podcast?
- S3 21:47 The few take home points I would say is - we'll sort of break them down here - in terms of individually. it's important to be cognizant of your drinking.
- S1 21:57 None of us would deny that that's for sure.
- S3 21:59 Absolutely not.
- And so it's important to also recognize that it sometimes become just habits and you sort of turn your mind off a little bit to it. It's important to think through about your own. And I'd also recommend for those who want to engage in sport or anyone really to make sure that you're sort of treating your body well. Make sure you're taking days off, right? Just like you work out, you need to take days off, let your muscles rest. I'd recommend that people take days off from drinking, not just recovery days but actually trying to abstain for a day, every now and then. So you don't make it a habitual everyday thing where it can lead to some negative consequences.
- S1 22:40 Excellent. Thank you for being with us today.
- S3 22:42 Thank you.
- S1 22:43 Very informative. As everyone knows at this point of the podcast is when we have one of our producers come on and gives us the podcast question of the week. So here with the podcast question of the week is our producer, Kenneth.
- S4 22:56 What did Doctor Berry say was the percentage of people in college that had binge drank in the past two weeks?
- S1 23:03 Great podcast question, be the first one to send us the email response for the correct answer, send it to Huffines podcast, Huffines podcast@hikn.tamu.edu, be the first one to respond with the correct answer and we'll send you one of our nifty podcast t-shirts. Don't think you're too late to respond, we've only known to give away bonus t-shirts as well, so go ahead and respond, reach out, let us hear from you. So again thank you all for taking the time to download and listen, Adam, thank you for taking your time today and be with us.
- S3 23:33 Thanks for having me, thanks for listening.
- S1 23:34 I had a great time with the podcast , we hope that all of you tune will tune in next week when we interview another interesting individual from the world of sports medicine and the extended world of human performance, and until then we want you and we hope that you're active and healthy.
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