**Sociodemographic Similarities and Differences Among Youth Participating in Camp Mariposa Mentoring Program**

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**Abstract**

**Background:** Camp Mariposa (CM) provides a hybrid approach, combining peer and group mentoring characteristics within the United States. CM's framework seeks to prevent youth from developing a substance abuse disorder and experiencing delinquency.

**Objectives:** This study aims to understand the sociodemographic similarities and differences of populations benefiting from the CM program. We expect the CM approach to mentoring will be associated with more positive life outcomesfor at-risk youth across sociodemographics.

**Methods:** From 2016-2022, this nationwide study collected demographic information about participating youth (aged 9-12) and their families from 24 camps. Youth were surveyed twice per year about substance abuse and delinquency. Bivariate analysis was conducted using SAS 9.4.

**Results:** Of the 1574 participants, 614 (52%) identified as female and had an average age of 10.5 years. Of youth who experimented with substances (7%) or had friends who did (2%) (based on CRAFFT), 34% used to relax, 13% alone, 24% to forget, 34% had friends or family tell them to cut down or quit, and 29% had gotten in trouble for using. Race/ethnicity was not significant (p>0.05). About 2% reported getting in trouble with the police; males were significantly more likely (p=0.009), but race was not statistically significant (p=0.6).

**Conclusions:** Overall, the camp prevented early use of drugs and alcohol and delinquency. Among survey participants, there was low usage of drugs and alcohol among youth that participated in camps. There was a small number of participants experiencing delinquency. Since there was no statistical significance, whether one group is more likely than the other to experience substance use or delinquency cannot be determined.

**Recommendations:** Other mentoring programs are recommended to use the CM methods to reach children at high risk for early substance abuse and delinquency exposure. Additionally, conducting focus groups to get a more in-depth perspective from campers is recommended.

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