

# Heavy drug-use among bad boys can be curbed by parental monitoring and peers

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Aggressive and hyperactive boys with low parental monitoring are more likely to befriend deviant peers and become heavy drug users as teens, according to a new study published in the journal *Addictive Behaviors*.

Yet the investigation by scientists from the Université de Montréal and Sainte-Justine University Hospital Research Center found that bad boys can be protected from heavy substance use as teenagers if they are highly monitored and befriend good boys as children.

Parental monitoring was shown to have a protective effect on bad boys and reduce their affiliation with deviant peers, says first author, Jean-Sébastien Fallu, a Université de Montréal psycho-education professor and scientist at the Groupe de recherche sur les environnements scolaires. "Disruptive boys typically show a proneness to act aggressively and impulsively – these adolescents might need more external constraints from parents as compared to others who have stronger internal control."

Co-author Richard Tremblay, a Université de Montréal professor of pediatrics, psychiatry and psychology and a researcher at the Sainte-Justine University Hospital Research Center, says aggressive children are more inclined to misuse drugs than their non aggressive counterparts and this risk increases substantially if they also affiliate with deviant friends. "Deviant peers often affiliate with each other and mutually influence each other through deviancy training," says Dr. Tremblay, who is also founding director of Montreal's Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development.

The study used data from a long-term investigation that followed children from low socioeconomic backgrounds and from kindergarten through adolescence. "Another finding of our study was that disruptive boys who were highly monitored – yet poorly attached to parents – were heavier drug users," continues Dr. Tremblay.

Conversely, says Dr. Fallu, "Well monitored disruptive boys are more prone to affiliate with conventional peers. When such boys affiliate with conventional peers, they might benefit from a positive socializing influence or conformity training."

## **Partners in research:**

This study was funded by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the National Health Research and Development Program and the Fonds de recherche sur la société et la culture.

## **About the study:**

The paper, "Preventing disruptive boys from becoming heavy substance users during adolescence: A longitudinal study of familial and peer-related protective factors," published in the journal *Addictive Behaviors*, was authored by Jean-Sébastien Fallu, Michel Janosz, Frédéric Nault-Brière, Ariane Descheneaux, Frank Vitaro, Richard E. Tremblay of the

Université de Montréal.

**On the Web :**

- [Cited article from \*Addictive Behaviors\*](#)
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