

Alcohol and Drug Abuse by Migrant Farmworkers: Past Research and Future Priorities

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If relatively little is known about drug and alcohol use in the rural United States (Edwards 1992), even less is known about such use among migrant and seasonal farmworkers. An extensive literature exists on patterns of alcohol and drug consumption, and a somewhat smaller, but still substantial, scholarly literature describes the lives of farmworkers, both migrant and nonmigrant. However, these two literatures have remained separate for historical and institutional reasons.

Alcohol use by farmworkers has been described only anecdotally within the framework of more general and often ethnographic descriptions of the lives of migrants. These studies have usually focused on the lives of migrants living in a particular migrant camp or within one of the three migrant streams (Coles 1967; Nelkin 1970). Moreover, drug use by farmworkers has been less studied than alcohol use. It is only perhaps because of the perception that human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection is spreading rapidly within migrant labor camps, that the question of drug abuse by migrant farmworkers has begun to receive attention.

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature on substance abuse in migrant populations. It begins with a description of migrant farm labor patterns in the United States. The second section is a review of past research, specifically the two extant empirically based studies of migrant alcohol use. The third section describes changes in the migrant population and their use of drugs and alcohol. Following from this, Hispanic/Chicano cultural norms of appropriate alcohol consumption are reviewed. Then there is a discussion of the relationship between HIV and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) and migrant farmworker alcohol and drug use. The chapter concludes with suggestions for further research on migrant farmworker substance abuse as well as suggesting policy implications that are relevant to improving the health and living conditions of farmworkers.

MIGRANT LABOR IN THE UNITED STATES

Migrant farmworkers tend to follow an established pattern of travel north regardless of whether their home base is south Texas, south Florida, or California. They develop permanent relations with crew leaders and farmers and, therefore, will return year after year to the same geographic areas and may even become specialized in harvesting certain crops to the exclusion of others. In addition, migrants often travel together in groups consisting of family members, friends, and neighbors. Thus, it is both the social system of relations in which migrants are embedded and the physical and social structures they encounter on the farms in the north that shape norms and practices that then determine drinking levels.

The three different migrant streams are characterized by quite different methods of recruitment, travel, and social control by farmers, growers, and crew bosses (Trotter 1985). Migrant camps in the Eastern stream tend to recruit more single men than is typical for the other two migrant streams. The housing for the men is more often barrack-style, with shared sanitary facilities and sleeping quarters. Crew leaders provide both food and drink, and deduct the cost of meals at the end of the week from the workers' pay. The crew chief acts as the exclusive intermediary between migrant and farmer or grower, a practice that results in little, if any, direct contact between the farmworker and his employer.

Migrants are physically isolated from the nearby towns that surround the farms on which they work, have no transportation, and frequently cannot even go to local stores to buy necessities. This physical and social isolation results in a degree of dependency on crew leaders and other authority figures that ordinarily is characteristic only of total institutions such as prisons or, in the past, mental hospitals (Goffman 1961). The result is that the individual male migrant is almost completely dependent on the crew leader. Alcohol, increasingly drugs, and, in some cases, prostitution are made available and become a source of additional profit for the labor organizer or crew boss. The farmer asks only that the crops be harvested in a timely fashion at low cost.

In the Western stream, although there are often crew chiefs and occasions in which migrants working in isolated areas are exploited and taken advantage of, the migrants tend to have much more mobility than those in the Eastern stream. They often own their own cars and drive long distances from camp to camp. Migrants in the

Western stream typically travel together in cohesive groups of family and friends and have more freedom to choose the farms for which they will work. Their choice is more likely to be based upon previous knowledge of the quality of the housing, the level of pay, and the general working conditions. Most important, however, is the freedom that at least some migrants in the Western stream have to leave a camp if the conditions are too onerous, including the freedom just to drive to the nearest town for a weekend shopping trip.

In the Midwestern stream more emphasis is placed on the value of longstanding relationships between farmworkers and the owners of the farms. The camps consist primarily of family groups; the presence of unattached men is relatively rare. The crew chief or *troqueo* is often a member of the same family as the farmworkers. The families have frequently established long-term relationships with growers and return year after year to the same farm. Midwestern farmers tend to discourage excessive drinking in the camps; some even prohibit all drinking. As a result, migrant worker exploitation is less likely, because any action that might destroy the level of trust that has developed over the years between employer and employee is counterproductive in both economic and human terms. Close personal and family relations tend to prevent over-dependency on despotic crew chiefs or impersonal labor contractors.

MIGRANT ALCOHOL USE IN NEW YORK STATE

It is estimated that 30,000 to 40,000 migrant and seasonal farmworkers are employed on farms in western New York (Embrey, no date). Of these, very few are receiving treatment for substance abuse, and little is known about the extent and nature of their drug and alcohol use. There are only two studies that carefully quantify the extent of alcohol consumption by migrant farmworkers, and only anecdotal reports exist on the topic of drug use by migrants. The lack of research may be due to the difficulties inherent in studying migrant workers in field settings: It is hard to obtain the cooperation of farmers and crew leaders so essential to gaining entry into the camps, and workers themselves are suspicious and afraid of outsiders.

The two studies that successfully describe and quantify migrant workers' alcohol consumption patterns were conducted in the 1980s (Chi and McClain 1992; Watson et al. 1985). Data were collected by Watson and colleagues in three rural counties in western New York,

and the site of Chi's study was in Orange County, New York, which is directly across the Hudson River from Westchester County.

In the western New York study, the sample included workers drawn from 13 camps and was divided between 153 African-Americans and 64 Haitians. The investigators found that drinking was widespread in the camps, especially in the evenings and on weekends. Ninety percent of the African-Americans reported drinking at least occasionally, and 90 percent also said they drank at least moderately on weekends. Seventy percent admitted drinking in the evenings on a regular basis, and 60 percent said they drank on rainy days. These results suggest a pattern of regular and accepted recreational drinking intended to fight boredom during what migrants refer to as down time when crops cannot be picked or processed.

About a fourth of the migrants reported consuming alcohol frequently and in large quantities, indicating a pattern of heavy and/or binge drinking among a minority of workers in the camps. Specifically, 22 percent indicated they drank daily, 22 percent said they regularly consumed 5 or more drinks at a single sitting, and 20 percent reported they drank more at the camps than at their home base in Florida. This group—approximately one-fifth of the sample—was categorized as heavy drinkers.

The major correlates of heavy drinking were found to include gender (men drink more than women), age (older men drink more frequently and in greater quantity than younger men), and social isolation. Social isolation was the variable that the authors of the western New York study considered the most important risk factor in alcohol consumption. Heavy and/or binge drinkers were found to be much more likely than other migrant workers to lack the support and companionship of family and friends in the camps. The importance of spouse, children, and other relatives cannot be overestimated as a moderating influence on drinking among male migrants. Specific findings that substantiate the importance of embeddedness in kinship groupings include: As the sheer number of relatives increases, alcohol consumption and trouble due to drinking decrease; and the social and physical isolation of the camps seems to increase the power and importance of the presence of wives and relatives.

Drinking patterns for Haitians were found to contrast markedly with those for African-Americans. Haitians reported drinking much less than African-Americans, and, as a result, social isolation had less effect on quantity and frequency of alcohol consumption among

Haitians. Interviewers working with Haitian respondents reported that Haitian immigrants preferred the use of drugs to the consumption of alcohol for recreational use. This impression could not be confirmed, however, because the study did not gather data on drug use.

Chi's study in downstate New York, based on data from 246 migrants in 28 camps, comes to very similar conclusions as the western New York study. The ethnic mix includes 65 percent Hispanic respondents (Puerto Rican and Mexican), 13 percent black, 9 percent Jamaican, 5 percent Haitian, and 8 percent others. Chi classified, by self-report, the sample into regular drinkers, occasional drinkers, or nondrinkers. For the sample as a whole, 58 percent reported themselves to be regular drinkers, 23 percent occasional drinkers, and only 18 percent nondrinkers. Thus, 81 percent drank at least occasionally. Weekend drinking was widespread, although less so than in the western New York study. Among the regular drinkers, 52 percent regularly drank on weekends, and among the occasional drinkers, 21 percent were weekend drinkers. With regard to binge drinking, 25 percent reported drinking large quantities (more than a six-pack) at one sitting. Thus, about one-fourth of the migrants in both studies appear to engage in a pattern of heavy or binge drinking, usually during down times or on weekends. Chi's study found that men drank more than women; however, age was not associated with alcohol consumption.

Findings that are consistent with the importance of social isolation across the two studies include: Workers reported drinking greater quantities of alcohol in the camps than at home; and workers drank more frequently in the camps than at home. Chi also found Haitians tended to abstain from alcohol use and that, although 90 percent of Puerto Ricans and Mexicans and 88 percent of African-Americans were regular drinkers, only 23 percent of Haitians reported drinking regularly.

The most important and consistent finding common to both studies was the significance of the presence of family members as a restraint on excessive alcohol consumption. Chi fit a logistic regression model that included age, marital status, family members present at camp, gender, ethnic origin, parents' drinking status, years worked as farmworkers, average number of hours worked per day, whether respondents felt pressure to drink, and camp distance from a liquor store. Results demonstrated that "the social support variables of marital status and family members present at camp are highly predictive of drinking status" (Chi and McClain 1992, p. 48). Married migrants were far less likely to be regular drinkers, and migrant

farmworkers who had family members living with them in the camps were also less likely to be drinkers.

CHANGES IN THE MIGRANT POPULATION

Since these studies were conducted, a major change has taken place in the composition of the farm labor force. Until recently, a large percentage of migrant farmworkers were either African-American or white, with both males and females present in the camps. In the 1990s, by contrast, farm laborers are predominantly young, male, and Hispanic. Based upon data gathered by the Department of Labor (1991), it is estimated that of the approximately 2.25 million farmworkers, 71 percent are male and 65 percent are under 35 years of age. Other statistics from the same source show that 71 percent of farmworkers are Hispanic (57 percent Mexican, 8 percent Mexican-American, and 3 percent Puerto Rican), 23 percent white, and only 2 percent African-American.

Specifically, the impression among those working to provide services to migrants today is that the agricultural community is, for strictly economic reasons, moving toward relying more and more on the employment of single, unattached males. Mechanization and rising overhead costs have reduced farmers' profit margins. And, ironically, progressive State regulations intended to promote cleaner, more sanitary, and safer housing raise the cost of new construction sufficiently so that housing families is no longer considered to be cost effective. Sleeping quarters for single men require fewer square feet per person, can be built to include shared sanitary facilities, and are easier to clean and maintain.

Thus, anecdotal reports indicate that in the Northeast, farmworkers today tend to be predominantly single, young, and male. The support and restraint that relatives or wives and children provide are absent and the result is an anomic social situation in which normal family-based rules and restraints lose their power to define the appropriate consumption level of drugs and alcohol. Drinking also increases in response to isolation of the camp environment and the resulting boredom. In an all-male environment, without variety in forms of entertainment, without social contact with townspeople, and without the opportunity for a meaningful or constructive respite from hard physical labor, alcohol and drugs can become the preferred form of amusement.

This situation is complicated by the change in the ethnic composition of the Eastern migrant stream. As African-Americans have been

replaced by a predominantly Hispanic labor force, the connection between social isolation and substance abuse has taken on increasing importance. Hispanic farm workers include both documented and undocumented migrants and the ethnic mix now encompasses Chicanos, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Jamaicans, Haitians and, most recently, Guatemalans. Unlike African-Americans and whites, many Hispanic migrants are recent immigrants who speak little, if any, English. Due to the difficulty of entering the United States, young men often come alone, leaving their families in their country of origin.

The undocumented alien status of many Hispanic males makes them especially vulnerable to exploitation by farmers and crew bosses. For all farmworkers, but especially for undocumented aliens, debt peonage continues to be a serious problem. Workers are usually paid at the end of the week, and when crew leaders deduct for housing, food, and the alcohol sold to the worker, a migrant may finish the week owing a substantial sum to the crew boss. Thus, crew leaders are often motivated to promote rather than discourage the use of large amounts of alcohol. Because they may not be legal residents or speak English, Hispanic migrants are particularly unable to complain. The farms are often located near rural towns where workers are viewed with hostility and suspicion and repeatedly told both in action and words that the local townspeople do not want them in their communities. They are frequently subjected to harassment by local police, resulting in an even greater sense of fear and isolation.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE BY HISPANIC FARMWORKERS

Any adequate theoretical or empirical understanding of substance abuse by migrant workers must, therefore, clearly recognize and take into account the Hispanic cultural and ethnic background of many of the workers. The former emphasis on the exploitation of African-Americans and Haitians as a source of readily available low-paid labor should be supplemented by attention to the culturally standardized norms and shared understandings that surround the consumption of alcohol and the use of legal or illegal drugs by Hispanics. There is a striking lack of research focused on Hispanic migrant farmworkers, despite their growing numbers and the important contribution they make to the continued viability of American agriculture. The available literature is fragmentary and makes only the briefest mention of the specific experiences of Mexicans, Mexican-

Americans, Puerto Ricans, and other Hispanic groups as they travel from farm to farm.

Although there is no one single constellation of beliefs, norms, and behaviors associated with alcohol consumption for all Hispanics, generalizations about Mexican and Mexican-American drinking mores can be found in the literature. It should be recognized, however, that the degree of conformity to the traditional Hispanic pattern will vary with the degree of acculturation to Anglo norms, which itself will be associated with length of residence in the United States and with measures of economic status. Hispanic farmworkers, however, are often recent immigrants, are not advanced occupationally or educationally, and are, therefore, relatively unacculturated.

Mexicans and Mexican-Americans approve of the moderate consumption of alcohol when celebrating happy family events such as births, weddings, graduations, anniversaries, and christenings. Many observers have stressed the overriding importance of the family in Hispanic culture, and it is at ceremonial occasions that family members assemble with close friends to reinforce a sense of group solidarity and pride. Alcohol is viewed as one way to enhance the sociability and conviviality so essential to these symbolically important occasions. For example, one study of a large Mexican-American sample in California found that celebrating was indicated as the most important reason for drinking by three-fourths of those interviewed (Alcocer and Gilbert 1979).

Aside from the overriding importance of family and family ceremonies, the other most frequently noted aspect of Hispanic drinking norms and behavior is associated with gender. It has been frequently observed that Hispanic men consume much more alcohol and experience many more drinking-related problems than Hispanic women (Caetano 1984, 1986; Corbett et al. 1991; Gilbert 1985; Gilbert and Cervantes 1986; Maril and Zavaleta 1979). However, within the family and during family-centered parties and celebrations, male drinking is moderated and controlled by the presence of spouses and by norms regarding respectful behavior in domestic settings.

An entirely different pattern of drinking behavior has been described when Hispanic men drink together within a predominantly male environment. Many of the restraints are reduced and different norms emerge from those operative within the family setting. In a male environment, drinking involves a sharing of identities and experiences that serves to reinforce the importance of masculinity.

Some have seen this response, especially among working- and lower-class African-American and Hispanic males, as an expression of machismo and have related heavy drinking to values associated with physical strength, male dominance, and sexual prowess (Neff et al. 1991).

Others (e.g., Gilbert 1985) have characterized male bonding in gender-segregated places as a function of class and occupational position. Men who work in physically demanding occupations (e.g., farm work) believe strongly that by virtue of their labor in the fields they have the right to drink after work, on the weekends, or even during work time. Drinking is a respite from the sheer physical demands and monotony of the work itself.

As Gilbert (1985) points out, under circumstances such as these, drinking becomes associated by both men and women with the provider role and is given legitimacy. A man is not considered alcoholic or deviant unless, because of his drinking, he can no longer work and hold a job. He loses his status as respected husband or father only if he no longer fulfills his role as provider—the economic mainstay of the family. As long as males drink apart from the family and drinking does not interfere with the family's everyday life, it is tolerated even when not explicitly endorsed or approved.

Hispanic cultural definitions of the use of alcohol make probable high rates of alcohol consumption in migrant camps where Hispanic males live separated from their families. The segregated all-male environment of the camps lacks the normative restraints that mothers, wives, and older relatives provide when Hispanic families celebrate together. By contrast, the hard, continuous, and physically exhausting nature of farm work brings into play norms that redefine heavy drinking as a richly deserved reward.

In the context of the migrant labor camp, excessive alcohol consumption for the Hispanic male is justified because Hispanic gender scripts require men to drink more when alone with other men and the physical difficulty of the work justifies the Friday and/or Saturday night binge at the end of a long day or long week. Whether binge or excessive drinking is explained as a function of social class or in strictly cultural terms as an expression of machismo, the result is the same: Alcohol is consumed in large enough quantities to lead to possibly serious consequences, including accidents, fights, trouble with the police, and activities that put migrants at increased risk for contracting HIV.

DRUGS, ALCOHOL, HIV, AND AIDS AMONG FARMWORKERS

The increasing presence of HIV infection and AIDS adds urgency to the problem of substance abuse in migrant and seasonal farmworker populations. Substance abuse puts farmworkers at greater risk of contracting HIV. This adds to the already known and serious consequences of overdependence on drugs and alcohol. Young men who are socially isolated not only tend to drink more but also to patronize prostitutes. This also increases the risk of contracting HIV.

Little research has been conducted on either HIV or AIDS among farmworkers. A study funded by the National Commission to Prevent Infant Mortality (NCPIM 1993), however, provides a useful overview of what is known. The study stressed three major findings: (1) Migrant and seasonal farmworkers are contracting HIV in significant numbers, and the rates of infection appear to be increasing; (2) risk or facilitating factors include sex with multiple partners, alcohol use, and both licit and illicit drug use; (3) because of isolation, fear, lack of knowledge, and language barriers, farmworkers tend not to make use of locally available medical facilities and often reject the help of medical and educational providers. These three conditions, if ignored by State and Federal authorities, could result in an explosive rise in the incidence of HIV/AIDS among farmworkers.

The NCPIM report discussed four risk factors that increase the probability of finding HIV infection in the farmworker population: sexually transmitted diseases, tuberculosis, substance abuse, and lack of knowledge about the transmission of the disease and how to protect against it. They report that rates for these four facilitating conditions are higher for farmworkers than for the overall population of the United States. With particular reference to substance abuse, the NCPIM reported, "Anecdotal sources document considerable use of chemical substances among farmworkers, particularly young adult males, stemming from loneliness, unemployment, and poverty associated with being a hired farmworker and living in a labor camp" (NCPIM 1993, p. 18).

The NCPIM report also included findings from a survey of providers from 60 farmworker service programs, drawn from each of the three migrant streams (NCPIM 1993). Nearly all providers in all three streams indicated the major reason for contracting the HIV virus was heterosexual intercourse with prostitutes and/or multiple sex partners. Over half of the providers also mentioned needle drug use as another

modality for the transmission of the virus. Infected needles as the vehicle of transmission for HIV were cited most frequently by providers in the East Coast stream. These findings confirm that recreational drug use and casual sex are endemic in migrant camps, especially among young men.

When providers were asked their perception of the relative importance of facilitating factors for HIV infections, they listed risk factors in the following order of importance (percentages refer to the proportion of providers mentioning a particular factor): sexually transmitted diseases (98 percent), alcohol use (88 percent), tuberculosis (69 percent), and illicit drug use (38 percent). The importance of alcohol and drug use as contributors to the contraction and spread of HIV is underscored by these findings.

Two other studies of AIDS and HIV add significant detail to the description of the specific mechanisms that facilitate HIV transmission among farmworkers. Magana (1991) reported results of an ethnographic study of heroin-addicted prostitutes and undocumented Mexican migrant farm-workers in Orange County, California, in which it was found that the most frequent sexual activity for migrant men was with prostitutes, many of whom were HIV infected because of intravenous heroin use. These men came to the United States alone, leaving their girlfriends, wives, and families in Mexico. Magana concluded that Hispanic migrant males were at high risk for contracting the HIV virus for the same reasons as inner-city populations: poverty, minority status, involvement with prostitution and intravenous drug use, and a high incidence of other sexually transmitted diseases in addition to HIV.

The second study on HIV and AIDS among migrants was conducted in Belle Glade, Florida, a small rural town in southern Florida. Belle Glade is home base for a large number of Hispanic and African-American Eastern stream migrant workers. The countries of origin of Hispanic migrants are very diverse and include Mexico, Puerto Rico, Guatemala, Cuba, Jamaica, Nicaragua, as well as the United States in the case of Mexican-Americans (Goicoechea-Balbona and Grief 1992). Despite the diverse nationalities of these migrants, very similar findings to those of the Orange County, California, study were reported.

Goicoechea-Balbona and Grief observed that in most cases the migrant farmworkers who lived in Belle Glade were far from their native countries and from their spouses. Thus, the basic structural

precondition for heavy reliance on prostitution as the main sexual outlet for younger males was reproduced in Belle Glade. Moreover, the same pattern observed among other groups of heavy use of alcohol and drugs was characteristic of the migrant population in Belle Glade.

In both the Belle Glade and Orange County studies, the risk factors were similar: poverty, limited access to medical care, a lack of health insurance, fear of deportation, fear of dismissal if they acknowledged illness, and cultural and language barriers between them and health providers. Further, the general health status of migrants in Belle Glade was poor, an additional HIV/AIDS risk factor. Both the farmworkers who live year round in Florida and those in the Eastern stream suffer from high rates of tuberculosis, venereal diseases, diarrhea, and chemical food poisoning from pesticides. Finally, Belle Glade, like Orange County, California, has become the home of large numbers of young men.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Life for farmworkers in a migrant camp is a social phenomenon that can be studied for its own sake and for what it reveals about the universal characteristics and processes of human life. In addition, the lives of migrant farmworkers represent a social problem for the society as a whole, as well as for the migrants themselves. High levels of infectious disease, HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, poverty, and serious deficiencies in education, health, and housing demand an affirmative response from the wider society, both morally and pragmatically. What follows is a series of recommendations for action. The goal of this action is to gain additional knowledge about the conditions in which farmworkers live so as to make possible the development of social policy. This policy should be directed toward changing the root causes of migrant farmworker disease and deprivation.

First, very little is known about substance abuse and its consequences within the population of migrant farmworkers. Research that will yield baseline data on the incidence and prevalence of drug and alcohol use is absolutely essential for all three migrant streams. Similarly, data must be gathered nationally on the health status of migrant workers. How wide-spread is HIV infection? How many AIDS cases have been identified? What about other infectious disease such as tuberculosis? How sick are migrants and what are the causes?

Substance abuse must be studied within a wider framework focused on the health status of farmworkers.

Second, research should have a multiethnic focus and should take into account the rapidly changing composition of the migrant workforce. The ethnic and cultural identities of farmworkers must be an additional focus for research. As persons of Hispanic national origin now constitute the majority of the migrant population, an adequate understanding of alcohol abuse should be based upon and compared to Hispanic cultural definitions of normal, culturally sanctioned alcohol use. The terms "normal," "deviant," and "abuse" are relative to culture.

The cultural identities of Hispanics vary by national origin and cannot be assumed to be culturally homogeneous (Gordon 1985). Although Puerto Ricans, Guatemalans, Dominicans, and Mexicans all speak Spanish, the meager evidence available suggests that each nationality endorses different norms to define appropriate drug and alcohol use.

Third, family and gender roles have great importance for the understanding of substance abuse and for its prevention. As has been previously discussed, drinking by young males in migrant camps is partly determined by the fact that the drinking takes place within an exclusively male setting. By contrast, the presence of family members, spouses, and relatives has been shown to dramatically moderate male drinking among south Texas Mexicans. More knowledge about gender role scripts as they play themselves out within the specific context of farm labor camps might provide crucial insight into the prevention of drug and alcohol use and the spread of HIV. It is not known whether the moderating effect of family networks on consumption is as true for other Hispanic groups as it is for Mexicans and Mexican-Americans. Moreover, nothing is known about the effect of gender scripts on "blacks," including Haitians, "black" West Indians, or African-Americans.

Fourth, participant observation, long interviews, and other soft methodologies are necessary if the dynamics of camp life are to be fully understood. Structured questionnaires are essential to gathering basic quantitative data, but it is necessary to probe more deeply to provide the proper context for the interpretation of hard data.

Fifth, it is necessary to study farm labor camps from a systems perspective. Not only do the characteristics of the farmworkers themselves need to be included, but information from growers, crew

leaders, townspeople, local police, service providers, and others who have the power to shape the lives of migrant farmworkers should be gathered.

Sixth, forces in the broader society must also be included in order to understand the current circumstance of farmworkers. In the United States, the mechanization of agriculture has decreased the number of farms as the average size of farms has increased. If the integrity of the family is necessary to the emotional support of the migrant farmworker, the question is urgently raised, "What can be done to help preserve the integrity of the farmworker family despite the fundamental economic and demographic changes that have transformed American agriculture?" The physical and social health of farmworkers cannot be understood without taking into account the necessities determined by broader economic forces. The farmworker's family must no longer be defined as an economic liability, but as an economic asset instead.

Last, but not least, nationwide cooperation among researchers is urgently needed. Research is needed on the Eastern and Midwestern streams as well as on the Western stream. Attempts have been made in the field of migrant education to create a system of information sharing; the same might be done among researchers concerned with the health and welfare of migrant workers.

In 1978, the President's Commission on Mental Health (1978) warned that alcoholism was the most significant health problem among farm-workers. Today, the author would add drug abuse, the spread of HIV/AIDS, and the health effects of pesticides. Another 20 years must not go by before a strenuous effort is made to find solutions to these serious social and medical problems, which continue to plague this highly vulnerable population.

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