

PART 2

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSES OF SCHOOL LEAVING IN YOUNG ADULTS

In order to extend this analysis beyond descriptive analysis using contingency table analysis and t-tests, a multivariate analysis was performed. This analysis takes into account the joint effects of age, race, socioeconomic status (SES); alcohol and other drug use, abuse, and life problems; health status and medical care utilization; and other factors in determining significant predictors of school leaving among young adults ages 18-34 in Tennessee.

Multiple logistic regression using stepwise selection criteria with a p to enter and remove of .05 is the method of choice for this kind of exploratory data analysis where the criterion variable is dichotomous and predictors are multiple and both dichotomous and continuous. Multiple logistic regression is a statistical procedure for analyzing the relationship between a dichotomous dependent (or response or outcome) variable and a set of two or more independent variables or predictors. It enables researchers to adjust for the effects of potential confounding variables in order to examine the effect of a single predictor of interest on the dependent variable.

Analysis #1

The results of this analysis (Figure 3 and Table 11) suggest that, all other things being equal, young school leavers are poorer, more likely to be male, more likely to be unemployed, and more likely to reside in non-metropolitan areas of Tennessee than are stayers in the same age group. School leavers are also more likely to live in households with children or youth under 18 compared to their better educated counterparts.

While, controlling for other variables, young school leavers are **less** likely than stayers to have recently (in the past 12 months) drunk alcoholic beverages, they are 2.4 times **more** likely to have recently used tobacco. No differences in the prevalence of AOD-related life problems are noted, nor do the two groups differ in their recent use of illegal drugs or psychoactive prescription medication.

School leavers aged 18 to 34 are twice as likely to have no health insurance than adult stayers and are 3 times more likely to be Medicaid enrollees (prior to TennCare). They are also 1.6 times (odds ratio of 1.62) more likely to report fair or poor health or functional limitation and disability than stayers. School leavers are 1.6 times more likely to report mental health problems, including depression and anxiety, compared to their better-educated peers. Finally, young adult school leavers are 26% less likely (odds ratio of 0.74) than young adult stayers to use private physicians or private clinics as regular sources of health care in Tennessee.