

The TEDS Report

Data Spotlight

December 14, 2012



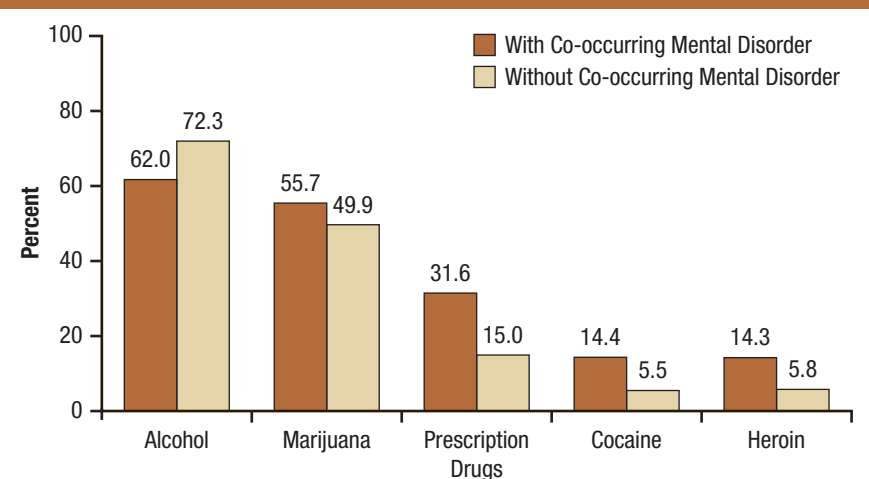
Nearly One Third of College Student Substance Abuse Treatment Admissions with Co-occurring Mental Disorders Abuse Prescription Drugs

A recent study of college students identified links between nonmedical prescription drug use, depressive symptoms, and suicidality, and raised the possibility “that students may be inappropriately self-medicating psychological distress with prescription medications.”¹ The Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS) is a compilation of data on admissions to substance use treatment that can be used to look at college students with mental disorders who have been admitted to treatment for drug abuse. Specifically, TEDS data for 2010 show that across college student substance abuse treatment admissions,² those with a co-occurring mental disorder were more than twice as likely as those without a co-occurring mental disorder to report abuse of prescription drugs³ (31.6 vs. 15.0 percent), cocaine (14.4 vs. 5.5 percent), and heroin (14.3 vs. 5.8 percent) (Figure). They were also less likely to report abuse of alcohol (62.0 vs. 72.3 percent).

Because college student admissions that have a co-occurring mental disorder are more likely to abuse prescription drugs, cocaine, and heroin, they may need to access special services, such as mental health care and pharmacotherapies that can treat and ease withdrawal symptoms from heroin and certain types of prescription drugs, including narcotic pain relievers, benzodiazepines, barbiturates, and sedatives.⁴ Whether they are at home or away at college, students who need to identify treatment facilities in their area that can address substance abuse and/or mental health problems can access the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s online treatment locator at: <http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/>.

1. Zullig, K. J., & Divin, A. L. (2012). The association between non-medical prescription drug use, depressive symptoms, and suicidality among college students. *Addictive Behaviors*, 37(8), 890-899.
2. College student admissions are defined as individuals aged 18 to 24 who were not in the labor force due to being students and who had completed 13 or more years of school. Admissions of students with less than 13 years of education or admissions of individuals in this age group with missing employment/not in labor force information were excluded from the analysis.
3. In this report, *prescription drug abuse* at treatment admission includes reports of abusing drugs in any of the following categories: opiates and synthetics other than heroin and non-prescription methadone (e.g., narcotic pain relievers such as oxycodone or OxyContin®), benzodiazepines (e.g., diazepam or Valium®), other non-benzodiazepine tranquilizers (e.g., zolpidem or Ambien®), barbiturates, and other non-barbiturate sedatives or hypnotics.
4. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2009). *Principles of drug addiction treatment: A research-based guide* (2nd ed.; NIH Publication No. 09-4180). Retrieved from http://www.drugabuse.gov/sites/default/files/podat_0.pdf

College Student Substance Abuse Treatment Admissions, by Selected Substances of Abuse and Co-occurring Mental Disorder: 2010



Note: Percentages may exceed 100 percent because up to three substances of abuse can be reported at admission. Other drugs of abuse (e.g., inhalants) were excluded due to small cell sizes.

Source: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS), 2010, based on data received through October 10, 2011. TEDS is a compilation of data on the demographic characteristics and substance abuse problems of admissions to substance abuse treatment facilities in the United States, primarily facilities that receive public funding. TEDS is one component of the Behavioral Health Services Information System (BHSIS), an integrated data system maintained by the Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, SAMHSA. For more information on the TEDS see <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/DASIS.aspx#TEDS>.

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