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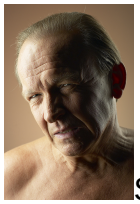
NATIONAL COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG DEPENDENCE, INC.

Substance Abuse Much More Likely in Adults with Mental Illness



Substance dependence or abuse is much more likely to occur in adults with a mental illness, compared with those without mental health problems, according to a new government report.

An estimated 17.5 percent of those with a mental illness, and more than 22 percent of those with a serious mental illness, met the criteria for substance dependence or abuse. In contrast, 5.8 percent of those without a mental illness met the criteria, HealthDay reports.

Two million 12-to-17-year-olds had a major depressive episode in the previous year. These young people were more than twice as likely to use illicit drugs during that year, compared with their peers who did not have a major depressive episode (26 percent vs. 17 percent).

The 2011 National Survey on Drug Use and Health found one in five adults in the United States—45.6 million people—had a mental illness in the past year. Nearly 30 percent of young adults ages 18 to 25 had a mental illness, compared with about 14 percent for those 50 and older.

The survey found 23 percent of women had a mental illness in the previous year, compared with 16 percent of men.

"Although mental illness remains a serious public health issue, increasingly we know that people who experience it can be successfully treated and can live full, productive lives," Pamela S. Hyde, head of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, said in a news release. "Like other medical conditions, such as cardiovascular disease or diabetes, the key to recovery is identifying the problem and taking active measures to treat it as soon as possible."

Alcoholism and drug dependence are complex problems, with many related issues. And, although there is no magic formula to help someone stop his or her drinking or drug use, you are not alone. To find out where and how to get help, click here.