

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."

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, 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 drugs (31.6 vs. 15.0 percent), cocaine (14.4 vs. 5.5 percent), and heroin (14.3 vs. 5.8 percent). 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.

Please [click here](#) for the PDF file to see the full SAMHSA TEDS Report and the bar chart.

For additional information about specific prescription drugs by drug category, street name, how it is used and health risks: [Selected Prescription Drugs With Potential For Abuse](#)