

Drug and Alcohol Use Common Years After Juveniles Released From Detention



Researchers at Northwestern University in Chicago interviewed 1,200 males and more than 650 females, ages 10 to 18, who were being held at a juvenile detention center.

They were interviewed again several times, up to five years later. More than 45 percent of males and almost 30 percent of females had psychiatric disorders.

Alcohol and drug use were the most common and persistent psychiatric disorders, the study found.

While it has been known that psychiatric disorders are common among teenagers in detention, this is the first study to examine whether these disorders persisted in subsequent years, the researchers said.

"These findings demonstrate the need for special programs — especially for substance use disorders — not only while these kids are in corrections but also when they return to the community," lead author Linda Teplin said in a news release. "People think these kids are locked up forever, but the average stay is only two weeks. Obviously, it's better to provide community services than to build correctional facilities. Otherwise, the lack of services perpetuates the revolving door between the community and corrections."

The findings appear in the Archives of General Psychiatry.

To learn more about Alcohol, Drugs and Crime, [click here](#).