

Alcohol Reported as Primary Substance of Abuse in 62% of Veterans' Treatment Admissions



There were nearly 58,000 admissions of veterans to substance abuse treatment facilities in 2010, according to the most recent data from the Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS).

TEDS, a database of treatment admissions to primarily publicly-funded substance abuse treatment facilities, excludes admissions to Veterans Affairs (VA) facilities.

Therefore, the veteran admissions in TEDS represent veterans who chose to seek substance abuse treatment in a non-VA facility.* While alcohol was most likely to be reported as the primary substance of abuse among veterans and nonveterans alike, veterans were much more likely than nonveterans to report alcohol as their primary substance of abuse (62% vs. 42%).

Veterans were less likely than nonveterans to report marijuana (7% vs. 15%) or heroin (8% vs. 16%) as their primary substance of abuse. No other substance besides alcohol was reported by more than 10% of veterans as a primary substance of abuse, suggesting that use prevention, intervention, and treatment programs for military personnel and veterans should focus their resources on alcohol.

SOURCES: Adapted by CESAR from Substance Abuse and Mental Health Data Archive (SAMHDA), online analysis of the concatenated 1992-2010 Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS), based on data received through 10/10/11, conducted 11/14/12