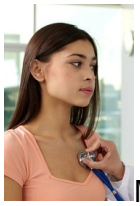
NCADD
NATIONAL COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG DEPENDENCE, INC.

Doctors Often Don’t Ask Teen Patients About Drinking



Many doctors don't ask their teenage patients about their drinking, a new study finds.

A survey of 10th graders found that while more than 80 percent had seen a doctor in the past year, only 54 percent of them were asked about drinking, and 40 percent were advised about the dangers of alcohol.

The survey of more than 2,500 teenagers was conducted by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), *MedicalXpress* reports. Researchers found 34 percent of the teens said they drank alcohol in the past month. In the journal Pediatrics, lead author Ralph W. Hingson, ScD, MPH, reported 26 percent said they had binged, defined as five or more drinks in one sitting for males, and four or more for females.

"Alcohol is by far the drug of choice among youth," NIAAA Acting Director Kenneth R. Warren, PhD, said in a news release. "The findings reported by Dr. Hingson and his colleagues indicate that we must redouble our efforts to help clinicians make alcohol screening a routine part of patient care for young people in the United States."

In 2011, NIAAA and the American Academy of Pediatrics released a two-question alcohol screening tool designed to help pediatricians spot children and adolescents at risk for alcohol-related problems.

The doctor asks about the patient's own drinking, as well as his or her friends' alcohol use. The tool walks the doctor through the steps to take when patients say they or their friends drink, and helps them assess the level of risk for current and future alcohol problems