



YOUNG MALE HEALTH: SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS

BACKGROUND

By the time most American adolescents reach the age of 13 they've stopped seeing a pediatrician – over 80% of all pediatric visits are by children under 13.¹ Less than half of adolescent and young adults have primary care visits within the last year.² Males are less likely than their female counterparts to seek care.^{3,4,5} Females have a relatively seamless transition with age with gynecologists accounting for 23-42% of AYA female preventive visits.⁶ For males, however, there is no similar continuity of care. On the whole, with the exception of episodic school exams, sports physicals and visits to the ER, once they leave the pediatrician's office adolescent and young adult males are left outside of our health care system, a pattern that extends into adulthood.

Yet, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, young males, or males within the age range of 10 to 27, are at higher risk than their female contemporaries for:

- ▶ Certain eating and body disorders
- ▶ Certain sexually transmitted infections, including HIV
- ▶ Violence and trauma, including homicide
- ▶ Abuse of certain substances
- ▶ Certain mental health conditions, including ADHD and autism spectrum disorders
- ▶ Suicide
- ▶ Accidental injury

SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS

- ▶ Nearly one third of American high school students now smoke, vape, drink or use other drugs.⁷
- ▶ A study revealed that 90 percent of Americans who are addicted to tobacco, alcohol or other substances started smoking, drinking or using drugs before they were 18 years old.⁸ The study also found that one-quarter of Americans who began using any addictive substance before age 18 are addicted, compared with one in 25 Americans who started using an addictive substance when they were 21 or older.
- ▶ Young males have higher substance abuse rates than females.
- ▶ Males under 17 drink more heavily than any other population group. Males are more apt to drink alcohol before age 13 than are females, and binge drinking is more prevalent among high school males than females.⁹

- ▶ High school males are more likely to drive a vehicle while intoxicated.
- ▶ They are also more apt to use cocaine, heroin, methamphetamines, ecstasy and hallucinogenic drugs than are females.
- ▶ In 2017, 17.7% of twelfth grade males engaged in prescription drug use without a doctor's prescription or differently than how a doctor told them to use it.¹⁰
- ▶ The most common sources for prescription drugs for 12-to-17-year-olds were getting them free from friends and relatives, physician prescriptions for opioids, and buying stimulants and tranquilizers illegally.
- ▶ In one study male college students were generally more likely to report drug use and abuse than female students.¹¹



SYMPTOMS OF DRUG USE DISORDER INCLUDE:

- ▶ a change in peer group
- ▶ carelessness with grooming
- ▶ decline in academic performance
- ▶ missing classes or skipping school
- ▶ loss of interest in favorite activities
- ▶ changes in eating or sleeping habits
- ▶ deteriorating relationships with family members and friends

COLLEGE AGE MALES

Compared to college females, in 2011 college males were:

- ▶ One and a half times more likely to use amphetamines and cocaine;
- ▶ Nearly twice as likely to use hallucinogens; and
- ▶ Twenty five percent more likely to use any illicit drug.¹²

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- ¹ Bocian AB, Wasserman RC, Slora EJ, Kessel D, Miller RS. Size and age-sex distribution of pediatric practice: a study from Pediatric Research in Office Settings. Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med. 1999.
- ² Rand, Cynthia M, Goldstein, Nicolas P.N. Patterns of Primary Care Physician Visits for US Adolescents in 2014: Implications for Vaccination. Academic Pediatrics. Volume 18, Issue 2, S72 - S78.
- ³ Lau JS, Adams SH, Boscardin WJ, et al. Young Adults' Health Care Utilization and Expenditures Prior to the Affordable Care Act. J Adolesc Health. 2014;54:663-671.
- ⁴ Callahan ST, Cooper WO. Gender and Uninsurance Among Young Adults in the United States. Pediatrics. 2004;113:291-297.
- ⁵ Fortuna RJ, Robbins BW, Haterman JS. Ambulatory Care Among Young Adults in the United States. Ann Intern Med. 2009;151:379-385.
- ⁶ Rand, Cynthia M, Goldstein, Nicolas P.N. Patterns of Primary Care Physician Visits for US Adolescents in 2014: Implications for Vaccination. Academic Pediatrics. Volume 18, Issue 2, S72 - S78.
- ⁷ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance – United States, 2017. 2018.
- ⁸ National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University. New CASA Report Finds Adolescent Substance Use at Epidemic Levels . 2011.
- ⁹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance – United States, 2017. 2018.
- ¹⁰ Ibid
- ¹¹ McCabe, Sean Esteban et al. Race/Ethnicity and Gender Differences in Drug Use and Abuse Among College Students. J Ethn Subst Abuse. 2007.
- ¹² National Institute on Drug Abuse. Principles of Adolescent Substance Use Disorder Treatment: A Research-Based Guide. 2014 Jan. Disorder