



Addiction Prevention

The problem?

About 18 million Americans have alcohol problems; about 5 to 6 million Americans have drug problems.¹ More than half of all adults have a family history of alcoholism or problem drinking.²

Researchers show that kids who start drinking before the age of 15 are four times more likely to become alcoholics by the time they're 21.³

Over 20 million people over the age of 12 reported having used one or more psychotherapeutic drugs (stimulants, sedatives, tranquilizers, and analgesics available through prescription) for non-medical purposes at some time in their lives.⁴

What are the consequences?

One-quarter of all emergency room admissions, one-third of all suicides, and more than half of all homicides and incidents of domestic violence are alcohol-related.⁵

Although there are fewer deaths from alcohol-related causes than from cancer or heart disease, alcohol-related deaths tend to occur at much younger ages.⁶

An estimated 6.6 million children under the age of 18 years live in households with at least one alcoholic parent.⁷

Drug overdose deaths have increased 540% since 1980 and drug-related problems have worsened: Emergency room visits, adolescent drug use, and the spread of disease (particularly AIDS and hepatitis) have also risen substantially and drug-related crime continues at high levels.⁸

Each day 33 more people are infected with HIV due to injection drug use.⁹

70% of AIDS cases among women are drug-related.¹⁰

What is the cost?

Alcohol and drug abuse costs the American economy an estimated \$276 billion per year in lost productivity, health care expenditures, crime, motor vehicle crashes and other conditions.¹¹

Every American adult pays nearly \$1,000 per year for the damages of addiction.¹²

California's share of the national tab is estimated to be more than \$32.7 billion.¹³

What can be done?

By increasing access to care for alcohol abuse, the costly toll on society and the burden it places on families can be reduced.

Successful prevention and treatment leads to reductions in drug use, improves health, improves job performance, reduces involvement with the criminal justice system, reduces family dysfunction and improves quality of life.



Sources:

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- ³ Eisner, Jane, "Today's youth are drowning in liquor ads," San Jose Mercury News (2002).
- ⁴ National Household Survey on Drug Abuse, "Give 'em the Facts: Prescription and Over-the-Counter Drug Abuse." (2002).
- ⁵ "Sobering Facts on the Dangers of Alcohol," NY Newsday, April 24, 2002.
- ⁶ NIAAA, Eighth Special Report, op. cit., p. 16.
- ⁷ NIAAA, Alcohol Alert, No. 9, 7/90, p. 1
- ⁸ Drucker, Dr. Ernest. (1998, Jan./Feb.). Public Health Reports, "Drug Prohibition and Public Health." U.S. Public Health Service. Vol. 114.
- ⁹ Day, Dawn. Health Emergency 1999: The Spread of Drug-Related AIDS and Other Deadly Diseases Among African-Americans and Latinos. (1998). The Dogwood Center, p. 5.
- ¹⁰ "Women & Drug Abuse: You And Your Community", op.cit., p. 7.
- ¹¹ "Substance Abuse: The Nation's Number One Health Problem," Institute for Health Policy, Brandeis University, 2001.
- ¹² The National Drug Control Strategy, The White House, 1997.
- ¹³ The National Institute for Drug Abuse, Little Hoover Commission-Executive Summary, 2003
- ¹⁴ Drug Control Strategy, The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, 1995.