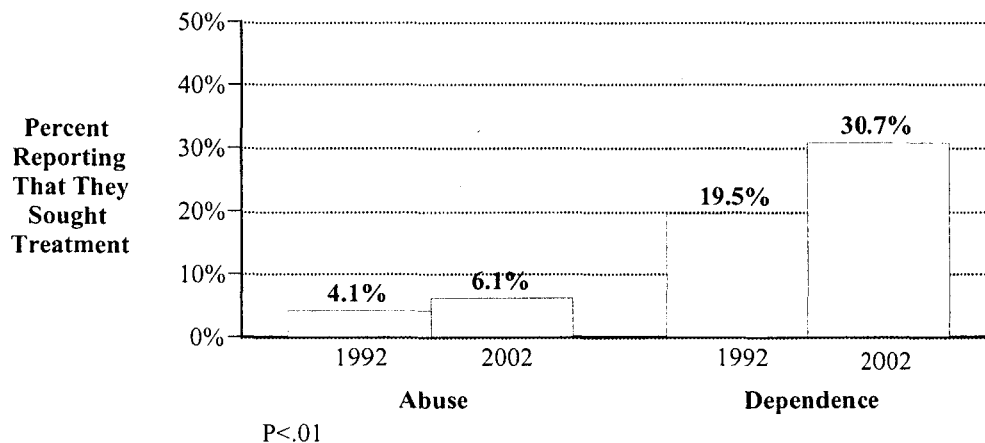


A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research
University of Maryland, College Park

While Drug Treatment-Seeking Has Increased Among U.S. Residents, More Than Two-Thirds Still Do Not Seek Help

The percentage of U.S. residents seeking help for their drug use disorders increased from 1992 to 2002, according to a recent analysis of data from the National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions (NESARC). In 2002 (the most recent year for which data are available), 6.1% of U.S. residents who met the criteria for substance abuse reported that they had sought treatment or help* for their disorder, compared to 4.1% in 1992.** An even greater increase was found for those meeting the criteria for substance dependence—30.7% reported seeking treatment in 2002, compared to 19.5% a decade earlier. The authors note that while these are statistically significant increases, “treatment rates for drug use disorders . . . are substantially lower than corresponding treatment rates of other major psychiatric disorders” (p. 573). Among their suggestions are to focus future research on the “development of instruments to screen, identify, and refer probable abuse and dependence in primary care settings” and to “computerize assessment and referral processes” (p. 573).

Percentage of U.S. Residents with Drug Abuse or Dependence in the Past Year Reporting That They Sought Treatment,* 1992 and 2002**



*Respondents were asked about substance treatment- or help-seeking behaviors in the following settings: self-help groups; family/social services; drug detoxification; inpatient ward of a hospital; outpatient clinic; rehabilitation unit; methadone program; emergency department; halfway house; crisis center; employee assistance program; private physician; psychiatrist, psychologist, or social worker; and counseling with a member of the clergy.

**Data from 1992 are taken from the National Longitudinal Alcohol Epidemiologic Survey (NLAES).

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Compton, W.M.; Thomas, Y.F., Stinson, F.S., and Grant, B.F. “Prevalence, Correlates, Disability, and Comorbidity to DSM-IV Drug Abuse and Dependence in the United States,” *Archives of General Psychiatry* 64(5):566-576.

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