Alcohol

- A recent Gallup Poll found consumption of alcohol was at a 25-year high, with 67 percent of Americans reporting they drink alcoholic beverages. Residents of New England, the far West and Upper Plains states drink the most. Americans are also drinking more wine...an average of 2.3 gallons per person in 2010, up 35 percent since 1994. In the same time period, spirits consumption rose 18 percent, to 1.5 gallons per person per year, while beer drinking dropped 7 percent, to 20.7 gallons per person per year.

- Research presented at the 2011 Associated Professional Sleep Societies meeting in Minneapolis showed that college students who start their classes later in the day are likely to drink more alcohol and binge drink, compared with students who take classes earlier in the day.

- Ignition interlock devices (which require a driver to blow into it to determine if there is alcohol present in their system before they start a vehicle) are usually installed because of a court mandate after a driver has been convicted of driving under the influence. A systematic review of 15 research studies shows that re-arrest for drivers who have had an ignition interlock installed in their vehicle were 67 percent lower than for drivers whose licenses were suspended, but who had no locks installed.

- A study of people admitted for substance abuse treatment for the first time has found they waited an average of 15.6 years to seek help from the time they initially used the substance. The study of 669,000 adults found men waited about three years longer to seek help than women.

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**Tobacco**
- A study of 74 countries by Canadian researchers found that as women acquire improved status, they are more likely to take up smoking. In countries where women are less empowered, such as China, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia, men were five times more likely to smoke than women. In China, an estimated 61 percent of men smoked, versus 4.2 percent of women. By contrast, in countries where women were more empowered, such as Australia, Canada, Sweden and the United States, the researchers found little difference in male and female smoking rates.

- A new report by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention showed that approximately 19.3 percent of adults in the United States smoked in 2010.

- A recent U.S. Navy study concluded that Marines and sailors in Iraq used tobacco (cigars, cigarettes, smokeless tobacco) at twice the rate of other Americans. Forty-five percent of the tobacco users did not use tobacco before joining the military.

**Marijuana**
- A growing percentage of students in the 8th, 10th, and 12th grades are using marijuana on a regular basis, according to the 2010 Monitoring the Future (MTF) survey. Most notably, daily marijuana use increased by more than 10 percent in all three grades since the 2009 survey. The recent rise in marijuana use follows a 10-year period of decline. Interestingly, alcohol use has fallen to the lowest levels in the history of the MTF survey.

- A recent report from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, based on blood, breath, and saliva tests collected on weekends from drivers in 300 locations nationally, found that 16.3% of drivers at night were impaired from legal and illegal drugs. Nine percent of the drivers had detectable traces of marijuana in their system. Law enforcement officials point to the increased use of medical marijuana as part of the problem.
Other Drugs

- The Clinical Psychology Review published an analysis of 27 long-term studies that included a total of 4,100 youth with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and 6,800 without the disorder that were followed from childhood into young adulthood. Children with ADHD were three times more likely to use, abuse or become dependent on substances (e.g. nicotine, marijuana, cocaine, etc.) than children without ADHD.

- Research from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has found the number of deaths from prescription painkillers to have more than tripled in the past decade. More people now die from painkillers than from heroin and cocaine combined.

- For the first time, drugs are causing more deaths than motor vehicle accidents. The rise in drug-related deaths is due in large part to an increase in overdoses from prescription narcotics. An estimated 37,485 Americans died from drug-related causes in 2009, double the rate from 10 years ago. From 2000 to 2008, drug-related deaths more than doubled among teenagers and young adults, and more than tripled among adults ages 50 to 69. The greatest number of drug-related deaths was among people in their 40s.

- The number of newborn babies who have been exposed to prescription painkillers is on the rise. Pregnant women who abuse pain killers are more likely to have babies born with neonatal withdrawal syndrome. In Florida, for example, the number of babies born with withdrawal syndrome rose from 354 in 2006 to 1,374 in 2010.

- Research from the Drug Abuse Warning Network shows emergency room visits due to prescription drug use has doubled in the past five years. In fact, ER visits for prescription drug use have outnumbered ER visits due to illegal drugs for the third year in a row. In 2009, 4.6 million ER visits were drug-related with 45 percent linked to the abuse or misuse of legal and illegal drugs. Almost a third of all visits were due to prescription drug use.

- A study published in the Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine found teens in rural areas were 26 percent more likely than urban adolescents to have abused prescription drugs. Rural adolescents who used prescription drugs non-medically also were more likely to drop out of school, have a history of depression, and/or live in a single-parent household. The researchers found no significant differences between rural, urban, and suburban groups in their use of alcohol and illegal drugs. The University of Kentucky researchers used national data on drug use of 17,872 adolescents ages 12-17.

- A recent study of 12,000 high-school seniors found that 12 percent reported that they used opioid-based prescription drugs for non-medical purposes. Students reported using drugs like hydrocodone, oxycodone, hydromorphone, meperidine, morphine and codeine. Students reported using these drugs to relax, relieve tension, get high, experiment, relieve pain or to have a good time with friends. This study was published in the Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine.
Lower Legal Drinking Age Linked to Higher Risk for Homicide, Suicide in Women

Women who became adults when 18 years old was the legal drinking age in the United States are at a higher long-term risk for homicide and suicide, than women who grew up after the legal drinking age became 21.

Researchers looked at data on 200,000 suicides and 130,000 homicides that occurred between 1990 and 2004. In 38 of the 39 states surveyed, women who grew up when the legal drinking age was below 21 had a 12 percent higher risk for suicide and a 15 percent higher risk of dying from homicide, compared with women who came of age when 21 was the legal drinking age. These trends were not seen among men.

Teens That Drink with Adult Supervision Have More Drinking Problems

Researcher at the University of Washington have found that teens who drink with adult supervision tend to have more drinking-related problems than their peers whose parents don’t allow them to drink. The study found that 45 percent of U.S. teens used alcohol by ninth grade, with 21 percent having experienced harmful consequences resulting from their alcohol use. “These findings challenge the harm-minimization position that supervised alcohol use or early-age alcohol use will reduce the development of adolescent alcohol problems,” the researchers wrote.

RESOURCES

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Alcoholics Anonymous
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