

A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

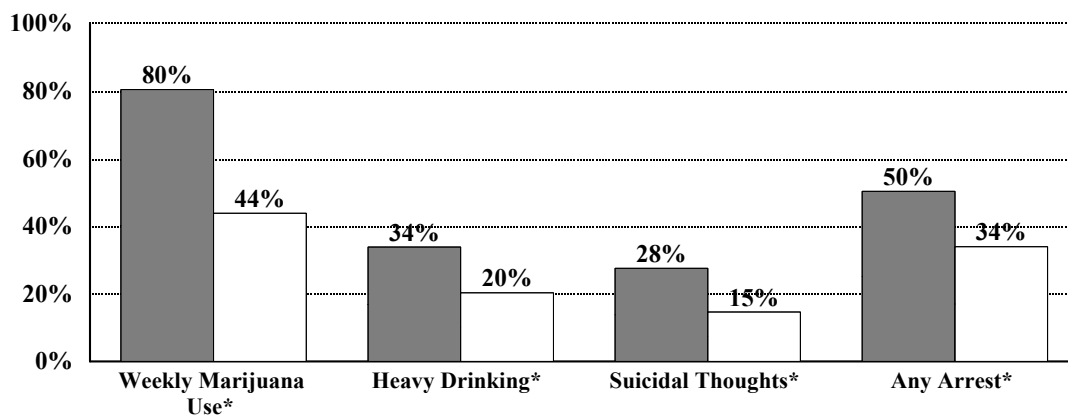
Study of Community-Based Treatment for Youths Finds Behavioral and Psychological Improvements After Treatment

Community-based substance abuse treatment for youth can be effective, according to data from the Drug Abuse Treatment Outcomes Studies for Adolescents (DATOS-A) project, a multi-site study of youth admitted to treatment programs in four major U.S. cities (Pittsburgh, Minneapolis, Chicago, and Portland). Youth drug use, psychological adjustment, school performance, and criminal activity all improved after treatment. For example, the percentage of adolescents reporting weekly marijuana use decreased by almost half from one year before to one year after treatment (from 80% to 44%)¹. While these improvements occurred regardless of the type of treatment program (residential, outpatient drug-free, or short-term inpatient), longer stays in treatment were significantly related to lower drug use. The authors suggest that treatment outcomes among adolescents could be further improved by implementing strategies to improve retention in and completion of drug treatment.

Percentage of Youth Reporting Drug Use, Suicidal Thoughts, and Arrests, One Year Before and After Substance Abuse Treatment²

(N=1,167)

■ Year Before Treatment □ Year After Treatment



* $p < .001$

¹The primary data collected were based on self-reports, which may underestimate actual behavior by youths. Self-reports of drug use were validated with urinalysis for approximately one-fourth of the respondents. Approximately 13% of those who denied using drugs in the previous 30 days tested positive.

²Data were collected from 1,167 youths from four U.S. cities (Pittsburgh, Minneapolis, Chicago, and Portland) who were treated at one of 23 community-based treatment programs participating in the DATOS-A project during the period from 1993 to 1995. The sample include youths who did and did not complete treatment

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Hser Y-I, Grella C.E., Hubbard R.L., Hsieh S-C, Fletcher B.W., Brown B.S., Anglin M.D., "An Evaluation of Drug Treatments for Adolescents in 4 US Cities," *Archives of General Psychiatry* 58:689-695, 2001. For more information, contact Dr. Yih-Ing Hser at yhser@ucla.edu.