

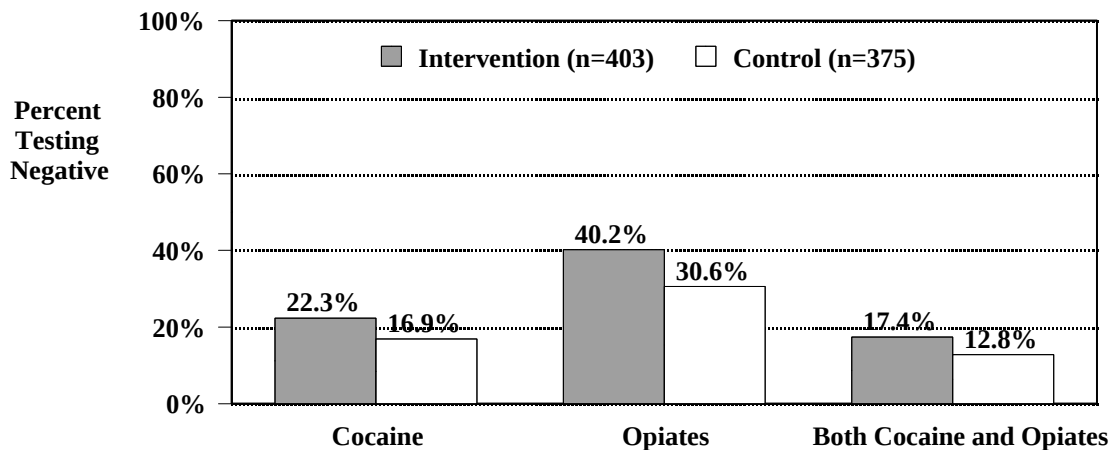
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

***Study Finds Brief Motivational Intervention During Medical Visit
May Promote Abstinence from Cocaine and/or Heroin Use***

A brief motivational intervention during a medical visit decreases cocaine and heroin use, according to a study of patients receiving routine health care at three Boston Medical Center walk-in clinics. Clinic patients who had used cocaine and/or heroin in the last 30 days (based on self-report and hair analysis) were randomly assigned to either 1) an intervention group that received a brief motivational interview, referrals, a written list of treatment sources, and a ten day follow-up phone call or 2) a control group that received only the written list of treatment sources. Six months after enrolling in the study, 22.3% of those who had received the brief motivational intervention tested negative for cocaine use and 40.2% tested negative for opiate use, compared to 16.9% and 30.6%, respectively, of users that did not receive the intervention. The authors conclude that “the aggregate effects of intervention could thus be quite large if screening and brief motivational intervention were instituted universally as normal routine in clinical settings across the country” (p. 58).

**Percentage of Patients Testing Negative for
Cocaine and/or Opiates Six Months After Medical Visit, by Experimental Group**



NOTES: Nearly 24,000 patients were screened between May 1988 and November 2000 at three Boston Medical Center walk-in clinics (urgent care, women's, and homeless). Patients in treatment or protective custody were excluded. The brief motivational intervention was conducted by a substance abuse outreach worker in recovery.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Bernstein, J., Bernstein, E., Tassiopoulos, K., Heeren, T., Levenson, S., Hingson, R. "Brief Motivational Intervention at a Clinic Visit Reduces Cocaine and Heroin Use," *Drug and Alcohol Dependence* 77(1):49-59, 2005.

• 301-405-9770 (voice) • 301-403-8342 (fax) • CESAR@cesar.umd.edu • www.cesar.umd.edu •

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