

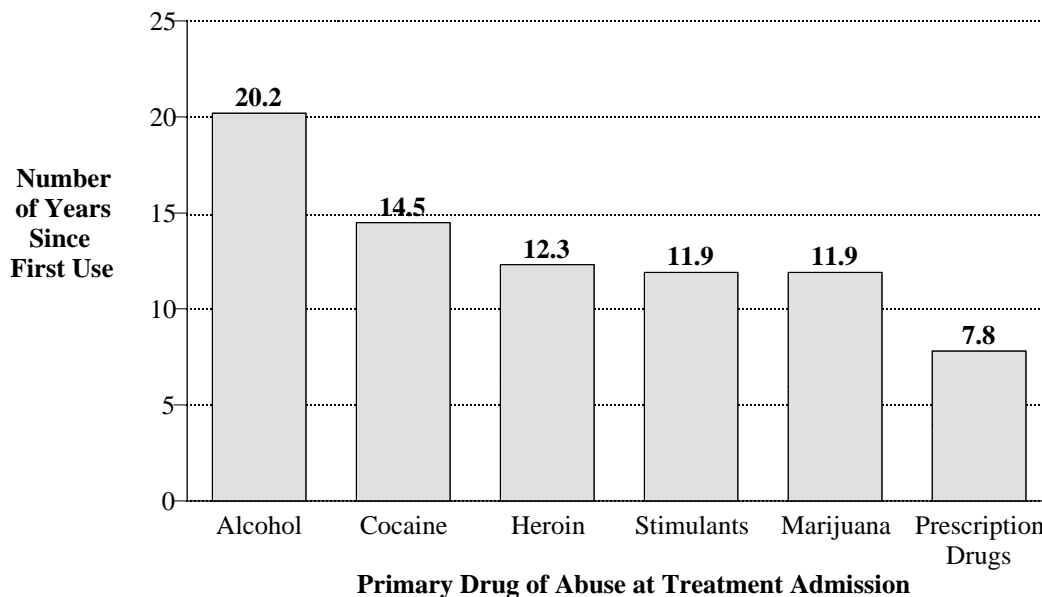
**A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research**

**University of Maryland, College Park**

***National Treatment Data Shows Prescription Drug Users Enter Treatment Sooner Than Users of Other Drugs***

It takes an adult drug user an average of 15.6 years to enter treatment after the first-time use of their primary drug of abuse, according to data from the national Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS). However, there are significant differences in the duration of time between first use and admission into a treatment program depending on the primary drug of abuse. For example, the longest period of use was for alcohol, with an average of 20.2 years between first use and treatment entry. The average durations of use among adult first-time cocaine, heroin, marijuana, and stimulant drug treatment admissions ranged from 12 to 14 years. Prescription drugs had the shortest duration period between first-time use and first entry into a treatment program, at 7.8 years (see data below). According to the authors, the relative short time between first use and treatment admission for prescription drugs “may indicate a high potential for problematic substance abuse patterns to develop quickly. Therefore it is critical that physicians and other healthcare professionals be vigilant in looking for signs of misuse of these drugs that intervention can occur as soon as possible” (p. 3).

**Number of Years Between First Use of Primary Drug of Abuse and Adult First-Time Substance Treatment Admissions, by Primary of Abuse, 2009**



SOURCE: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality (CBHSQ), “Length of Time from First Use to Adult Treatment Admission,” *The TEDS Report*, September 29, 2011. Available online at <http://store.samhsa.gov/product/Length-of-Time-from-First-Use-to-Adult-Treatment-Admission/TEDS11-0929>.