

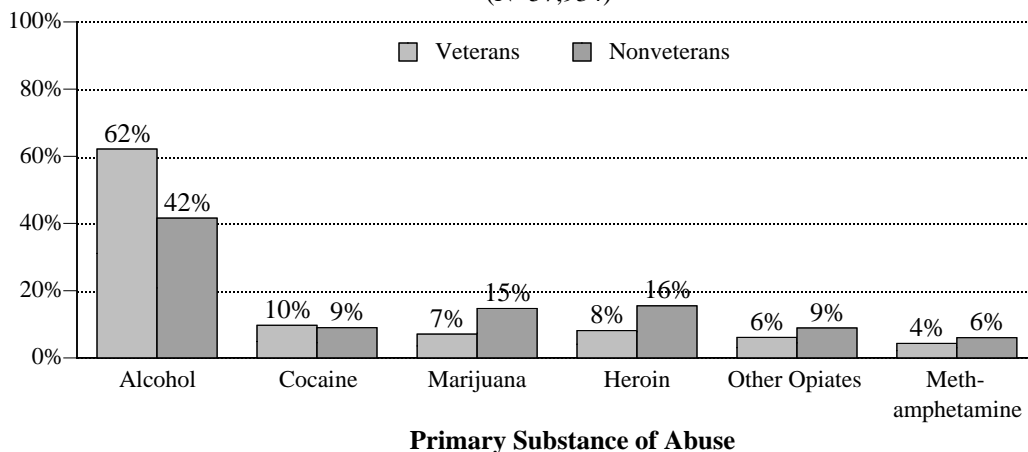
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

Alcohol Reported as Primary Substance of Abuse in 62% of Veterans' Treatment Admissions

There were nearly 58,000 admissions of veterans to substance abuse treatment facilities in 2010, according to the most recent data from the Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS). TEDS, a database of treatment admissions to primarily publicly-funded substance abuse treatment facilities, excludes admissions to Veterans Affairs (VA) facilities. Therefore, the veteran admissions in TEDS represent veterans who chose to seek substance abuse treatment in a non-VA facility.* While alcohol was most likely to be reported as the primary substance of abuse among veterans and nonveterans alike, veterans were much more likely than nonveterans to report alcohol as their primary substance of abuse (62% vs. 42%). Veterans were less likely than nonveterans to report marijuana (7% vs. 15%) or heroin (8% vs. 16%) as their primary substance of abuse. No other substance besides alcohol was reported by more than 10% of veterans as a primary substance of abuse, suggesting that use prevention, intervention, and treatment programs for military personnel and veterans should focus their resources on alcohol.

Primary Substance of Abuse in Treatment Admissions Ages 18 and Older, by Veteran Status, 2010 (N=57,934)



*It is possible that veterans receiving treatment from VA treatment facilities may have a different pattern of primary substances of abuse than those found in TEDS.

NOTES: A veteran is defined by TEDS as a person 16 years or over who has served (even for a short time), but is not now serving, on active duty in the US Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, or Commissioned Corps of the US Public Health Service or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, or who served as a Merchant Marine seaman during World War II. Persons who served in the National Guard or Military Reserves are classified as veterans only if they were ever called or ordered to active duty, not counting the 4-6 months for initial training or yearly summer camps.

SOURCES: Adapted by CESAR from Substance Abuse and Mental Health Data Archive (SAMHDA), online analysis of the concatenated 1992-2010 Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS), based on data received through 10/10/11, conducted 11/14/12 (available online at <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/SAMHDA>); and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, "Half of Substance Abuse Treatment Admissions among Veterans Aged 21 to 39 Involve Alcohol as the Primary Substance of Abuse," *Data Spotlight*, November 8, 2012 (available online at www.samhsa.gov/data/2k12/TEDS2010N/TEDS2010NWeb.pdf).