

A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

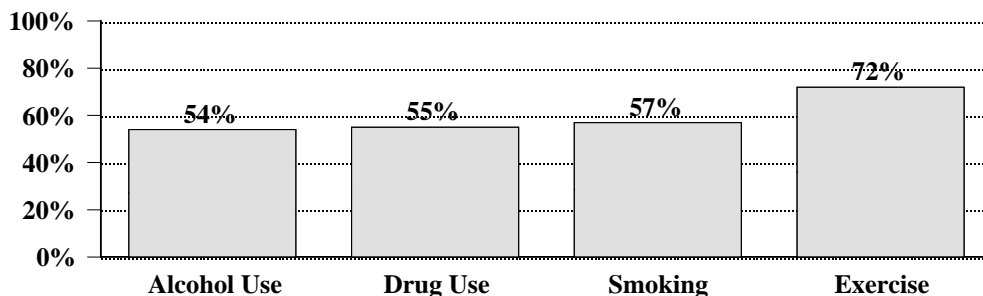
University of Maryland, College Park

Slightly More Than One-Half of Physicians Offer Advice to Teenagers Regarding Drinking, Smoking, or Drug Use at Routine Checkups

More than three-fourths (82%) of U.S. 10th graders saw a doctor in the past year, according to data from a nationally-representative longitudinal study of health behaviors of adolescents and young adults. Of these teenagers, 54% reported being asked about their drinking habits, 55% about drug use, and 57% about smoking, compared to 72% who reported being asked about their physical activity (see figure below). According to the authors, “efforts are warranted to increase the proportion of physicians who follow professional guidelines to screen and counsel adolescents about unhealthy alcohol use and other behaviors that pose health risks” (p. 249). Both the American Medical Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend that health care providers conduct routine annual substance use screening of all adolescents and use brief intervention techniques as indicated.¹

Percentage of U.S. 10th Grade Students Who Had a Routine Checkup in the Last Year and Reported That They Were Asked About Their Alcohol Use, Drug Use, Smoking, and Exercise at Their Most Recent Physical Examination, 2010

(n=2,066)



NOTES: Data are from the NEXT Generation Health Study which used a 3-stage stratified design to select a sample representative of 10th graders enrolled in public, private, and parochial high schools in the U.S. in 2010. Researcher-administered, in-school surveys were completed by 2,524 of the 2,619 students providing both parental consent and assent forms. The 82% (2,066) of students that had a routine checkup in the last year were given separate questions to assess if, at their last checkup, a doctor or nurse asked whether they drink alcohol, smoke, use drugs, or exercise.

¹American Academy of Pediatrics, “Alcohol Use by Youth and Adolescents: A Pediatric Concern,” *Pediatrics* 125(5): 1078-1087, 2010. Available online at <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/125/5/1078.full.html>.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Hingson, R.W., Zha, W., Iannotti, R.J., and Simons-Morton, B., “Physician Advice to Adolescents About Drinking and Other Health Behaviors,” *Pediatrics* 131(2):249-257, 2013. For more information, contact Dr. Hingson at rhingson@mail.nih.gov.

National Alcohol Screening Day is April 11, 2013

National Alcohol Screening Day is an outreach, education, and screening program that raises awareness about alcohol misuse and refers individuals with alcohol problems for further treatment. Take an online screening or find a military, college, or community screening event near you at <http://www.howdoyouscore.org>.