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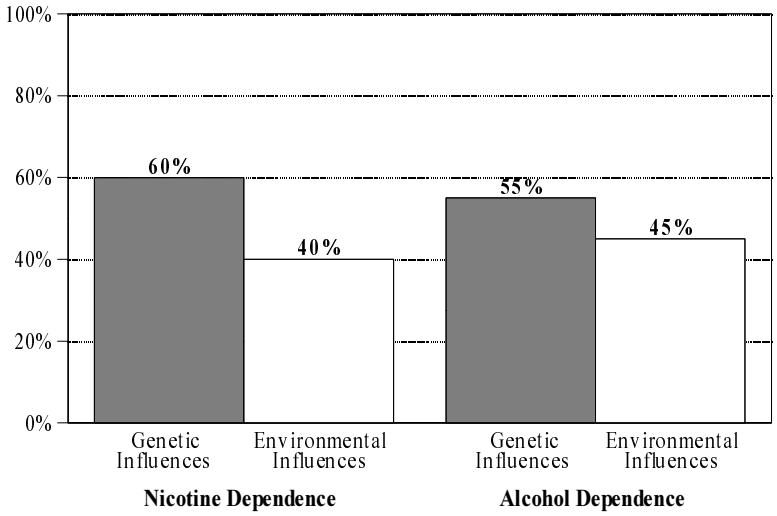
Genetic Influences Contribute Slightly More than the Environment to Risk for Alcohol and Nicotine Dependence

Genetic factors make a stronger contribution to nicotine (60%) and alcohol (55%) dependence than do environmental factors, according to a study of 3,356 male twins. Genetic influences also contribute to the risk of dual dependence on alcohol and tobacco. The study concluded that adolescents who begin to experiment with cigarettes and alcohol are most likely unaware of the "powerful role that genes play in determining risk for becoming an addicted smoker or alcohol dependent." The authors recommend "stressing the common genetic risk for dual addiction to nicotine and alcohol in efforts to prevent smoking and teenage drinking" (p. 660).

Genetic and Environmental Influences on Nicotine and Alcohol Dependence



SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from True W.R., et al., "Common Genetic Vulnerability for Nicotine and Alcohol Dependence in Men," *Archives of General Psychiatry* 56:655-661, July 1999.

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