

Regional Advisory Board (RAB) of Community Anti-Drug Coalitions

February 2021 Newsletter

Did you know?

Almost half (48.8%) of teen drivers who currently use marijuana reported driving after using marijuana (DAUM), which is 17% higher than the rate found in a study of first-year college students in 2012. The prevalence of DAUM was more than double the prevalence of drinking and driving, perhaps reflecting teens' perception that DAUM is less dangerous and more acceptable than driving after using alcohol. A higher prevalence of DAUM among male youths than female youths was found, but the differences were not statistically significant. As U.S. states legalize medical and recreational marijuana use, teens may misperceive the risk of marijuana use and DAUM. More than 1 in 8 teen drivers reported DAUM in the past month. Policies such as zero tolerance of THC while driving and increased age limits for legal marijuana consumption might help alter social norms among teens. Strategies to adopt and enforce policies that change social norms and increase perceived harmfulness offer promise to mitigate the risks associated with DAUM. (getsmartaboutdrugs.gov, 1/8/21)

A two-drug combination, the antidepressant bupropion and the injectable drug naltrexone, may help treat moderate or severe methamphetamine use disorder.

Naltrexone is prescribed for addictions to opioids and alcohol. Among the study participants, almost 14% of those who received the combination treatment presented mostly drug-free urine samples — more than five times greater than participants who received a placebo. "The opioid crisis and resulting overdose deaths in the United States are now well known, but what is less recognized is that there is a growing crisis of overdose deaths involving methamphetamine and other stimulants. However, unlike for opioids, there are currently no approved medications for treating methamphetamine use disorder," National Institute on Drug Abuse Director Nora D. Volkow, M.D., said. "This advance demonstrates that medical treatment for methamphetamine use disorder can help improve patient outcomes." (drugfree.org, 1/14/21)

Having hope may prevent people from engaging in risky behaviors, such as drinking alcohol, taking drugs, over-eating or gambling, a new study finds. Researchers studied a concept called "relative deprivation," or the feeling that other people have things better than you in life. They wanted to find out why only some people experiencing relative deprivation engage in risky behavior, HealthDay reports. They studied volunteers who were questioned at the beginning of the study about their levels of relative deprivation and hope. The participants played gambling games that involved risk-taking and placing bets, with a chance to win money. The researchers found study participants who scored high for hopeful feelings were much less likely to take risks. The study also found people with higher levels of hope had a lower risk of gambling problems, even in those with relative deprivation. The researchers said encouraging hope in people who are unhappy with their lives might protect them against harmful behaviors. (drugfree.org, 1/14/21)

Researchers at IUPUI have utilized a novel approach of identifying risk factors for substance use disorders by age group, as opposed to the more commonplace practice of grouping risk factors by the substances being abused. The study consisted of a literature review of more than 300 articles addressing risk factors for substance use among all age groups. It found that for children younger than 18, those with traumatic childhood experiences, family history of drug use, and peer pressure are most at risk. For adults ages 26-64 family and career circumstances (e.g. high-stress or physically taxing jobs) placed them most at risk. For individuals older than 65, the grief and loss of loved ones, and chronic pain was a significant risk factor. To create interventions that work, the research team suggests screenings and interventions based on age groups. This allows for individualized intervention efforts and helps distribute the responsibility among multiple support persons in the individual's life. (Indiana Department of Health, 1/19/21)

Opioid overdose deaths and opioid use disorder cost the US \$1.02 trillion in 2017. Fatal opioid overdoses and opioid use disorders cost the United States \$1.02 trillion in 2017. This is a substantial increase from the 2015 estimate of \$500 billion. The costs include: health care (\$31.3 billion); opioid use disorder treatment (\$3.5 billion); criminal justice (\$14.8 billion); and lost work productivity (\$100 billion). The majority of the economic burden can be attributed to loss of life due to fatal opioid overdose (\$480.7 billion) and reduced quality of life from opioid use disorder (\$390 billion). The cost estimation helps us understand the impact of the opioid epidemic and helps inform public policy, clinical practice, research, and prevention and response activities. (Indiana Department of Health, 1/26/21)

Vaping could cloud your thoughts. New studies from the University of Rochester find that adults and children can experience mental fog if they vape nicotine. An effect previously noted in animals, the Rochester team is the first to find this connection in humans. Both adults and kids who vape were more likely to report trouble concentrating, remembering, or making decisions than their non-vaping, non-smoking peers. Led by Dongmei Li, the team analyzed data from the National Youth Tobacco Survey and the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. (The Marijuana Report, 1/6/21)

Researchers find nationwide links between vaping and Covid-19. In a parallel study, Dr. Li and her team found that vaping increases one's risk of contracting COVID-19. The study examined data from the Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System. The team's analysis found that states with more vapers had larger numbers of coronavirus cases and more deaths. "Our study supports the possibility that vaping increases the risk," says Dr. Li. (The Marijuana Report, 1/6/21)

Congress extends ban on mailing cigs to include all e-cigs, including marijuana vapes. UCSF Emeritus Professor Stanton Glantz notes that recent legislation Congress passed to fund the government includes a provision that bans sending e-cigarettes through the mail. The law defines e-cigarettes very broadly, includes marijuana vapes, and will go a long way to stop Internet sales of e-cigarettes. (The Marijuana Report, 1/6/21)

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