

## **CESAR FAX: October 24, 2006 (Vol. 15, Issue 42)**

### ***Adults with Earlier Onset of Alcohol Dependence More Likely to Wait to Seek Treatment***

One-fourth of adults who were ever alcohol dependent sought help or treatment for a reason related to their drinking at some point in their life, according to a recent analysis of data from the National Epidemiologic Study of Alcohol Related Conditions (NESARC). Among those who sought help; those with earlier onset of alcohol dependence took longer to do so. Thirty-one percent of persons who became dependent before age 18 waited 10 years or more after the onset of dependence to seek help or treatment, compared to 10% of those who became dependent at age 30 or older (see figure below). Yet adults first dependent at an earlier age were significantly more likely to have had multiple dependence episodes, episodes exceeding one year, and more dependence symptoms (data not shown). The authors conclude that “adolescents need to be screened and counseled about alcohol, and treatment services should be reinforced by programs and policies to delay age of first alcohol dependence” (p. e755).

NOTES: The NESARC consisted of face-to-face interviews with a multistage probability sample of 43,093 adults conducted in 2001 and 2002. This analysis focused on 4,778 persons diagnosed as alcohol dependent ever in their lives using DSM-IV criteria. Of persons ever dependent, 15% were diagnosed before age 18, 32% from ages 18 to 20, 22% from ages 21 to 24, 11% from ages 25 to 29 and 21% at age 30 or older.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Hingson, R.W.; Heeren, T.; and Winter, M.R. “Age of Alcohol-Dependence Onset: Associations with Severity of Dependence and Seeking Treatment,” *Pediatrics* 118(3):e755-e763, 2006. Available online at <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/118/3/e755>.

## **CESAR FAX: October 31, 2006 (Vol. 15, Issue 43)**

### ***Alcohol, Marijuana, Adderall, and Ritalin Perceived to Be Most Easily Available Drugs Misused Among Undergraduates***

After alcohol and marijuana, the prescription stimulants Adderall® and Ritalin® are perceived to be the most easily available drugs misused at a large public mid-Atlantic university, according to a qualitative survey of a consistent panel of undergraduate students. Nearly all high risk\* (91%) and low risk\* (87%) student reporters (SRs) surveyed thought that Adderall was easy to obtain and more than two-thirds of each thought that Ritalin was easy to obtain (see figure below). Respondents believed that students use prescription stimulants non-medically instead of coffee or energy drinks because prescription stimulants are “more effective, last longer, [and have] less calories” (p. 2). According to the authors, these results suggest “that the perceptions of wide-spread availability and use of prescription drugs on campus found in our earlier surveys of high risk SRs are probably applicable to a wider student population” (p. 2).

NOTE: Student reporters' perceptions of drug use are not representative of the general student population. The SDR findings are obtained from a panel of students over sampled to include students very familiar with drug use and those with limited or no exposure to drug use.

SOURCE: Maryland Drug Early Warning System (DEWS), Center for Substance Abuse Research (CESAR), “Perceptions of Prescription Stimulant Misuse Among College Students at High and Low Risk of Drug Use,” *DEWS Investigates*, October 2006. Available online at <http://www.cesar.umd.edu/cesar/pubs/20061001.pdf>. For more information, contact Dr. Eric Wish at [ewish@cesar.umd.edu](mailto:ewish@cesar.umd.edu). \*High risk students were those who reported drug use or knowledge about drug use. Low risk students were those who reported limited or no drug use.