



Youths Who Report Inhalant Use Also Tend to Engage in Other Problem Behaviors or Report Involvement in Public Systems

Results from a recent study that analyzed combined data from both the 2000 and 2001 National Household Surveys on Drug Abuse found that among adolescents aged 12 to 17 (N = 36,859), 9 percent (n = 3,332) reported having ever used inhalants in their lifetime. This represents approximately two million adolescents in this age range annually. Inhalant use was significantly associated with involvement in public systems or other problem behaviors. For example, 21.5 percent of adolescents who reported a history of incarceration had also used inhalants at least once; of those who did not report a history of incarceration, only 8.1 percent had used inhalants. Approximately 16 percent of youth who reported a history of participation in mental health treatment had used inhalants compared to 7.3 percent of inhalant users that did not utilize mental health services. Approximately 16 percent of youth who had ever used inhalants also reported a history of foster care placement compared with 8.6 percent of inhalant users that did not report a history of foster care placement. Investigators concluded that adolescents with a history of inhalant use comprised a subgroup of highly troubled youths with multiple vulnerabilities.

Lifetime Prevalence of Inhalant Use Among Adolescents Aged 12 - 17 (N=36,859)

Characteristics	Total Sample	Number that also Used Inhalants	% of Total Sample that also Used Inhalants
History of incarceration			
Yes	1,820	391	21.5%
No	35,039	2,838	8.1%
Mental health service utilization			
Yes	6,111	990	16.2%
No	30,748	2,245	7.3%
History of foster care placement			
Yes	945	149	15.8%
No	35,914	3,089	8.6%
Number of delinquent behaviors			
None	25,561	1,355	5.3%
1-2	9,413	1,346	14.3%
3 or more	1,885	549	29.1%
Lifetime alcohol use			
Yes	15,640	2,534	16.2%
No	21,219	700	3.3%
Lifetime use of other drugs			
None	27,912	1,172	4.2%
1	5,406	714	13.2%
2	1,769	481	27.2%
3 or more	1,772	863	48.7%

Source: Adapted by TASC from Wu, L.T., Pilowsky, D.J., and Schlenger, W.E. (2004). Inhalant abuse and dependence among adolescents in the United States. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 43(10),1206-1214.

Prepared by TASC, Inc. TASC is an independent, statewide, nonprofit agency that provides case management for clients who are mandated or referred to substance abuse treatment by public systems (e.g. corrections, criminal justice, child welfare, welfare to work). TASC serves approximately 30,000 clients in Illinois each year. For more information visit www.tasc.org.

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