

Substance Abuse Issues in Alabama: Scope, Drugs of Abuse, Signs and Symptoms, Treatment Options

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Faculty

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Demographics of Alabama

- **Population: 4,599,030**
- **Race/ethnicity**
 - **70.4% White**
 - **26.3% Black**
 - **2.4% Hispanic/Latino origin (any race)**
 - **1.0% Asian**

Demographics of Alabama

- **0.04% American Indian**
- **0.01% Native Hawaiian/ other Pacific Islander**

Scope of the Substance Abuse Problem in Alabama

- **2008 drug abuse violations (includes illegal sales, possession, manufacturing, use, cultivation, etc. of illegal narcotic and non-narcotic drugs)**
 - **8,346 citizens were arrested for drug violations**
 - **9% were were for sales**
 - **91% were for possession**

Scope of the Substance Abuse Problem in Alabama

- **94% of these arrests were adults**
 - **6% were juveniles**
- **41% of these arrests were white**
 - **59% were black or of other ethnic origin**

Scope of the Substance Abuse Problem in Alabama

2008 Arrests for Sales: Adult & Juvenile

		Opium/Cocaine		Marijuana		Synthetic Drugs		Other	
Race/Sex		Adult	Juvenile	Adult	Juvenile	Adult	Juvenile	Adult	Juvenile
White	M	82	1	73	3	64	3	425	3
White	F	60	2	23	1	30	5	184	1
Black	M	403	6	129	1	77	1	61	3
Black	F	59	0	14	0	7	0	12	0
Other	M	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	F	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total:		606	9	239	5	178	9	682	7
Grand Total:		615		244		187		689	

Scope of the Substance Abuse Problem in Alabama

2008 Arrests for Possession: Adult & Juvenile

		Opium/Cocaine		Marijuana		Synthetic Drugs		Other	
Race/Sex		Adult	Juvenile	Adult	Juvenile	Adult	Juvenile	Adult	Juvenile
White	M	976	11	2499	285	525	14	425	3
White	F	535	6	642	68	296	8	184	1
Black	M	2631	92	5360	452	181	9	61	3
Black	F	361	7	600	27	47	1	12	0
Other	M	10	0	23	3	3	0	0	0
Other	F	2	0	6	0	0	0	0	0
Total:		4515	116	9130	835	1052	9	682	7
Grand Total:		4631		9965		1084		931	

Scope of the Substance Abuse Problem in Alabama

- The number of methamphetamine laboratory incidents reported by the DEA and state and local authorities decreased from a high of 404 in 2004 to 193 in 2006
- This is directly due to legislation that limited availability of over-the-counter pseudoephedrine sales in Alabama

Scope of the Substance Abuse Problem in Alabama

Year	Meth Lab Incidents
2002	261
2003	344
2004	404
2005	276
2006	193

Types of Drugs Abused in Alabama

- Alcohol
 - Belongs to the class of drugs known as sedative-hypnotics
 - Other drugs in this category include benzodiazepines
 - Valium, Ativan, Librium, and Xanax

Types of Drugs Abused in Alabama

- By far the most abused intoxicating drug in Alabama, due to the fact that it is legally-sanctioned under certain circumstances, and its use is generally socially accepted

Alcohol and its Legal Ramifications in Alabama

- In 2008
 - 34,785 citizens were arrested for alcohol violations
 - 16,337 were arrested for DUI
 - 99% age 18 or over
 - 80% DUI arrests were male
 - 77% white, 23% black or other ethnic origin

Types of Illicit Drugs Abused in Alabama

- Stimulants
 - Methamphetamine generally preferred by white Anglo-Americans
 - Methamphetamine abuse surpasses cocaine abuse state wide
 - Cocaine/crack generally preferred by African-Americans

Types of Illicit Drugs Abused in Alabama

- Narcotic Analgesics (Opioids)
 - Heroin
 - Law enforcement reports an increase in the prevalence of heroin in Alabama
 - This data is substantiated by an increase in the number of patients admitted into treatment for heroin use

Types of Illicit Drugs Abused in Alabama

- Pharmaceutical narcotics
 - Hydrocodone, Oxycontin, and Vicoden were the most commonly abused in 2005, the most recent year data was available

Types of Illicit Drugs Abused in Alabama

- Marijuana
 - The most abused illicit drug in Alabama
 - Production is declining in the state, while trafficking into the state is increasing

Types of Illicit Drugs Abused in Alabama

- Arrest data over the last few years indicates an increase in street dealing and the size of the loads seized, particularly in the Huntsville area

Types of Illicit Drugs Abused in Alabama

- Club drugs
 - Distribution and use of club drugs, including Ecstasy, GHB, LSD, and MDMA are widely available in Alabama
 - Most commonly found around college campuses
 - Users are primarily white

What is Addiction?

- The term “addiction” is a common part of everyone’s vocabulary
- How often have you heard someone say
 - “I love it so much I must be addicted to it”
 - “I’m addicted to chocolate”

What is Addiction?

- But the word *addiction*, when used this way is unscientific
 - People that drink a lot and lose their normal behavioral characteristics are called “*drunks*”
 - People that smoke marijuana are called “*pot heads*”
 - People that use heroin or other narcotics are called “*junkies*”

Addiction: A Vague Term

- Scientific literature is filled with attempts by researchers to define the word “addiction,” but popular culture and “pop” psychologists have misused the term so much that many people have an inaccurate understanding of what it is

Addiction: A Vague Term

- Definition
 - “Addiction is a primary, chronic, neurobiological disease, with genetic, psychosocial, and environmental factors. It is characterized by behaviors that include one of the following: impaired control over drug use, compulsive drug use, continued use despite harm, and craving.”

- American Society of Medicine, American Pain Society, American Academy of Pain Medicine

A Better Definition for Addiction

- A *bio-psycho-social* (and many people believe *spiritual*) disorder that is characterized by
 - Compulsive use of the drug (*behavioral*)
 - *Obsession and preoccupation* with the drug (psychological)

Signs and Symptoms of Substance Abuse

- DSM IV criteria for Substance Abuse Disorder
- Defined as a maladaptive pattern of substance use leading to clinically significant impairment or distress as evidenced by one (or more) of the following occurring with a 12-month period

Signs and Symptoms of Substance Abuse

- Recurrent substance use resulting in a failure to fulfill major role obligations at work, school, or home
 - Repeated absences or poor work performance related to substance use
 - Substance-related absences, suspensions, or expulsions from school

Signs and Symptoms of Substance Abuse

- Neglect of children or household
- Recurrent substance use in situations in which it is inherently hazardous
 - Driving a motor vehicle or operating a machine

Signs and Symptoms of Substance Abuse

- Recurrent substance use-related legal problems
 - Arrest for simple possession or public intoxication

Signs and Symptoms of Substance Abuse

- Continued substance use despite having persistent or recurring social interpersonal problems caused or exacerbated by the effects of the substance
 - Arguments with spouse about consequences of intoxication or physical fights

Signs and Symptoms of Substance Abuse

- NOTE!
 - The symptoms for abuse have never met the criteria for dependence for this class of substance. According to the DSM IV, a person can be abusing or dependent on a substance, but not both at the same time.

Signs and Symptoms of Substance Abuse

- DSM IV criteria for Substance Dependency Disorder
- Defined as a maladaptive pattern of substance use leading to clinically significant impairment or distress as evidenced by three (or more) of the following occurring with a 12-month period

Signs and Symptoms of Substance Abuse

- Tolerance as defined by either of the following
 - A need for markedly increased amounts of the substance to achieve intoxication or the desired effect
 - A markedly *diminished* effect with continued use of the same amount of the substance

Signs and Symptoms of Substance Abuse

- Withdrawal, as manifested by either one of the following
 - The characteristic withdrawal syndrome for the substance
 - The same (or closely related) substance is taken to avoid withdrawal symptoms

Signs and Symptoms of Substance Abuse

- The substance is taken in larger amounts, or for longer periods of time than intended
- There is a persistent desire or unsuccessful efforts to cut down on or control substance use

Signs and Symptoms of Substance Abuse

- A great deal of time spent in activities necessary to obtain the substance, use the substance, or recover from the effects of using the substance
- Important social, occupational, or recreational activities given up or reduced because of substance use

Signs and Symptoms of Substance Abuse

- The substance use is continued despite knowledge of having a persistent physical or psychological problem that is likely to have been caused or exacerbated by the substance
 - Current cocaine use despite recognition of cocaine-induced depression

Signs and Symptoms of Substance Abuse

- **Continued drinking despite the recognition that doing so will worsen an ulcer**