

# The DASIS Report

April 26, 2002

## New and Repeat Admissions to Substance Abuse Treatment

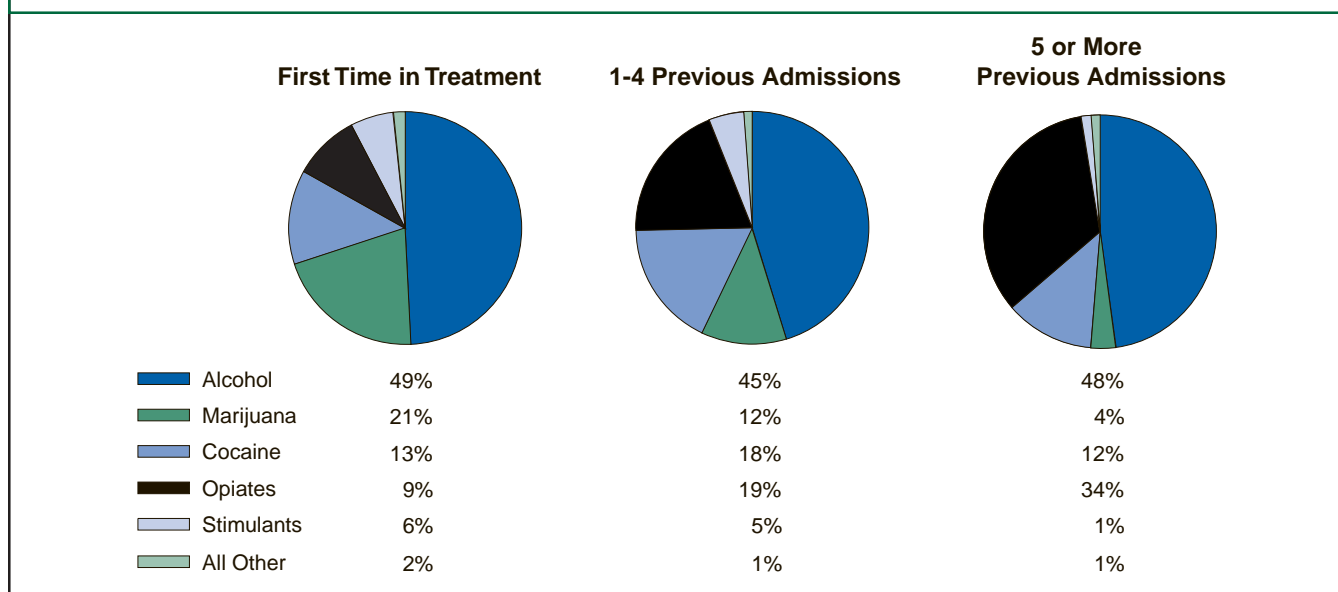
### In Brief

- In 1999, about 40 percent of substance abuse treatment admissions were first treatment episodes and 60 percent were repeat treatment episodes
- Alcohol accounted for about half of new and repeat admissions
- Abuse of opiates was more common among repeat admissions than new admissions
- Age at first use of the primary substance varied little among new and repeat treatment admissions

**R**elapse to substance use after a period of abstinence is a common pattern among alcoholics and drug abusers. Many substance abusers are readmitted to treatment multiple times before they are able to achieve long-term abstinence.

The Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS) collects data primarily on the 1.6 million annual admissions to substance abuse treatment facilities that receive some public funds. TEDS records represent admissions rather than individuals; a person may be admitted to treatment more than once in a given time period. TEDS data include the number of prior treatment episodes and the age at first use of the primary substance (or first alcohol intoxication).

**Figure 1. Primary Substance of Abuse among First-Time Admissions and Repeat Admissions: 1999**



Source: 1999 SAMHSA Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS).

This report compares first-time, or new, treatment admissions with readmissions of persons admitted to treatment 1 to 4 times, and 5 or more times, before the current episode.

### Number of Prior Treatment Episodes

In 1999, more than 40 percent of treatment admissions (some 660,000 admissions) were first treatment episodes (data not shown). More than 45 percent (about 730,000 admissions) were readmissions of people who had been in treatment 1 to 4 times previously. Thirteen percent, or some 200,000, had been in treatment 5 or more times before the current episode.

### Primary Substance

Alcohol accounted for almost half of all 1999 new and repeat admissions (Figure 1). The proportion of admissions for opiates was greater with more treatment episodes; 9 percent of new treatment admissions were for opiates compared with 34 percent for those admitted to treatment 5 or more times before. The proportion of admissions for marijuana decreased as the number of treatment episodes increased. The proportion of admissions for cocaine was fairly constant among new and repeat admissions.

### Age at Admission

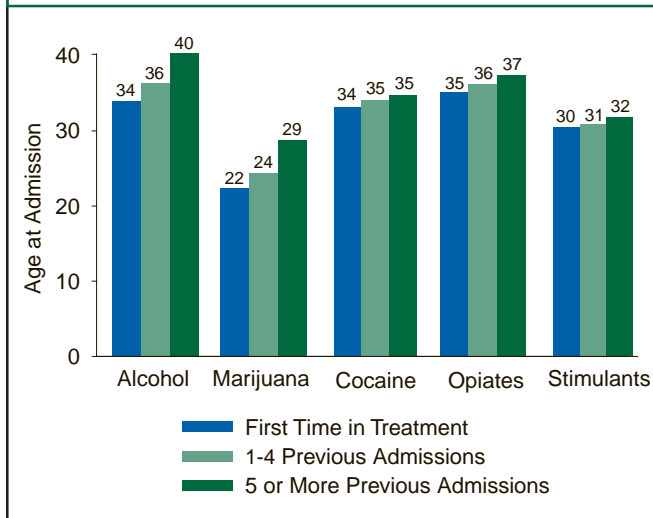
There was a strong association between age and number of prior treatment episodes for all primary substances in 1999 (Figure 2). The association was most marked for alcohol and marijuana.

For new and repeat admissions, the average age at admission for alcohol, cocaine, and opiates was between 35 and 40 years old, and it was 30 years old for stimulants. The average age for first-time admissions for marijuana was 22 years of age compared with 29 years for those admitted 5 or more times previously.

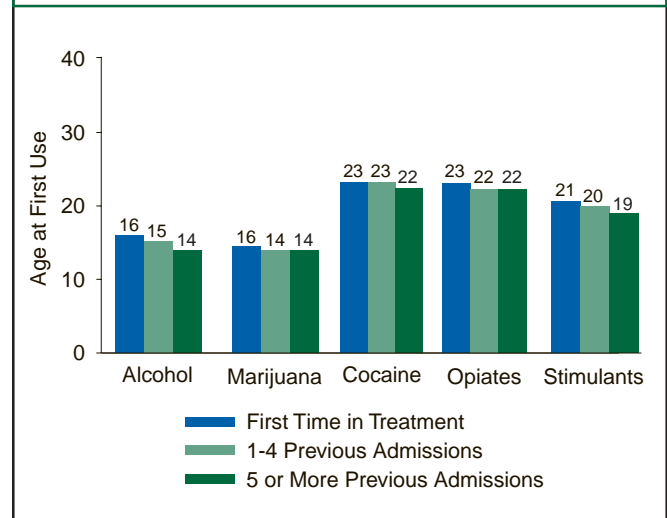
### Age at First Use

There was little difference in the age at which use of the primary substance began (or first alcohol intoxication occurred) among first-time and repeat 1999 treatment admissions (Figure 3). However, TEDS data indicate that persons readmitted to treatment after 5 or more previous admissions first used the problem substance 6 months to a year earlier than first-time admissions.

**Figure 2. Average Age at Admission among First-Time Admissions and Repeat Admissions, by Primary Substance: 1999**



**Figure 3. Average Age at First Use or First Intoxication among First-Time Admissions and Repeat Admissions, by Primary Substance: 1999**



## Duration of Use

In 1999, the average duration of use of the primary substance was longer among those readmitted to treatment than for first-time admissions (Figure 4).

There was considerable variation in the average duration of use of different substances

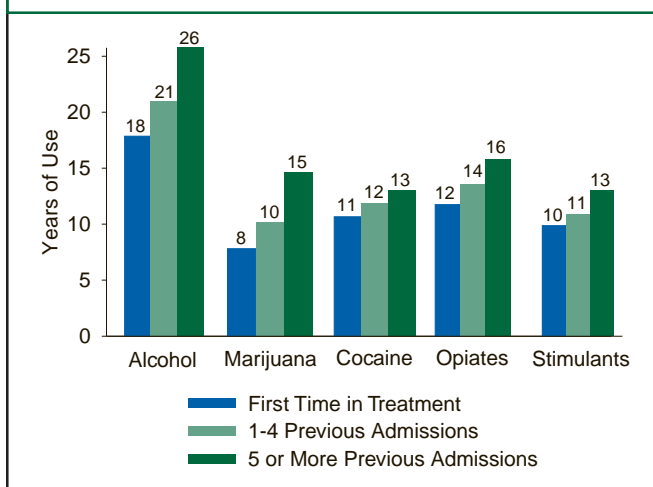
before first entering treatment among 1999 admissions, ranging from 8 years for marijuana to 18 years for alcohol.

## Source of Referral

The criminal justice system accounted for a high proportion (47 percent) of first-time treat-

ment admissions in 1999, but it was less important as a referral source among readmissions (data not shown). The proportion of criminal justice referrals was 34 percent among readmissions of persons admitted for treatment 1 to 4 times and 12 percent among readmissions of persons admitted 5 or more times.

**Figure 4. Average Duration of Use among First-Time Admissions and Repeat Admissions, by Primary Substance: 1999**



The Drug and Alcohol Services Information System (DASIS) is an integrated data system maintained by the Office of Applied Studies, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). One component of DASIS is the Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS). TEDS is a compilation of data on the demographic characteristics and substance abuse problems of those admitted for substance abuse treatment. The information comes primarily from facilities that receive some public funding. Information on treatment admissions is routinely collected by State administrative systems and then submitted to SAMHSA in a standard format. Approximately 1.6 million records are included in TEDS each year. TEDS records represent admissions rather than individuals, as a person may be admitted to treatment more than once.

The DASIS Report is prepared by the Office of Applied Studies, SAMHSA; Synectics for Management Decisions, Inc., Arlington, Virginia; and RTI, Research Triangle Park, North Carolina.

Information and data for this issue are based on data reported to TEDS through April 16, 2001.

Access the latest TEDS reports at:  
[www.DrugAbuseStatistics.SAMHSA.gov/](http://www.DrugAbuseStatistics.SAMHSA.gov/)

Access the latest TEDS public use files at:  
[www.icpsr.umich.edu/SAMHDA/teds.html](http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/SAMHDA/teds.html)



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