

# The DASIS Report

March 25, 2005

## Polydrug Admissions: 2002

**P**olydrug abuse (abuse of more than one substance) is common among alcohol and drug users. The Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS) provides information on the primary, secondary, and

tertiary substances of abuse reported by persons admitted to treatment in publicly funded facilities.<sup>1</sup> Among the 1.9 million TEDS admissions in 2002, polydrug abuse was more common than abuse of a single substance.<sup>2</sup>

### In Brief

- Among polydrug admissions, alcohol was the most common substance reported (76 percent)
- Over half of all admissions to substance abuse treatment reported the use of multiple substances (polydrug abuse)
- Younger admissions were more likely to report polydrug abuse than older admissions

### Substance of Abuse

Among polydrug<sup>3</sup> admissions, alcohol was the most common substance reported (76 percent). Marijuana was the second most commonly reported substance (55 percent), followed by cocaine (48 percent), opiates (27 percent), and other drugs (26 percent).

### Age

Over half (56 percent) of all admissions to treatment in publicly funded facilities in 2002 reported more than one substance of abuse (Table 1). Younger admissions were more likely to report polydrug abuse than older

admissions: 65 percent of admissions younger than 20 years old reported polydrug abuse, but only 41 percent of admissions aged 45 or older reported polydrug abuse. The largest drop in polydrug abuse occurred between admissions aged 40 to 44 (53 percent reported abuse of more than one substance) and those aged 45 or older (41 percent) reported abuse of more than one substance.

### Substance of Abuse by Age

Polydrug admissions showed varying patterns of substance abuse across age groups. Fifty-four percent of admissions younger than 20 years old reported polydrug abuse involving alcohol, while only 31 percent of admissions 45 or older reported polydrug abuse involving alcohol (Figure 1). Overall, abuse of alcohol with another substance decreased, while abuse of alcohol alone increased, with age.

Polydrug admissions involving marijuana were more likely to be reported by younger admissions (60 percent of admissions younger than 20) (Figure 2). This number decreased with age so that, among admissions 45 or older, only 13 percent reported polydrug abuse involving marijuana. Marijuana reported as a single substance of abuse or as part of a polydrug admission dropped sharply as age increased.

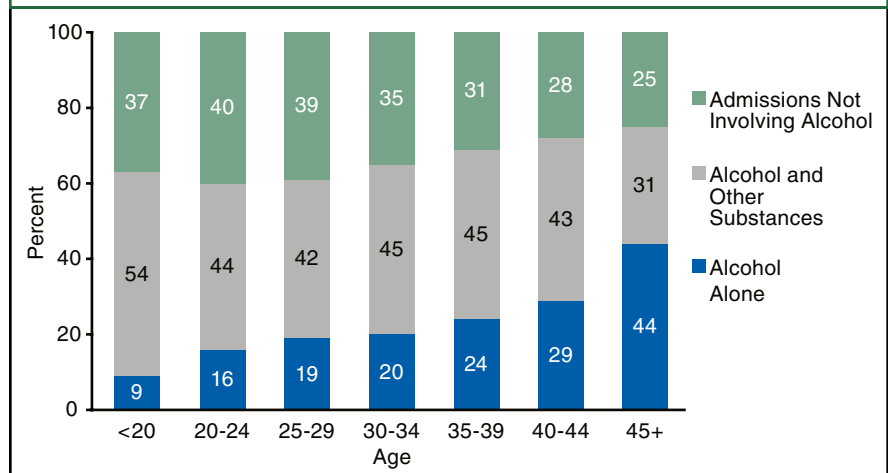
Admissions involving cocaine polydrug abuse peaked between ages 35 and 39 (37 percent) (Figure 3), increasing from 10 percent of those younger than 20 and then decreasing to 24 percent for those older than 45.

**Table 1. Admissions Reporting Polydrug Abuse, by Age Group: 2002**

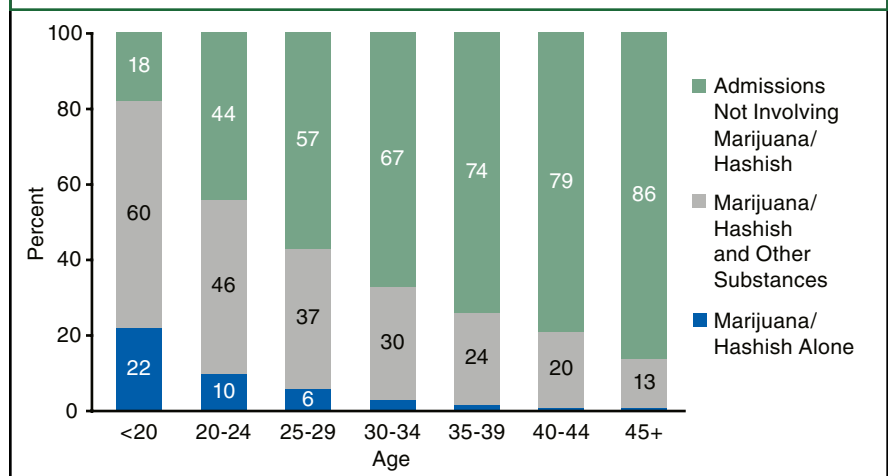
Age Group	Number of Admissions (In Thousands)	Percent Reporting Poludrug Use
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,819</b>	<b>56%</b>
Younger than 20 Years	220	65%
20 to 24 Years	236	62%
25 to 29 Years	206	60%
30 to 34 Years	252	61%
35 to 39 Years	296	58%
40 to 44 Years	274	53%
45 Years or Older	335	41%

Source: 2002 SAMHSA Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS).

**Figure 1. Abuse of Alcohol Among All Admissions, by Age Group: 2002**



**Figure 2. Abuse of Marijuana/Hashish Among All Admissions, by Age Group: 2002**



Polydrug abuse involving opiates was relatively stable across most age groups (Figure 4). Among admissions aged 25 or older, about 17 percent reported opiates in combination with other substances.

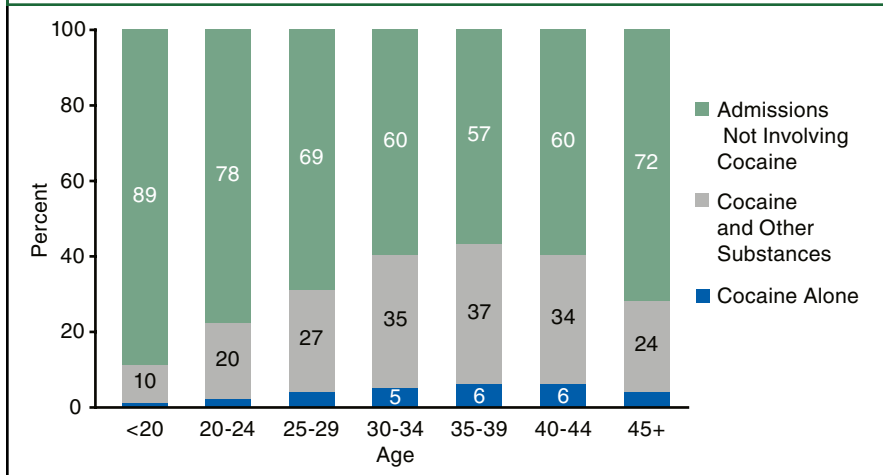
### Prior Treatment

Polydrug admissions were more likely to have had five or more prior treatment admissions compared with single substance admissions (12 vs. 10 percent) and also more likely to have had one to four prior treatment admissions (48 vs. 42 percent). Accordingly, they were less likely to have never been in treatment before (40 vs. 48 percent).

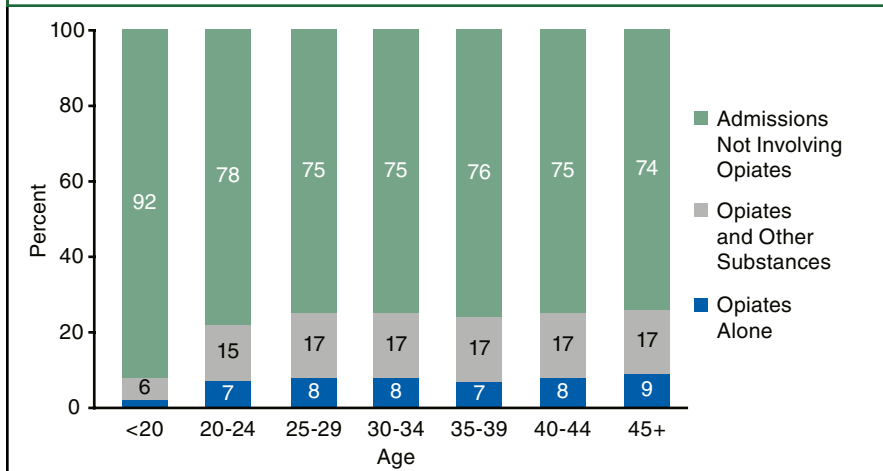
### End Notes

- <sup>1</sup> The *primary substance of abuse* is the main substance reported at the time of admission. Secondary and tertiary substances are other substances of abuse also reported at the time of admission.
- <sup>2</sup> This report examines treatment admissions for single and multiple substances of abuse (referred to as polydrug abuse). However, it should be noted that TEDS data cannot distinguish between admissions using multiple drugs simultaneously and admissions using multiple drugs at separate times.
- <sup>3</sup> Polydrug abuse is defined as admissions reporting more than one substance of abuse.

**Figure 3. Abuse of Cocaine Among All Admissions, by Age Group: 2002**



**Figure 4. Abuse of Opiates Among All Admissions, by Age Group: 2002**



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. TEDS records represent admissions rather than individuals, as a person may be admitted to treatment more than once. State admission data are reported to TEDS by the Single State Agencies (SSAs) for substance abuse treatment. There are significant differences among State data collection systems. Sources of State variation include completeness of reporting, facilities reporting TEDS data, clients included, and treatment resources available. See the annual TEDS reports for details. Approximately 1.9 million records are included in TEDS each year.

The *DASIS Report* is prepared by the Office of Applied Studies, SAMHSA; Synectics for Management Decisions, Inc., Arlington, Virginia; and by RTI International in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina (RTI International is a trade name of Research Triangle Institute).

**Information and data for this issue are based on data reported to TEDS through March 1, 2004.**

Access the latest TEDS reports at: <http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/dasis.htm>  
 Access the latest TEDS public use files at: <http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/SAMHDA.htm>  
 Other substance abuse reports are available at: <http://www.oas.samhsa.gov>



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