

# The DASIS Report

May 11, 2004

## Older Adults in Substance Abuse Treatment: 2001

### In Brief

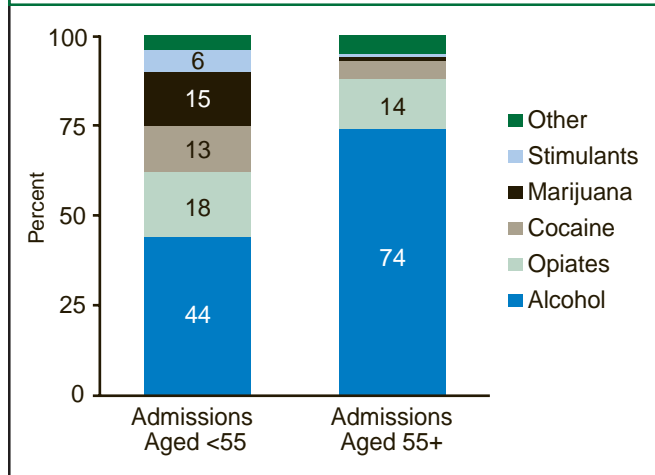
- In 2001, there were 58,000 admissions aged 55 or older, about 3 percent of all substance abuse treatment admissions
- Alcohol was reported as the primary substance of abuse more frequently among admissions 55 or older than among younger admissions (74 vs. 44 percent)
- Abuse of alcohol alone, with no secondary drug abuse, was reported by nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of older admissions

This report examines substance abuse treatment admissions aged 55 or older in 2001, and compares them with younger admissions. In 2001, there were 58,000 admissions aged 55 or older among the 1.7 million substance abuse treatment admissions in the Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS). While the number of admissions aged 55 or older has increased over the years, the proportion of admissions aged 55 or older has remained stable at 3 percent of all admissions.<sup>1</sup>

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the number of Americans older than 55 is increasing—from 59 million in 2000 to a projected 74 million in 2010.<sup>2</sup> Adults older than 55 will constitute 25 percent of the U.S. population in 2010, up from 21 percent in 2000.

TEDS is an annual compilation of data on the demographic characteristics and substance abuse problems of substance abuse treatment admissions. The information comes primarily from facilities that receive some public funding. TEDS records represent admissions

**Figure 1. All Admissions, by Age Group and Primary Substance: 2001**



Source: 2001 SAMHSA Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS).

**Table 1. All Admissions, by Age Group, Sex, and Race/Ethnicity: 2001**

	Age <55 Percent	Age 55+ Percent
Male	70	80
Female	30	20
White	59	61
Black	24	23
Hispanic	12	11
American Indian/Alaska Native	2	3
Asian/Pacific Islander	1	1
Other	2	1
All	100	100

rather than individuals, as a person may be admitted to treatment more than once.

### Primary Substance of Abuse

Alcohol was more frequently reported as the primary substance of abuse<sup>3</sup> among admissions aged 55 or older than among younger admissions (74 vs. 44 percent) (Figure 1). Cocaine (5 vs. 13 percent) and marijuana (1 vs. 15 percent) were reported as the primary substance of abuse less frequently among older admissions than among younger admissions.

Abuse of alcohol alone, with no secondary drug abuse, was reported by nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of older admissions while only one-quarter (23 percent) of admissions younger than 55 years old reported abuse of alcohol alone.

### Demographics

Admissions aged 55 or older differed little from younger admissions in racial/ethnic composition. Both age groups were about 60 percent White, 24 percent Black, and 12 percent Hispanic (Table 1).

There was a higher proportion of males among admissions aged 55 or older (80 percent) than among admissions younger than 55 (70 percent).

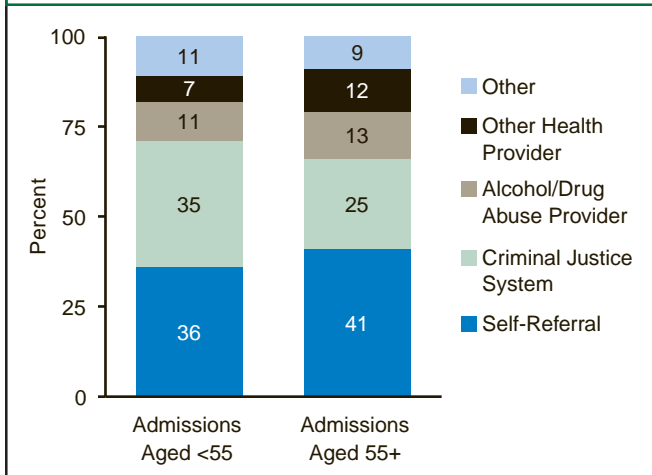
### Source of Referral

Admissions aged 55 or older were more likely than younger admissions to enter treatment through self-referral (41 vs. 36 percent) and less likely to be referred through the criminal justice system (25 vs. 35 percent) (Figure 2).

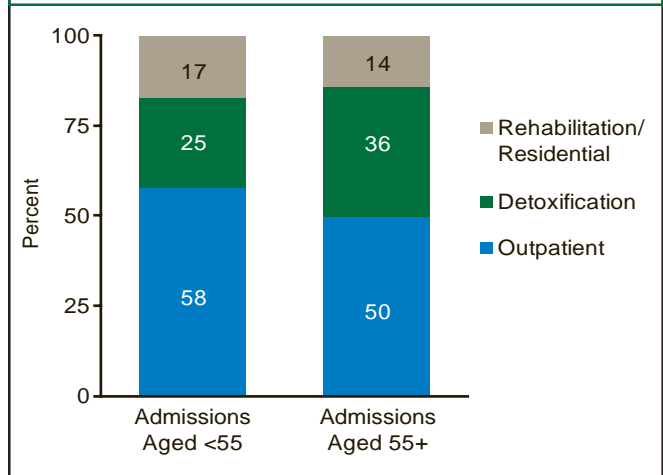
### Type of Treatment

Admissions aged 55 or older were more likely to receive detoxification services than younger admissions (36 vs. 25 percent) (Figure 3). Older admissions were less likely than younger admissions to receive outpatient treatment, either intensive or non-intensive (50 vs. 58 percent).

**Figure 2. All Admissions, by Age Group and Referral Source: 2001**



**Figure 3. All Admissions by Age Group and Type of Treatment: 2001**



**End Notes**

<sup>1</sup> For a previous *DASIS Report* on admissions aged 55 or older, see Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Office of Applied Studies. *The DASIS report: Older adults in substance abuse treatment*. Rockville, MD. December 7, 2001. This report contains trend data on older admissions between 1994 and 1999.

<sup>2</sup> For 2000 population numbers, see U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing. Census 2000, Summary File 1, Table QT-P1, Age Group and Sex: 2000. Downloaded on 1/23/04 from <http://www.census.gov/prod/2001pubs/c2kbr01-12.pdf>.

For population projections, see U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, Population Projections Branch, Table NP-D1B. Quarterly Projection of the Resident Population by Age, Race, and Hispanic Origin. Updated August 2, 2002. Downloaded on 1/23/04 from <http://www.census.gov/population/projections/nation/summary/np-t3-c.txt>.

<sup>3</sup> The primary substance of abuse is the main substance reported at the time of admission.

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 1.7 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 May 31, 2003.**

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>

