Despite Declines in Early Initiation Rates, Many U.S. High School Students Still Drink or Smoke Before Age 13

While early initiation rates have declined since 1995, a considerable proportion of U.S. high school students continue to report using alcohol and cigarettes for the first time before age 13. Recently released data from the national Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) show that 26% of U.S. high school students reported drinking more than a few sips of alcohol and 16% reported smoking a whole cigarette before age 13 in 2005, compared to 32% and 25%, respectively, in 1995. The percentage of students who reported trying marijuana before age 13 has remained stable at 8% to 9%. Previous studies have found a relationship between early drug initiation and drug dependence (see CESAR FAX, Volume 13, Issue 45 and Volume 9, Issue 38; available online at www.cesar.umd.edu).

Percentage of U.S. High School Students Who Began Using Alcohol, Cigarettes, or Marijuana Before Age 13, 1995 and 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1995</th>
<th>2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cigarette</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marijuana</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance (YRBS) survey employs a three-stage cluster sample design to produce a nationally representative sample of public and private school students in grades 9 to 12.


CESAR Seeking PhD-Level Candidate to Analyze Data on Alcohol Use Among College Students

CESAR is seeking a Research Associate to analyze and publish data from an ongoing, longitudinal prospective survey of alcohol use among college students. A PhD-level candidate with post-doctorate experience in public health and/or epidemiology is preferred. If you are interested in working in a supportive and stimulating, university-based team environment, please send a letter of interest and a resume to Dr. Amelia Arria at CESAR, 4321 Hartwick Rd, Ste 501, College Park, MD 20740; 301-403-8342 (fax); cesar@cesar.umd.edu.

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