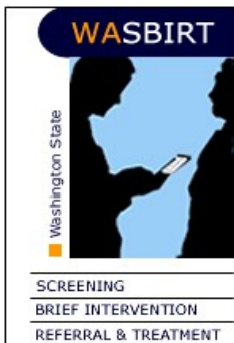




Substance Use Levels

Washington State Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral and Treatment (WASBIRT)



Use of Alcohol or Other Drugs Reported by Patients Screened in Hospital Emergency Departments April 2004 – December 2005

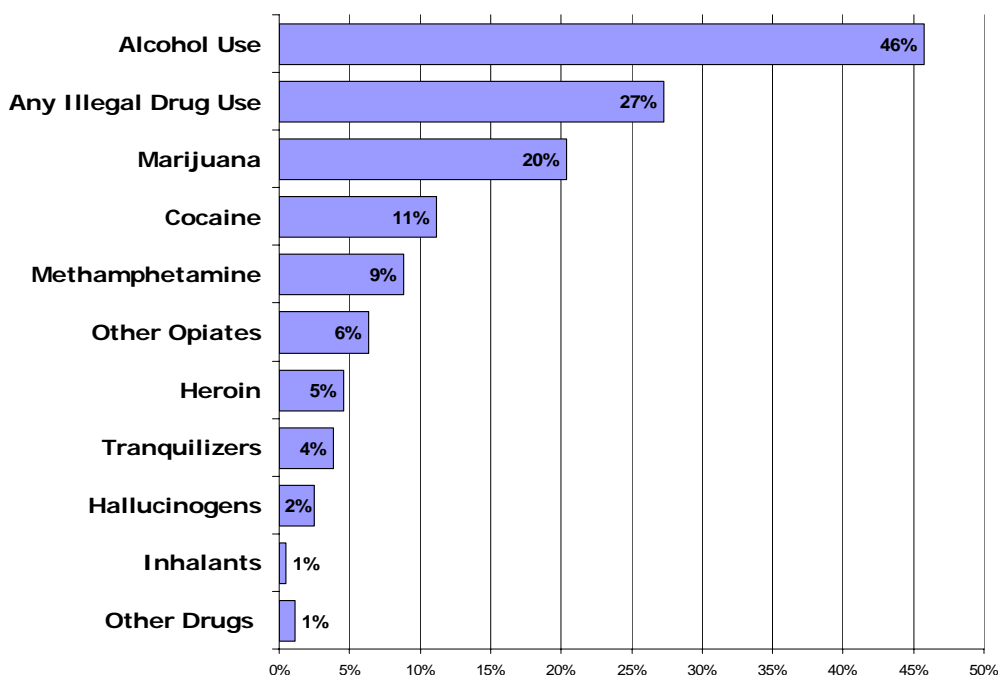
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The Washington State Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral and Treatment (WASBIRT) Program screens patients for alcohol or drug use disorders in nine major hospital Emergency Departments (ED) in the state. In 2005, 22,130 patients were screened through this program. The results of the screening sessions revealed the following rates of alcohol or other drug use:

- 46% of the patients drank alcohol at levels that represented potentially harmful use patterns such as binge drinking or a possible alcohol use disorder
- 27% of the patients used some form of illegal drug in the prior 12 months
- Marijuana was the most frequently used illegal drug, reported by 20%
- Cocaine was used by 11% of the patients
- Methamphetamine was used by 9% of the patients
- Use of other types of drugs ranged from 1% for inhalants to 5% for heroin and 6% for opiates other than heroin

About 1 out of 2 ED patients used alcohol at potentially harmful levels and about 1 out of 4 ED patients reported using some form of illegal drug in the last 12 months.



TECHNICAL NOTES

Indication of Alcohol or Other Drug Use Problems

Chemical dependency counselors screened patients in nine hospitals to identify their level of substance use disorders, to provide brief interventions and to make referrals for additional counseling as needed. Between January and December 2005, 22,130 patients were screened at these hospitals primarily in the emergency departments. Five percent of the patients had two screening sessions, and one percent had three or more sessions during the year.

Alcohol use described in this report represents patients whose score on the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) was 7 or higher for females and 8 or higher for males or for whom there was an indication of binge drinking. Use of other drugs represents use in the previous 12 months as reported by the patient during the screening session. For patients with two or more screening sessions, their alcohol or drug use includes use of substances reported during any of their screening sessions in 2005.

Counselors approached patients who appeared to be medically stable enough to give informed consent to participate in the WASBIRT Program which is conducted as a research project within each hospital. About one-third of the patients approached chose not to participate in the program, were found to be too ill to participate, or were found to be ineligible based on selected criteria (e.g., age, language, police custody). Statistics presented in this report pertain only to those who agreed to participate in the program.

The rates of alcohol and drug use represent an average across hospitals. The overall rate is a function of such factors as the number of patients screened at each site, differences in use rates across hospital populations, the number of months of screening during the year, and the number of counselors conducting screens. Rates were higher at some hospitals (e.g., Harborview Medical Center) than at others. Most of the participating sites screened patients throughout the year (Harborview Medical Center, Providence Everett Medical Center, Tacoma General Hospital, Southwest Washington Medical Center, Yakima Regional Medical and Heart Center, and Toppenish Community Hospital), but a few hospitals screened patients for half the year or less (Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital, Allenmore Hospital, and Providence St. Peter Hospital).

Additional copies of this paper may be obtained from: <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/RDA/> or <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/dasa/> or through the Washington State Alcohol|Drug Clearinghouse by calling 1-800-662-9111 or 206-725-9696 (within Seattle or outside Washington State), by e-mailing clearinghouse@adhl.org, or by writing to 6535 Fifth Place South, Seattle, Washington 98108-0243.

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