

Drugs—Treatment

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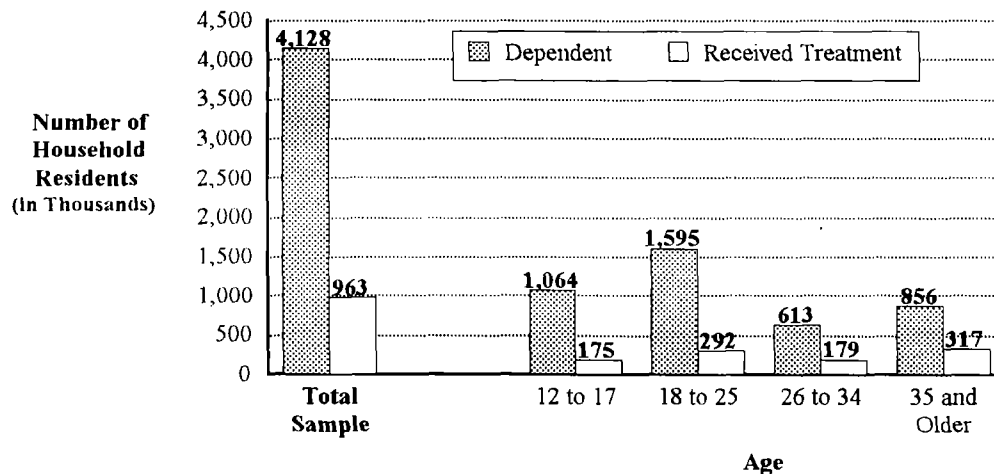
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National Household Survey Reveals Large Unmet Need for Treatment; Largest Gap Found Among Younger Residents

Of the 23.1 million U.S. household residents who used an illicit drug in the past year, 4.1 million were assessed as dependent*, according to data released last week from the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHSDA). However, less than 1 million residents reported that they had received treatment in the past year. The treatment needs of younger residents were particularly underserved. The number of persons aged 12 to 25 dependent on an illicit drug was nearly six times greater than the number who had received treatment. In contrast, the number of residents aged 26 and older who were dependent on an illicit drug was three times greater than the number who had received treatment (see figure below). A similar unmet need for treatment was found for alcohol--9.7 million residents were assessed as dependent on alcohol, compared to 1.7 million who had received treatment.

Estimated Number (in Thousands) of U.S. Household Residents Who Were Dependent On or Received Treatment for Illicit Drug Use in the Past Year

(Annual Averages Based on 1997 and 1998 Samples)



*The NHSDA includes a series of questions that are based on the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition (DSM-IV) used to assess dependence on substances. It includes questions about health and emotional problems associated with substances used, attempts to cut down on use, tolerance, and other symptoms.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from data from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Office of Applied Studies (OAS), "Summary of Findings from the 1998 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse," August 1999. Available online at www.samhsa.gov.

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