

# Example of analyzing the prevalence of substance abuse among teens in usa essay

[Health & Medicine](#), [Alcoholism](#)



Substance abuse is one of the most common problems that heavily plague societies across the globe nowadays. Among the many negative aspects of substance abuse that compromise the development of a society is the increasing prevalence of teenage involvement in it. The increasing prevalence of adolescents that get involved with drug use is one of the most alarming social problems in USA that need attention and urgent action. Analyzing the impact and predominance of drug abuse among teenagers in USA, it is important to understand what sets the problem to locate the possible interventions that will yield the best results.

Alcohol and other drugs or AOD use is highly prevalent among teenagers of Central America. In a 2010 survey conducted by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, AOD use among adolescents was measured and results showed that 36% of teenagers in 8th grade have used alcohol while another 21% have reported using some forms of illegal drugs (Matheson and McGrath). Furthermore, the extensive survey also measured the prevalence of AOD among adolescents in 12th grade and showed that 71% have experienced using alcohol at some point in their lives while another 48% have reported using illegal drugs (Matheson and McGrath). Considering the implementation of the legislation that prohibits alcohol and drug use among adolescents below the age of 21 (Matheson and McGrath), the extensive research conducted by the National Institute on Drug Abuse or NIDA reflects the massive problem of AOD use among teenagers in USA despite the intervention set by the American government.

The involvement of teenagers with the use of AOD is caused by many factors. The factors that cause an adolescent to resort to the use of AOD are

collectively known as risk factors (NIDA 6). Risk factors that contribute to the emergence or development of AOD use among adolescents may be environmental and/or hereditary (Thatcher and Clark 168). Family and peers are substantial environmental factors that may cause the development of AOD use among teenagers (NIDA 8-9). Within the family, the lack of a nurturing relationship and communication between parents and children, and violence within home—including the use of AOD exhibited by the very parents, are some of the key risk factors at home that may contribute to the later AOD use of a child as he/she grows up into adolescence (NIDA 8). Outside home, association with peers who use alcohol and drugs, poor social and academic skills, and harsh environments count as the leading risk factors (NIDA 9). In addition, it is also during adolescence that an individual is most curious to try out different things—particularly alcohol and drugs. As stated in a research about AOD use among teenagers, the highest risk of the development of problematic AOD use is during adolescence as teenagers are highly likely to experiment with alcohol and drugs (Thatcher and Clark 168). The experimentation of adolescents with alcohol is considered normal and socially acceptable (Thatcher and Clark 168), especially in highly developed countries such as the USA. The initial alcohol use among adolescents as a form of experimentation may result to binge drinking (Thatcher and Clark 168). Binge drinking and alcohol use disorders among adolescents are typically associated with the use of drugs, particularly cigarettes and marijuana (Thatcher and Clark 168).

## Works Cited

Matheson, Jennifer L., and R. T. McGrath Jr. Adolescent Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse. Colorado State University. Aug. 2012. Web. 24 November 2014.

Thatcher, Dawn L., and D. B. Clark. "Adolescents at Risk for Substance Use Disorders: Role of Psychological Dysregulation, Endophenotypes, and Environmental Influences." *Alcohol Research and Health* 31. 2 (2008): 168-176. National Institutes of Health (NCBI PubMed). Web. 24 November 2014.