

## CURRENT RESEARCH ON

# Substance Abuse: Alcohol, Drugs, and Tobacco

RAND Corporation research on substance abuse began in the mid-1970s when we conducted the first national study of the course of alcoholism after treatment. Today RAND researchers are tackling an extensive and diverse set of issues, from how best to prevent youth from using drugs, alcohol, and tobacco to understanding substance abuse when it is complicated by co-occurring disorders. A sampling of our current work is provided here.

### Alcohol Studies

- **Getting To Outcomes™ and Underage Drinking**—An evaluation of a new intervention based on the Getting To Outcomes model that is designed to help communities successfully translate evidence-based underage drinking prevention strategies into practice by building their prevention capacity. **Contact: Mathew Chinman, PhD (Mathew\_Chinman@rand.org)**
- **Reducing Student Alcohol Abuse**—An evaluation of the impact of the Santa Barbara School District's Safe Schools and Healthy Students program. **Contact: Patricia Ebener, BA (Patricia\_Ebener@rand.org)**
- **Alcohol Promotion in Neighborhoods**—An investigation of the relationship between neighborhood-level availability and promotion of alcohol and alcohol-related mortality, and the degree to which racial and socioeconomic differences in alcohol-related mortality may be accounted for by neighborhood-level availability and promotion of alcohol. **Contact: Deborah Cohen, MD, MPH (Deborah\_Cohen@rand.org)**
- **Alcohol Outlets in Neighborhoods**—A study to use Geographical Information System techniques to conduct national-level and state-level (California) analyses of commercial alcohol outlets around schools and homes as they relate to adolescent drinking. **Contact: Roland Sturm, PhD (Roland\_Sturm@rand.org)**

### Tobacco and Marijuana Studies

- **Cigarette Advertising and Adolescent Smoking**—A study to experimentally model how exposure to cigarette advertising interacts with individual differences to promote higher intentions to smoke among adolescents who have never smoked. **Contact: William Shadel, PhD (William\_Shadel@rand.org)**

- **Friendship Networks and Youth Smoking**—A study using social network analysis, applied to data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health), to investigate how friendship networks are related to patterns of youth smoking over time. **Contact: Joan Tucker, PhD** ([Joan\\_Tucker@rand.org](mailto:Joan_Tucker@rand.org))
- **Tobacco Settlement Funds**—A longitudinal evaluation of programs established with tobacco settlement funds to improve the health of the people of Arkansas. **Contact: Donna Farley, PhD** ([Donna\\_Farley@rand.org](mailto:Donna_Farley@rand.org)) or **John Engberg, PhD** ([John\\_Engberg@rand.org](mailto:John_Engberg@rand.org))

### **Substance Abuse and HIV**

- **Drug Use and HIV Risk Among Homeless Youth**—A study to understand the social context of drug use and risky sex leading to HIV infection among homeless youth. **Contact: Joan Tucker, PhD** ([Joan\\_Tucker@rand.org](mailto:Joan_Tucker@rand.org))
- **Homeless Women, Alcohol, and HIV Risk Behaviors**—A study of impoverished women in Los Angeles County shelters to understand the relationship between alcohol use and HIV risk behaviors by examining the social context in which these behaviors occur. **Contact: Suzanne Wenzel, PhD** ([Suzanne\\_Wenzel@rand.org](mailto:Suzanne_Wenzel@rand.org))

### **Substance Use Prevention and Interventions**

- **Classroom Drug Prevention**—An evaluation of the long-term results from ALERT Plus, a combination middle school and high school drug-prevention curriculum that aims to sustain the positive effects of Project ALERT currently used in middle schools. **Contact: Phyllis Ellickson, PhD** ([Phyllis\\_Ellickson@rand.org](mailto:Phyllis_Ellickson@rand.org))
- **Race and Criminal Justice Referrals to Treatment**—An examination of the adjudication of drug offenders in California from 1982–2005 to determine the extent to which race/ethnicity has played a role in final disposition and referral to drug treatment. **Contact: Nancy Nicosia, PhD** ([Nancy\\_Nicosia@rand.org](mailto:Nancy_Nicosia@rand.org))
- **Brief Intervention for Youth in Teen Court**—A 4 1/2-year longitudinal study with the Santa Barbara, CA. Probation Department and Teen Court system to adapt and test a group intervention among teens who have committed a first-time alcohol or other drug misdemeanor offense, with the goal of reducing alcohol and drug use and related consequences among this population. **Contact: Elizabeth D’Amico, PhD** ([Elizabeth\\_D’Amico@rand.org](mailto:Elizabeth_D’Amico@rand.org))
- **Brief Intervention for Middle School Youth**—A 5-year longitudinal study to assess the long-term efficacy of a voluntary after-school intervention among ethnically diverse students in 16 middle schools across three school districts. Project CHOICE was developed at RAND and is the only voluntary drug and alcohol intervention that has been tested among middle school youth and found to be efficacious. **Contact: Elizabeth D’Amico, PhD** ([Elizabeth\\_D’Amico@rand.org](mailto:Elizabeth_D’Amico@rand.org))
- **Group Cognitive Behavioral Treatment for Depression and AOD Disorders**—Development and pilot testing of a new integrated group cognitive behavioral treatment for depression and substance abuse in outpatient substance abuse treatment settings. **Contact: Katherine Watkins, MD, MSHS** ([Katherine\\_Watkins@rand.org](mailto:Katherine_Watkins@rand.org))

## Substance Use Policies and Costs

- **World Market in Illicit Drugs**—A study of how the global drug market has changed from 1997 to 2006 to estimate the size and distribution of drug revenues over that period, describe how drug use and drug harms have changed in 18 countries, and assess the role of drug policy in those changes.  
**Contact: Peter Reuter, PhD (Peter\_Reuter@umd.edu)**
- **Economic Cost of Drug Use**—A study to estimate the costs of illegal drug use in the United States, both total cost and costs for four specific drugs: cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, and marijuana.  
**Contact: Rosalie Pacula, PhD (Rosalie\_Pacula@rand.org)**
- **Economic Cost of Methamphetamine Use in the United States**—A study to develop the first estimate of the annual economic burden of methamphetamine use in the United States.  
**Contact: Rosalie Pacula, PhD (Rosalie\_Pacula@rand.org)**
- **Economic Costs of Marijuana Use**—A project to identify and quantify some of the private and social costs associated with regular marijuana use to inform ongoing debates regarding policy reform and the allocation of public dollars to treatment and prevention efforts. **Contact: Rosalie Pacula, PhD (Rosalie\_Pacula@rand.org)**
- **Alcohol Policies and HIV Risk Behavior**—An examination of the influence of local alcohol policies on the sexual risk behaviors of HIV-positive adults. **Contact: Rebecca Collins, PhD (Rebecca\_Collins@rand.org)**
- **Health and Social Costs of Methamphetamine Abuse**—An investigation to determine (1) the health and social costs—including hospitalizations, drug treatment admissions, and property and violent crime—attributable to methamphetamine abuse and (2) whether supply-side interventions are effective at reducing these costs. **Contact: Nancy Nicosia, PhD (Nancy\_Nicosia@rand.org)**
- **Funding Treatment Services**—A study to provide improved funding information to local and state policymakers facing difficult choices in the present economic crisis in California and to provide forecasting tools to help plan ahead for future changes in substance abuse treatment resources.  
**Contact: Patricia Ebener, BA (Patricia\_Ebener@rand.org)**

## Highlights of Recent Studies

*Teens Who Work Are More Likely to Smoke.* A strong link exists between working and smoking among tenth-grade teens. Available online at [www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_briefs/RB9321/](http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB9321/)

*Mental Health and Substance Abuse Issues Among People with HIV: Lessons from HCSUS.* New findings from the HIV Costs and Services Utilization Study (HCSUS) shed light on the prevalence of mental health and substance abuse problems for persons with HIV, access to appropriate care, and ability to adhere to treatment. Available online at [www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_briefs/RB9300.pdf](http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB9300.pdf)

*New Perspectives on Marijuana and Youth: Abstainers Are Not Maladjusted, but Lone Users Face Difficulties.* Although some consider experimenting with marijuana normal behavior for adolescents, those adolescents who abstain are not maladjusted as others have reported. Available online at [www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_briefs/RB9265/](http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB9265/)

*Using Outcomes to Assess Teen Substance-Use Treatment Programs—How Feasible?* Using outcome data to assess adolescent substance abuse treatment program performance may be problematic; a more promising approach may be to identify quality-of-care indicators for assessing performance. Available online at [www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_briefs/RB9269/](http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB9269/)

*Getting To Outcomes™: Improving Community-Based Substance-Use Prevention.* A science-based model and support tools to help local groups develop or improve substance-use-prevention programs. Available online at [www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_briefs/RB9172/](http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB9172/)

*Forging the Link Between Alcohol Advertising and Underage Drinking.* A much stronger connection exists between alcohol ads and youth drinking than previously shown, but participation in a school-based drug prevention program can counteract the impact of alcohol ads. Available online at [www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_briefs/RB9073/](http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB9073/)

### **Related Web Sites**

*The BRIGHT Project (Building Recovery by Improving Goals, Habits, & Thoughts):*  
[www.rand.org/health/projects/bright/](http://www.rand.org/health/projects/bright/)

*RAND Drug Policy Research Center:* <http://www.rand.org/multi/dprc/>

*Project ALERT:* [www.projectalert.com/](http://www.projectalert.com/)

*Empowering Community Coalitions to Prevent Substance Abuse:*  
[www.rand.org/health/projects/substance\\_abuse/](http://www.rand.org/health/projects/substance_abuse/)

*Healthcare for Communities:* [www.hsrcenter.ucla.edu/research/hcc.shtml](http://www.hsrcenter.ucla.edu/research/hcc.shtml)

*UCLA/RAND Center for Adolescent Health Promotion:* [www.rand.org/health/adol.html](http://www.rand.org/health/adol.html)

*HIV Cost and Services Utilization Study:* [www.rand.org/health/projects/hcsus/](http://www.rand.org/health/projects/hcsus/)

### **Working with Congress**

RAND's Office of Congressional Relations (OCR) furthers RAND's mission to provide objective analysis and effective solutions by disseminating research results to Congress and federal agencies. OCR publishes a monthly electronic newsletter featuring current work on health policy. The *RAND Health Congressional Newsletter* is found at [www.rand.org/congress/newsletters.html](http://www.rand.org/congress/newsletters.html). **Contact: Shirley Ruhe** ([Shirley\\_Ruhe@rand.org](mailto:Shirley_Ruhe@rand.org))

*RAND Health is a unit of the RAND Corporation. Abstracts of all RAND Health publications and the full text of many research documents can be found on the RAND Health Web site at [www.rand.org/health](http://www.rand.org/health). The RAND Corporation is a nonprofit research organization providing objective analysis and effective solutions that address the challenges facing the public and private sectors around the world.*