

ARCHIVES OF GENERAL PSYCHIATRY

Vol. 65 No. 12, December 2008

Original Article

[TABLE OF CONTENTS >](#)

Mental Health of College Students and Their Non-College-Attending Peers

Results From the National Epidemiologic Study on Alcohol and Related Conditions

Carlos Blanco, MD, PhD; Mayumi Okuda, MD; Crystal Wright, BS;
Deborah S. Hasin, PhD; Bridget F. Grant, PhD, PhD; Shang-Min Liu, MS;
Mark Olfson, MD, MPH

Arch Gen Psychiatry. 2008;65(12):1429-1437.

Context Although young adulthood is often characterized by rapid intellectual and social development, college-aged individuals are also commonly exposed to circumstances that place them at risk for psychiatric disorders.

Objectives To assess the 12-month prevalence of psychiatric disorders, sociodemographic correlates, and rates of treatment among individuals attending college and their non-college-attending peers in the United States.

Design, Setting, and Participants Face-to-face interviews were conducted in the 2001-2002 National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions (N = 43 093). Analyses were done for the subsample of college-aged individuals, defined as those aged 19 to 25 years who were both attending (n = 2188) and not attending (n = 2904) college in the previous year.

Main Outcome Measures Sociodemographic correlates and prevalence of 12-month *DSM-IV* psychiatric disorders, substance use, and treatment seeking among college-attending individuals and their non-college-attending peers.

Results Almost half of college-aged individuals had a psychiatric disorder in the past year. The overall rate of psychiatric disorders was not different between college-attending individuals and their non-college-attending peers. The unadjusted risk of alcohol use disorders was significantly greater for college students than for their non-college-attending peers (odds ratio = 1.25; 95% confidence interval, 1.04-1.50), although not after adjusting for background sociodemographic characteristics (adjusted odds ratio = 1.19; 95% confidence interval, 0.98-1.44). College students were significantly less likely (unadjusted and adjusted) to have a diagnosis of drug use disorder or nicotine dependence or to have used tobacco than their non-college-attending peers. Bipolar disorder was less common in individuals attending college. College students were significantly less likely to receive past-year treatment for alcohol or drug use disorders than their non-college-attending peers.

Conclusions Psychiatric disorders, particularly alcohol use disorders, are common in the college-aged population. Although treatment rates varied across disorders, overall fewer than 25% of individuals with a

Archives

• [Online Features](#)

This Article

- [Full text](#)
- [PDF](#)
- [Reply to article](#)
- [Send to a friend](#)
- [Save in My Folder](#)
- [Save to citation manager](#)
- [Permissions](#)

Citing Articles

- [Citation map](#)
- [Contact me when this article is cited](#)

Related Content

- [Related article](#)
- [Similar articles in this journal](#)

Topic Collections

- [Pediatrics](#)
- [Adolescent Psychiatry](#)
- [Stress](#)
- [Psychiatry, Other](#)
- [Public Health](#)
- [Substance Abuse/Alcoholism](#)
- [Alert me on articles by topic](#)

mental disorder sought treatment in the year prior to the survey. These findings underscore the importance of treatment and prevention interventions among college-aged individuals.

Author Affiliations: New York State Psychiatric Institute/Department of Psychiatry, College of Physicians and Surgeons (Drs Blanco, Okuda, Hasin, Grant, and Olfson and Mss Wright and Liu), and Department of Epidemiology, Mailman School of Public Health (Drs Hasin and Grant), Columbia University, New York; and Laboratory of Epidemiology, Division of Intramural Clinical and Biological Research, National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Maryland (Dr Grant).

RELATED ARTICLE

This Month in *Archives of General Psychiatry*

Arch Gen Psychiatry. 2008;65(12):1355.

[FULL TEXT](#)

[HOME](#) | [CURRENT ISSUE](#) | [PAST ISSUES](#) | [TOPIC COLLECTIONS](#) | [SUBMIT](#) | [SUBSCRIBE](#) | [HELP](#)
[CONDITIONS OF USE](#) | [PRIVACY POLICY](#) | [CONTACT US](#) | [SITE MAP](#)

© 2008 American Medical Association. All Rights Reserved.