

Wisconsin's Epidemiological Profile on the Consumption and Consequences of Alcohol and Other Substances

INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes current data available on the consumption of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs and its consequences. An Executive Summary is followed by a narrative detailing key trends in the consumption and consequences of alcohol and other drug use in Wisconsin. Appendices provide information on data sample sizes as well as details on the ranking process for indicators included in this report.

- This profile casts a wide net regarding inclusion of indicators and the data reflects trends at a statewide level.
- Future profiles will reflect data at a more local level and indicators will be ranked further utilizing more exclusive criteria.

ROLE OF THE STATE EPIDEMIOLOGICAL WORKGROUP (SEOW)

The State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup (SEOW) provides data access, experience in the substance abuse field and analytical expertise to the development of Wisconsin's Epidemiological Profile. Members of the SEOW include professionals and advocates from diverse disciplines related to substance use/abuse and its consequences. The SEOW's work assists policy makers in identifying the needs of communities using epidemiological methods. Based on the identified needs, resources can be allocated to address the problems using evidence-based programming. Specifically, the SEOW was charged with:

- collecting and analyzing data on the consumption and consequences of alcohol, tobacco and other drug use;
- providing a comprehensive menu of data constructs and indicators reflecting possible problem areas in the state;
- creating a National Outcomes Measures (NOMS) data collection plan;
- creating an initial Epidemiological Profile which will inform further analysis and planning in the Strategic Prevention Framework State Incentive Grant process; and
- determining the state's future data needs.

SEOW members were invited to participate in the project based on their access to and ability to work with substance-related data. Workgroup members consist of a wide range of experts from academia, government agencies and private organizations.

PROFILE INDICATOR SELECTION

General Methodology for Indicator Selection

The Epidemiological Workgroup included any indicator mentioned in the State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup (SEOW) Request for Proposal (RFP), Healthy People 2010, State Epidemiological Data System (SEDS), or National Outcome Measures (NOMS).

Additional indicators were chosen by the Workgroup through an online voting process using the following criteria as a guide:

1. Whether or not there are identified data sources for the given construct;
2. If those data sources are available at a regional or county level; and
3. The attributable fraction estimate reported in the literature, if available.

Workgroup members were additionally instructed to draw from their own expertise regarding the importance of indicators. The epidemiological consultant also assisted the group in determining the validity of constructs and indicators.

KEY FINDINGS

Areas of need are easily identified through this report:

- Wisconsin data for 2005 show a higher prevalence of alcohol use and binge drinking in adults and college students compared to the country as a whole.
- Another problem area is the high rate of smoking among American Indian and African American adults.
- Regarding illicit drug use, in 2005 men were more than twice as likely to die due to drug use compared to women; blacks were more than three times more likely to die due to drug use than the Wisconsin average.
- From 1996 to 2004, Wisconsin's arrest rate for liquor law violations was more than three times the national rate.
- From 1996 to 2004, the rate of drug law arrests was higher in Wisconsin compared to the nation as a whole.

CONCLUSION

The economic and health costs of substance abuse in Wisconsin are great, as are the related costs to the community of arrest and criminal offenses. Future studies will focus on these key areas and will guide the state's funding decisions regarding which problems to address and which interventions to use.