

Challenges and Gaps in Understanding Substance Use Problems in Transitional Age Youth



Oscar G. Bukstein, MD, MPH

KEYWORDS

- Transitional age youth • Substance use disorder • Substance abuse • Screening • Treatment

KEY POINTS

- Risk factors for the persistence of substance use problems and disorders into adulthood mirror those for the development of problems and disorders in adolescents.
- Early screening of both college students and noncollege high-risk youth in the community is critical to early and effective intervention.
- Brief interventions using motivational techniques are effective for many transitional age youth, particularly for those in early stages of problem use on college campuses.
- Professionals should be aware of evidence-based treatments and providers for substance use disorders in the community as well as the developmental nuances of this period.

INTRODUCTION

Transitional age youth (TAY), those approximately 16 to 26 years of age and covering the period between and encompassing late adolescence and early adulthood, are the target of increasing attention by health care providers and policymakers. TAY have a number of psychosocial and developmental challenges that portend the emerging challenges of adulthood. Despite obtaining the age of legal majority at age 18, successful achievement of adult tasks in this age group is complicated by incomplete cognitive maturation; continued dependency on parents and/or other adults for housing, education, and financial stability; the continued need for education and/or training to enter and succeed in the 21st-century job market; and the continued increased rates of psychopathology.^{1,2} Another major challenge for TAY is substance use and substance use disorders (SUDs). For many TAY, substance use and SUDs emerged earlier in adolescence and, for others, the increased independence and decreased

The author has nothing to disclose.

Department of Psychiatry, Boston Children's Hospital, 300 Longwood Avenue, Boston, MA 02115, USA

E-mail address: oscar.bukstein@childrens.harvard.edu

Child Adolesc Psychiatr Clin N Am 26 (2017) 253–269

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.chc.2016.12.005>

1056-4993/17/© 2016 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

childpsych.theclinics.com

Abbreviations	
ADHD	Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder
BASCIS	Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention of College Students
BI	Brief intervention
EBT	Evidenced-based therapy
FRAMES	Feedback, responsibility, advice, menu, empathy, self-efficacy
MI	Motivational interviewing
SBIRT	Screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment
SUD	Substance use disorder
TAY	Transitional age youth

supervision after high school allows for increased exposure to substance use and is fertile ground for the development of SUDs. TAY have the highest rates of substance use and SUDs of any age group.³ By their late 20s, nearly two-thirds (63%) of today's young adults have tried an illicit drug, and about 4 in 10 (37%) have tried some illicit drug other than marijuana, usually in addition to marijuana.⁴

This article reviews what is known about the prevalence and course of substance use and SUDs in TAY and provides guidance on screening, and brief and comprehensive treatment approaches. Although most definitions of TAY include youth who are still adolescents (ie, <18 years old) and those who are young adults, the focus is on TAY 18 years and older. Although there are continuities in the younger and older TAY groups, the differences are more salient to most clinicians.

TAY are a heterogeneous group, particularly as manifested by their level of educational attainment—that is, whether they graduate from high school, attend vocational training programs, community colleges or 4-year colleges or universities. Those who do not graduate high school or go on to college are different in important ways from those who go to college and those who complete college. Similarly, those who attend postsecondary vocational schools or community colleges may differ from the other 2 groups. Predictors of low educational attainment include lower socioeconomic status, increased familial stressors, and psychopathology; these attributed also constitute many of the risk factors for the development of SUDs.⁵ Certainly youth who attend college are not immune from the development of SUDs, but rather SUDs often occur in a different context (eg, fraternities, sororities, or dormitories), an important consideration for educators, clinicians, and social service agencies.

Many of the risk and protective factors associated with problem substance use in young adulthood are the same as those that predict adolescent substance use.⁶ These shared risk factors are listed in **Box 1**. The consequences of TAY alcohol use include deaths, injuries, and, among college students, academic problems, fighting, and sexual behavior problems.⁷ The most common causes of mortality among TAY are injury-related causes, including poisoning, motor vehicle/traffic-related deaths, and firearm-related deaths, which are often substance involved.⁸ Environmental factors in young adulthood also affect future substance use. For example, in 1 study of young adults, the transition into marriage predicted decreases in alcohol consumption, and this effect was consistent across gender and age.⁹ Conversely, divorce predicted increased alcohol consumption, particularly for men.

TRANSITIONAL AGE YOUTH BRAIN DEVELOPMENT AND BEHAVIOR

Successful adult functioning requires cognitive maturity and the development of self-control over behavior and emotions, which is an aspect of executive functions. Executive functions are generally defined as cognitive processes and include planning, working memory, attention, problem solving, verbal reasoning, inhibition, mental

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/5717752>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/5717752>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)