



A survey of more than 10,000 U.S. teenagers found that by late adolescence, 78 percent had consumed alcohol, and about 15 percent met the criteria for alcohol abuse.

The survey also found 81 percent said they had the opportunity to use illicit drugs, and 42.5 percent actually did so. Among those surveyed, 16 percent were abusing drugs, HealthDay reports.

The median starting age for alcohol use was 14. For teens who were dependent on drugs, the median starting age was 14; for those who abused drugs but were not dependent, the average starting age was 15.

The findings are published in the Archives of General Psychiatry.

Bruce Goldman, Director of Substance Abuse Services at The Zucker Hillside Hospital in Glen Oaks, New York, who was not involved in the study, told HealthDay, "It is imperative that families, schools, police, youth groups, and communities all join together to prevent or delay the onset of substance use as long as possible. Social norms have a very powerful impact on drug-use patterns. We need to create norms where substance use and availability, especially for young people, is not acceptable."

To learn more about Alcohol, Drugs and Youth, [click here](#).