

Adolescent Alcohol and Other Substance Use: Sharing the Australian Experience

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Abstract

Substance use is common among adolescents. Although substance use may be a manifestation of experimentation in adolescent development, it may have more serious implications. It may be an indicator of emotional disturbance, or may be associated with several other health risk behaviours in adolescence. Substance use may also progress to harmful levels that can have a significant impact on a young person's health. Health professionals are increasingly being exposed to teenagers who use alcohol and drugs. The following article aims to provide, based on clinical and research experience in a number of institutions in Melbourne, Australia, an overview of the epidemiology of adolescent drug use, a clinical approach to assess substance use in young people and the principles of management of drug use in adolescence.

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