Illicit drug use in adolescents and pregnant women: Prevalence and prevention strategies

Introduction and series overview

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Welcome to the series!

Illicit Substance Use around the Time of Birth: Education and Prevention Strategies

• Rationale

• Upcoming topics
  – 9/30: Opioid Use in Pregnancy: Maintenance, Not Detox
  – 10/14: Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome: Scoring and Training Options
  – 10/28: Breastfeeding and Illicit Drug Use
Today’s topic: Illicit drug use in adolescents and pregnant women: Prevalence and prevention strategies

• A growing problem across the US; health care workers struggling to meet the challenges

• For some IHS sites the problem is overwhelming in both hospital and community settings

• No easy answers but raising awareness is critical
Illicit substance use around the time of birth: Broader implications

- Not just a “maternal” problem
- Domestic violence
- Suicide
Illicit substance use around the time of birth: Broader implications

- Child neglect/abuse
- Multiple drug use; alcohol use
- Law enforcement and custody issues
- Financial issues; poverty; hunger
- Medical issues – Hepatitis C; HIV; mental health, etc
Illicit substance use around the time of birth

• Ongoing ‘tension’ of personal ‘stance’...
  – A moral issue?
  – A medical issue?

• Emotional and complex when infants/young children are involved

• Even more complex among health care professionals who may have been exposed to the same issues
Illicit substance use around the time of birth

- Beliefs of health care workers may impact how they react; lead to conflict
- Policies are critical to ensure consistent treatment
- Health care workers often from the same community – pressures, confidentiality?
- Burnout/compassion fatigue among health care professionals
Illicit substance use around the time of birth

• Small communities with complex relationships

• Some clinicians experience pressure from patients (“we need opiates”) which conflicts with current work to reduce iatrogenic-induced opiate dependency
Prevalence of illicit drug use in the US

Illicit drug use SAMHSA: Results from the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Summary of National Findings, NSDUH Series H-48, HHS Publication No. (SMA) 14-4863. Rockville, MD
SAHMSA report (2013)

- 9.4% of the US population over 12 had used illicit drugs in the month prior to the survey
- Marijuana was the most commonly used illicit drug (7% of population, or 80% of users used marijuana)
SAHMSA data: 2013

- Marijuana (70.3%)
- Pain Relievers (12.5%)
- Inhalants (6.3%)
- Tranquilizers (5.2%)
- Stimulants (2.7%)
- Hallucinogens (2.6%)
- Sedatives (0.2%)
- Cocaine (0.1%)

2.8 Million Initiates of Illicit Drugs
Drug use by race/ethnicity

- Asians – 3.1%
- Hispanics – 8.8%
- Whites – 9.5%
- Blacks – 10.5%
- AI/AN – 12.3%
- Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders – 14%
- 2 or more races – 17.4%
Illicit Drug Use In The Past Month Among Persons Aged 12 Or Older
Drug use in pregnancy (all)

- 5% illicit drug use overall
  - 11% rate in same group, not pregnant
- 15% among pregnant 15-17 year olds
- 9% among pregnant 18-25 year olds
- 3% among pregnant 26-44 year olds
Increase in Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS)

- NAS is when the newborn suffers from ‘withdrawal’ symptoms resulting from maternal *opioid* use in pregnancy

- 2000 to 2012 saw a 5-fold increase in the proportion of US babies born with NAS

- In 2012, 21,732 US infants born with NAS – 1 every 25 minutes

Our 10/14 webinar will focus on Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome.
Alcohol use in pregnant population nationally

• 9.4%

• Binge drinking - 2.3%

• Heavy drinking – 0.4%

• Lower than for non-pregnant women (55.4, 24.6, and 5.3%, respectively)

• Usage lower in trimesters 2 and 3 than in 1st trimester
Current hot topics

• Legalization of marijuana – will rates increase? Will its being legal in some states, change perceptions; advice to patients; recommendations?

• Opioids – over-use of opioids for pain relief have led to widespread addiction and illicit use of these substances
SAHMSA – Protective factors among youth

• Youths were less likely to use drug if:
  – They believed drugs are dangerous
  – Their parents would disapprove of drug use
  – Their “religious beliefs” were important to them
  – They were exposed to prevention messaging outside of school