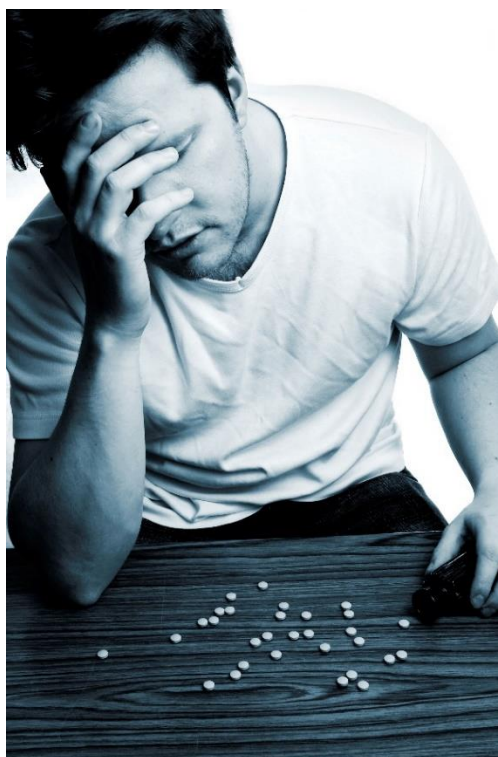


# Substance Abuse and Disability



Substance use disorders occur more often in persons with disabilities than in the general population. This includes problems related to the abuse of prescription medications as well as illicit drugs. In the general population, alcoholism affects 10% of individuals and 5% are addicted to drugs.

- Moore (2002) estimates that as many as 1.5 million individuals with disabilities may need treatment for substance use disorders in any given year. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) (2002) estimates that approximately 4.7 million American adults with a disability have a co-occurring substance abuse problem.

- Persons with any type of disability experience substance abuse at rates 2 to 4 times that of the general population.
- Substance abuse prevalence rates approach or exceed 50% for persons with traumatic brain injuries, spinal cord injuries, or mental illness.
- Conditions such as deafness, arthritis, and multiple sclerosis have shown substance abuse rates of at least double the general population estimates.
- Where persons with spinal cord injuries, orthopedic disabilities, vision impairment, and amputations consume alcoholic beverages, approximately 40-50% can be classified as heavy drinkers.

Data indicate that rates of substance abuse vary widely across disabilities.

- Spinal cord and traumatic brain injury populations have been found to have substantially higher rates of substance abuse disorders than the general population.

Source: US Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Disability  
[http://www.hhs.gov/od/about/fact\\_sheets/substanceabusech26.html](http://www.hhs.gov/od/about/fact_sheets/substanceabusech26.html)

## **Websites**

### **ADA Network: The ADA, Addiction, Recovery and Employment**

<https://adata.org/factsheet/ada-addiction-recovery-and-employment>

### **Alcoholics Anonymous**

[www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)

Alcoholics Anonymous is an international fellowship of men and women who have had a drinking problem. It is nonprofessional, self-supporting, multiracial, apolitical, and available almost everywhere. There are no age or education requirements. Membership is open to anyone who wants to do something about his or her drinking problem.

### **American Association on Health and Disability (AAHD): Substance Abuse**

<http://www.aahd.us/best-practice-topic/substance-abuse/>

### **Arizona Spinal Cord Injury Association: YouTube channel about opioid use**

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqznzd6j-7DxLaoMWgo7RCw>

They are starting a collection of videos on opioid use.

### **Craig Hospital: Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs After Disability—A Guide for Family Members**

<https://craighospital.org/resources/alcohol-tobacco-and-other-drugs-after-disability-a-guide-for-family-members>

### **Craig Hospital: Alcohol After Spinal Cord Injury**

<https://craighospital.org/resources/alcohol-after-spinal-cord-injury>

### **Craig Hospital: Alcohol After Traumatic Brain Injury**

<https://craighospital.org/resources/alcohol-after-traumatic-brain-injury>

**Craig Hospital: Marijuana and Other Drugs After Disability**

<https://craighospital.org/resources/marijuana-and-other-drugs-after-disability>

**Craig Hospital: Medications**

<https://craighospital.org/resources/medications>

**Facing Disability: Substance Abuse and SCI**

<http://www.facingdisability.com/expert-topics/substance-abuse-and-sci>

Short videos featuring Allen Heinemann, PhD, Professor, Feinberg School of Medicine, Northwestern University--Chicago

**Narcotics Anonymous**

[www.na.org](http://www.na.org)

NA offer recovery from the effects of addiction through working a twelve-step program, including regular attendance at group meetings. The group atmosphere provides help from peers and offers an ongoing support network for addicts who wish to pursue and maintain a drug-free lifestyle. Addiction from any type of drug as well as alcohol is included.

**Ohio Valley Center for Brain Injury Prevention and Rehabilitation: Substance Use and TBI**

<https://wexnermedical.osu.edu/neurological-institute/neuroscience-research-institute/research-centers/ohio-valley-center-for-brain-injury-prevention-and-rehabilitation/for-professionals/substance-use-and-tbi>

This site presents information on substance abuse among people who have suffered traumatic brain injuries, including how common the problem is, its effects, and treatment.

**Spinal Cord Injury Information Network: Substance Abuse**

<http://www.uab.edu/medicine/sci/daily-living/managing-personal-health/secondary-medical-conditions/substance-abuse>

This page lists publications and videos on alcohol use and abuse among people with spinal cord injuries.

**Substance Abuse Resources & Disability Issues (SARDI)**

<http://www.med.wright.edu/citar/sardi/>

Boonshoft School of Medicine

Wright State University

3640 Colonel Glenn Hwy

Dayton, OH 45435

Phone: 937-775-1484

Email: [Jeremy.trim@wright.edu](mailto:Jeremy.trim@wright.edu)

The SARDI Program seeks to improve the quality of life for persons with disabilities, including those who are concurrently affected by behavioral health issues. The SARDI Program achieves its objective by conducting collaborative and participatory research; developing intervention approaches; and training; and disseminating related information.

## Articles and Publications

### **Materials from the Substance Abuse Resources & Disability Issues Program**

<https://medicine.wright.edu/sardi/materials>

Publications that can be downloaded for free from this site include Exploring Substance Abuse Among Minorities with Disabilities and Its Associations With Their Experiences in Vocational Rehabilitation and Guide to Substance Abuse & Disability Resources Produced by NIDRR Grantees.

**Alcohol and Your Health After SCI.** Northwest Regional Spinal Cord Injury System. Spring 2003.

[http://sci.washington.edu/info/newsletters/articles/03sp\\_alcohol.asp](http://sci.washington.edu/info/newsletters/articles/03sp_alcohol.asp)

This article discusses the unique health problems associated with alcohol use among people with spinal cord injuries.

**Alcohol Abuse and SCI.** Spinal Cord Injury Update. Summer 1996.

[http://sci.washington.edu/info/newsletters/articles/96su\\_alcohol\\_abuse.asp](http://sci.washington.edu/info/newsletters/articles/96su_alcohol_abuse.asp)

This article discusses alcohol abuse among people with spinal cord injuries and interventions during inpatient rehabilitation.

**Paralyzed Veterans of America** has a clinical practice guideline for health care workers titled **Management of Mental Health Disorders, Substance Use Disorders, and Suicide in Adults with Spinal Cord Injury.**

[www.pva.org](http://www.pva.org)

### **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA): Publications**

<https://store.samhsa.gov/>

SAMHSA offers many free publications on substance abuse and mental health issues for patients and providers.

### **Substance Use Disorders in People with Physical or Sensory Disabilities**

<https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Substance-Use-Disorders-in-People-with-Physical-and-Sensory-Disabilities/SMA11-4648>

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