ABSTRACT

TITLE:	Adolescent Susceptibility to Substance Use
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ABSTRACT: According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) nearly three quarters of students (72%) in America have consumed alcohol by the end of high school and more than one third (37%) have drunk alcohol by eighth grade. SAMHSA reports that 17.4% of adolescents from ages 12-20 years old have self-reported binge drinking (more than five drinks) in the past month. The prevalence of adolescent substance use increases the importance for understanding how substance use affects the brain. This stage in human development consists of significant interrelated changes in cognition, physiological brain development, social influence, and affective changes. Disparity in development between the limbic system and the prefrontal cortex renders adolescents susceptible to the rewarding effects of alcohol and marijuana. Although adolescents seem doomed to poor decisions regarding substance use, various protective and preventative factors provide hope.