Initial Focus on OCD May Ease Defiant Disorder

**By Damian McNamara**

MIAMI — Children with comorbid oppositional-defiant and obsessive-compulsive disorders may be more likely to engage in and benefit from cognitive-behavioral therapy if the oppositional-defiant disorder is treated first, according to preliminary findings from an ongoing study.

Such comorbid children are at increased risk for early, more severe obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). “Children with oppositional-defiant behavior tend to develop OCD more rapidly,” Jennifer Adkins, Ph.D., said at the annual conference of the Anxiety Disorders Association of America.

“They engage in rituals more than other children might be able to, and that allows OCD symptoms to get more severe more rapidly,” she noted. “There is a strong importance to this work in children—80% of adults with OCD exhibited the disorder in childhood,” said Dr. Adkins, of the department of psychiatry at the University of Florida, Gainesville.

**Signs and Symptoms of Inhalant Abuse**

Inhalant abuse, known as “sniffing” or “huffing,” appears to be increasing among teens, and shifting attitudes about the practice are cause for alarm, according to the Partnership for a Drug-Free America.

In a new survey of 7,200 7th-12th graders, about 23% of recent inhalant initiates had not used cigarettes, alcohol, or marijuana. Drug Use and Health data showed that 23% of recent inhalant initiates had not used cigarettes, alcohol, or marijuana.

**Children with oppositional defiant behavior engage in rituals more than others might be able to, which allows OCD symptoms to get more severe faster.**

**Survey: Teens Use Inhalants More, Worry About Risks Less**

BY SHARON WORCESTER

Inhalant abuse, known as “sniffing” or “huffing,” appears to be increasing among teens, and shifting attitudes about the practice are cause for alarm, according to the Partnership for a Drug-Free America.

In a new survey of 7,200 7th-12th graders, about 23% reported abusing inhalants. That’s up about 2% since 2001, according to the Partnership, which conducts such surveys annually. The most recent survey—the 2005 Partnership Attitude Tracking Study—was conducted from March through June 2005 and has a margin of error of ±/−1.5%.

Of particular concern is the percentage of teens reporting that they “strongly agree” that inhalant abuse can be deadly declined 19% since 2001, with only 64% of respondents in the 2005 survey agreeing that inhalants kill.

“What stands out is the teens’ decreasing perception of risk because that often correlates with increases in use. We clearly need to address underlying attitudes and help teens understand the dangers associated with this form of substance abuse,” Steve Pasierb, president and chief executive officer of the Partnership, said in a written statement.

Earlier this year, a report by the National Survey on Drug Use and Health called “Characteristics of Recent Adolescent Inhalant Initiates” found that recent inhalant initiates were significantly more likely to be white, compared with the general population (70% vs. 62%), and significantly more likely to be 14-15 years old, compared with the general population (39% vs. 34%).

Among adolescents, substances commonly used for huffing include spray paint, glue, computer duster, cooking spray, and correction fluid. Sniffing highly concentrated amounts of vapors from some products can cause a syndrome known as “sudden sniffing death,” which can result after even a single session of inhalant use.

The most common causes of death as a result of inhalant use are sudden cardiac death and suffocation or asphyxiation. Chronic exposure to inhalants can also cause damage to the brain, heart, lungs, liver, and kidneys.

Educational campaigns about the dangers of inhalant abuse also must target parents, who according to the Partnership report are either not aware or are in denial about the prevalence of inhalant abuse among teens.

Of 1,200 parents of teens who were also surveyed, only 5% believe their ever-inhaled-inhalants; teens are four times more likely to report inhalant abuse than parents expect.

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