

USPSTF urges primary care docs to ask adults about drug use

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(HealthDay)—The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF)

recommends that primary care clinicians ask adults about drug use and connect them to services for treatment and appropriate care. These recommendations form the basis of a final recommendation statement published in the June 9 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

Carrie D. Patnode, Ph.D., M.P.H., from Kaiser Permanente in Portland, Oregon, and colleagues conducted a systematic review of the literature on screening and interventions for [drug](#) use to inform the USPSTF. Data were included from 99 studies with 84,206 participants. The researchers found that the sensitivity and specificity of screening tools for detecting unhealthy drug use varied from 0.71 to 0.94 and 0.87 to 0.97, respectively, among adults. Compared with no [psychosocial intervention](#), psychosocial interventions were associated with an increased likelihood of drug use abstinence (15 trials: relative risk, 1.60) and with a reduced number of drug-use days (19 trials: mean difference, -0.49 days in the last seven days) at three- to four-month follow-up.

Based on these findings, the USPSTF concludes with moderate certainty that screening by asking about unhealthy drug use has moderate net benefit when services for accurate diagnosis, [effective treatment](#), and appropriate care can be offered or referred (B recommendation). Due to a lack of evidence, the benefits and harms of screening for unhealthy drug use are uncertain for adolescents (I statement).

"Primary care clinicians can help by asking adults about their [drug use](#) and providing a connection to treatment and support for those who need it," USPSTF vice chair Karina Davidson, Ph.D., said in a statement.

More information: [Evidence Report](#)
[Final Recommendation Statement](#)
[Editorial](#)

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