

A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

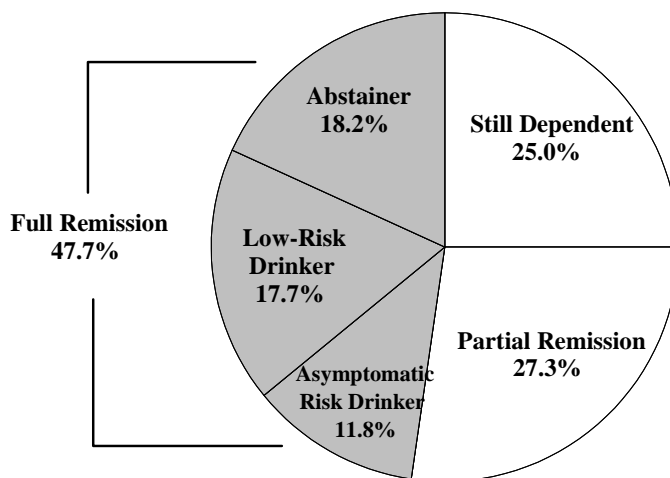
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Nearly One-Half of U.S. Adults with Prior Alcohol Dependence Were in Full Remission in the Past Year, Including Some Who Still Drink

There is a substantial level of recovery from alcohol dependence, according to an analysis of data from the 2001-02 National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions (NESARC). Of adults classified with alcohol dependence prior to the past year, 47.7% were diagnosed as being in full remission in the past year, either because they had abstained from alcohol (18.2%), were a low-risk drinker (17.8%), or were a risk drinker with no symptoms of abuse or dependence (11.8%). Remission rates were related to the number of years since the onset of dependence. For example, 11% of those who had been diagnosed with dependence less than five years ago were in remission in the past year, compared to 73% of those whose onset of dependence was 20 or more years ago (data not shown).

Past-Year Alcohol Use Status of U.S. Adults with Alcohol Dependence Diagnoses Prior to the Past Year

(N=4,422)



CAVEATS: Chronic alcoholics may be more likely to die than those who recover, which would inflate estimates of recovery. In addition, errors in recall may bias recovery estimates.

NOTES: The NESARC was a household survey of the civilian, non-institutionalized adult population of the United States. Persons who developed alcohol dependence in the year preceding the interview were excluded from analysis because they could not have had any other status in the past year other than still being dependent. Definitions of alcohol use disorders and remission are based on DSM-IV criteria.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Dawson, D.A., Grant, B.F., Stinson, F.S., Chou, P.S., Huang, B., Ruan, W.J. "Recovery from DSM-IV Alcohol Dependence: United States, 2001-2002," *Addiction*, OnlineEarly, January 14, 2005.

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