

Emerging Adults and Opioid Use Disorders

Holly Hills, Ph.D.

October 23, 2019

Lisbon Addictions 2019

Louis de la
Parte Florida
Mental Health
Institute



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH FLORIDA

COLLEGE OF BEHAVIORAL
& COMMUNITY SCIENCES

Emerging Adults and Opioid Use Disorders

Co-authors:

Tara Richards, PhD

Charles Dion, MA

Louis de la
Parte Florida
Mental Health
Institute



Emerging Adults and Opioid Use Disorders

Park et al. (2014) compared age-related groups (12-17 and 18-25 years of age) and found that past-month substance use increases ‘dramatically between adolescence and young adulthood’ (pg. 11).

Louis de la
Parte Florida
Mental Health
Institute



Emerging Adults and Opioid Use Disorders

Almost all individuals initiate substance use before adulthood and, with limited exceptions, substance use disorders onset 'before 25 years of age' (Pepier et al., 2016, pg. 350).

Louis de la
Parte Florida
Mental Health
Institute



Emerging Adults and Opioid Use Disorders

- Almost all individuals initiate substance use before adulthood and, with limited exceptions, substance use disorders onset ‘before 25 years of age’ (Pepier et al., 2016, pg. 350).
- It is estimated that over 20% of young adults (18-25 years) meet criteria for past-year substance use disorders (Gayman, Cuddeback, & Morrissey, 2011).

Louis de la
Parte Florida
Mental Health
Institute



Emerging Adults – Administrative Data

Descriptive analyses were used to examine Department of Children and Families (DCF-FL) service data and Medicaid claims data for the period between 7/1/14 and 12/31/16 for emerging adults (EA) enrolled in Managed Medical Assistance (MMA) plans in Florida.

Louis de la
Parte Florida
Mental Health
Institute



Emerging Adults and Opioid Use Disorders

Individual structured interviews were conducted at medication-assisted treatment (MAT) sites throughout Florida (n=42); content analysis was conducted using Atlas.ti V5.0 (Muhr, 2004).

Louis de la
Parte Florida
Mental Health
Institute



Emerging Adults and Opioid Use Disorders

Emerging adults (EA =18-24 years) made up 13.6% (n=9373) of the Medicaid service enrollees who received at least one substance use treatment service in the period evaluated.

Of this group, 21% (n=1938) had a primary diagnosis of 'Opioid type Dependence'. Of these, 39% were found to have received any MAT care during the period evaluated.

Louis de la
Parte Florida
Mental Health
Institute



Emerging Adults and Opioid Use Disorders

Interview sample (N=42):

- 52% female
- 71% Caucasian
- Average age – 23 years

Louis de la
Parte Florida
Mental Health
Institute



Emerging Adults and Opioid Use Disorders

Interview sample (N=42):

- Average age at first use = 15 years
- 32% of this group reported beginning their use at a very young age (9-12 years)
- Only 17% reported and SUD treatment service prior to age 18

Louis de la
Parte Florida
Mental Health
Institute



Emerging Adults and Opioid Use Disorders

Within the interview sample:

- 36% reported current treatment for a (non-substance mental disorder); 93% were receiving medication and 33% reported receiving some form of psychotherapy/counseling

Louis de la
Parte Florida
Mental Health
Institute



Emerging Adults and Opioid Use Disorders

- Analysis of interview data revealed multiple pathways to the initiation of use and eventual addiction
- Common historical themes in their reports included family histories of domestic violence, deaths (typically loss of parents), and unplanned pregnancies

Louis de la
Parte Florida
Mental Health
Institute



Emerging Adults and Opioid Use Disorders

- Reports of depression and/or anxiety in childhood, diminished performance in school, association with ‘wrong crowd’, and discord with parents were common themes
- The use of initially prescribed opiate medication was also identified as a pathway to addiction

Louis de la
Parte Florida
Mental Health
Institute



Summary / Recommendations related to Emerging Adults

- Treatment Access and Engagement:
 - Improve training around the use of screening measures for the identification of substance use disorders early in development, for primary care physicians and pediatricians.
 - Train staff in emergency facilities to utilize engagement strategies to improve conversion to care for individuals with SUDs.

Louis de la
Parte Florida
Mental Health
Institute



Summary / Recommendations related to Emerging Adults

- ‘Co-occurring’ Disorders:
 - Consistent with other epidemiological reports, early onset MH disorders can contribute to / signal risk for the development of SUDs – improve screening in PH settings / School environments

Louis de la
Parte Florida
Mental Health
Institute



Summary / Recommendations related to Emerging Adults

- Education:
 - Multiple interviewees commented that they were surprised how quickly they became addicted once they started using opiates – and found it nearly impossible to discontinue due to withdrawal experiences.

Louis de la
Parte Florida
Mental Health
Institute



Summary on Emerging Adults

- Questions?
- hills@usf.edu

Louis de la
Parte Florida
Mental Health
Institute

