

Cost of Substance Abuse in Wyoming 2010

What is a cost-of-illness study?

A cost-of-illness study estimates the economic burden imposed on society because of substance abuse. More to the point, a cost-of-illness study estimates the *potential* amount of money saved if substance abuse were eliminated.

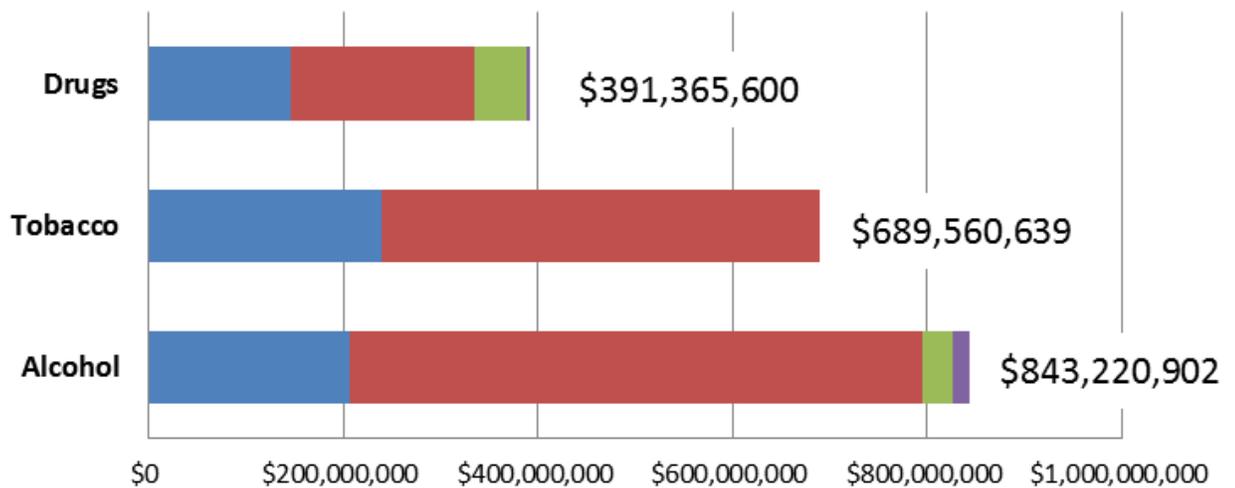
Why is this study important?

Cost-of-illness studies inform the decision making process by providing comparable estimates of the financial impacts of substance abuse. Cost-of-illness studies are routinely used by government agencies to justify and prioritize prevention, intervention, and research programs.

What substances were included in this study?

The total costs of alcohol abuse, tobacco use, and prescription and illicit drug abuse were estimated in this study.

How much does substance abuse cost Wyoming?



	Alcohol	Tobacco	Drugs
Health Care Costs	\$206,297,631	\$239,631,163	\$146,155,714
Total Productivity Losses	\$589,194,744	\$449,929,476	\$189,104,591
Crime Costs	\$30,370,956		\$53,118,881
Other Costs	\$17,357,571		\$2,986,414

What types of costs were tallied in this study?

The following major cost categories were included in this study:

Health care costs. These include the costs of treating substance abuse as well as the illnesses or injuries resulting from substance abuse.

Productivity losses. These include reduced earnings during 2010 for the abuser and victims of substance abuse-related crimes. Previous research has shown that individuals who abuse alcohol or drugs or who smoke cigarettes significantly underperform (presenteeism) and are sick more often (absenteeism) than individuals who do not abuse or use alcohol, drugs or tobacco. Productivity losses also include the lost earnings of individuals who die prematurely from substance abuse.

Other effects on society. These include the costs of crime and criminal justice, road accidents, and fire.

What portion of the total economic cost does the state of Wyoming bare?

Table 1 shows the costs to the state government as a result of substance abuse. WYSAC only included the costs associated with policing, legal, adjudication, corrections, and Wyoming's tobacco cessation program in the estimation of the state's proportion of total costs. The state's share of total economic costs of substance abuse was limited to these categories because WYSAC researchers were certain that the state paid 100% of the costs for these categories. WYSAC did not include the cost of Medicaid or Medicare in the state's proportion of the total economic costs because the relevant data set (i.e., hospital inpatient discharge data) did not include information on payer origin. Taking this highly conservative approach resulted in an underestimation of the cost of substance abuse to the state's budget.

Table 1. State Government's Proportion of Total Economic Costs, 2010

Substance	Total Economic Cost	Wyoming	
		Cost	Percentage
Alcohol	\$843,220,902	\$27,658,488	3.3%
Tobacco	\$689,560,639	\$1,218,500	0.2%
Drugs	\$391,365,600	\$48,897,539	12.5%

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