COMMENT. Adolescents with or without ADHD have a similar risk of psychoactive substance use disorders (PSUD), with a frequency of 15%. However, children with ADHD may be at higher risk for early-onset addictions than controls. PSUD in adolescents is associated with a history of conduct and bipolar disorders, but not oppositional defiant disorder, major depression, or anxiety disorders. The risk of PSUD is increased in adults with ADHD, and a sharp increase in PSUD may be expected in adolescent ADHD subjects as they become adults.

Comorbid ADHD and substance abuse. Comorbidity of ADHD among adolescents in treatment for substance abuse is reported from the National Center for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Veteran's Affairs Medical Center, West Haven, CT. (Horner BR, Scheibe KE. Prevalence and implications of attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder among adolescents in treatment for substance abuse. Lam 1997;36:30-36). Attempts to self-medicate symptoms of ADHD may underlie substance use and abuse, especially in previously untreated adolescents. Prescribed medical treatment for ADHD may decrease drug craving in adults with ADHD and improve functioning.

ADHD and cigarette smoking. ADHD, particularly when associated with conduct disorders, is a significant risk factor for early cigarette smoking in children and adolescents in a study at the Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston. (Milberger S, Biederman J, Faraone SV, Chen L, Jones J. ADHD is associated with early initiation of cigarette smoking in children and adolescents. <u>I Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry</u> Jan 1997;36:37-44).

ADHD AND MOTOR VEHICLE SKILLS AND RISKS

The motor vehicle skills, risks, and accidents in 25 young adults with ADHD were compared with 23 non-ADHD adult control subjects, aged 17 to 30 years, at the Departments of Psychiatry and Neurology, University of Massachusetts Medical Center, Worcester, MA. ADHD young adults were twice as likely to be cited for unlawful speeding, had more crashes, more accidents involving bodily injury, more likely to have licenses suspended, and poorer driving habits and performance despite adequate driving knowledge, when compared to controls. (Barkley RA, Murphy KR, Kwasnik D. Motor vehicle driving competencies and risks in teens and young adults with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Pediatrics Dec 1996;98:1089-1095). (Reprints: Russell A Barkley PhD, Department of Psychiatry, University of Massachusetts Medical Center, 55 Lake Ave North, Worcester, MA 01655).

COMMENT. This study confirms previous reports of an increased risk of motor vehicle accidents and injury among ADHD young adults. The findings indicate the need for continued treatment and supervision of adolescents with ADHD into adulthood, particularly in relation to self-regulation of motor control and lessening of impulsive behavior.

METHYLPHENIDATE USAGE FOR ADHD IN THE 1990s

The usage and usage trends for methylphenidate (MPH) treatment of ADHD from 1990 through 1995 were estimated by the Departments of Psychiatry and Pediatrics, Johs Hopkins University School of Medicine, Baltimore County Health Department, and the Schools of Pharmacy and Medicine, University of Maryland, Baltimore, MD. A review of regional and national databases showed a 2.5-fold increase in the prevalence of MPH treatment of youths with ADD in this time period. Approximately 2.8% (1.5