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Predictors of Substance Use Among Black Urban Adolescents with Asthma: A Longitudinal Assessment

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The physical and psychological consequences of asthma, a chronic respiratory disease disproportionately affecting black urban adolescents, may be amplified by substance use, yet studies have not assessed rates or predictors of substance use in this at-risk population. Therefore, this study examined rates of substance use and mental health/ asthma-related predictors of use among 110 black urban adolescents with asthma. Participants completed study questionnaires at baseline and 11 to 14 months post baseline. The mean age of the sample was 15.8 (SD \pm 1.85), 66 (60%) were female, and 82 (74%) of the participants had intermittent/mild persistent asthma. At follow-up, 37 (34%) participants endorsed using at least 1 substance in the past 30 days, including cannabis (n = 18 [16%]), cigarettes (n = 13 [12%]), and/or alcohol (n = 23 [21%]). The substance use variables were dichotomized for analyses (1 = use, 0 = nonuse). Logistic regression results indicated that older age (odds ratio [OR], 1.83; p < .05) was significantly associated with cigarette use and had a marginally significant (p = .06) association with cannabis use at follow-up. Increased anxiety symptoms were significantly associated with alcohol use (OR, 1.12; p < .05) and cannabis use (OR, 0.90; p < .05) at follow-up. Targeting adolescents earlier, those with anxiety difficulties, and those who report early substance initiation may improve prevention/intervention efforts for substance use reduction in this population. Asthma-related factors were not significantly associated with substance use. Future studies should assess the relationship between other asthma-related variables, as well as social and community factors, and substance use among black adolescents with asthma.

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Keywords

asthma; children/adolescents; African Americans; substance abuse/use

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