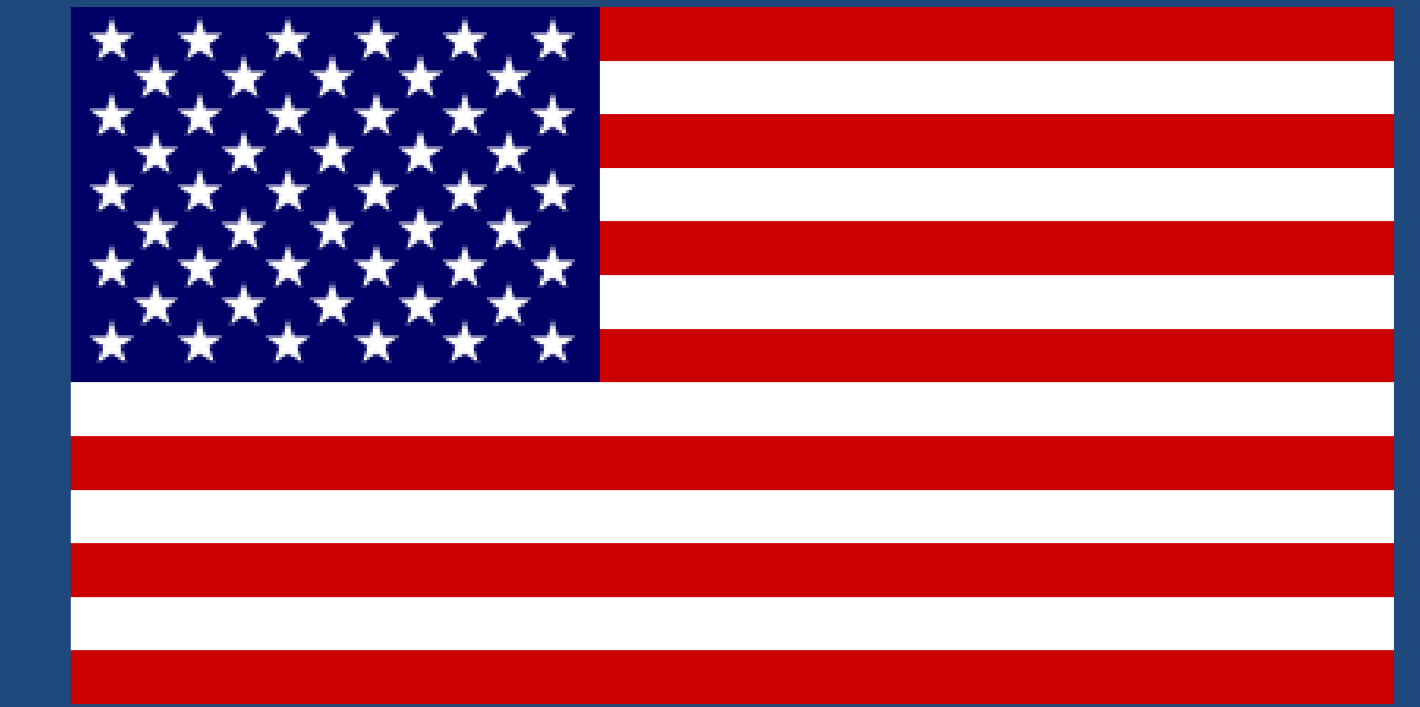


# Substance Abuse, Poverty and the United States

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## The Big Question

Does living in poverty in the United States of America lead to and/or result in addiction?

## Background

### Background of The United States

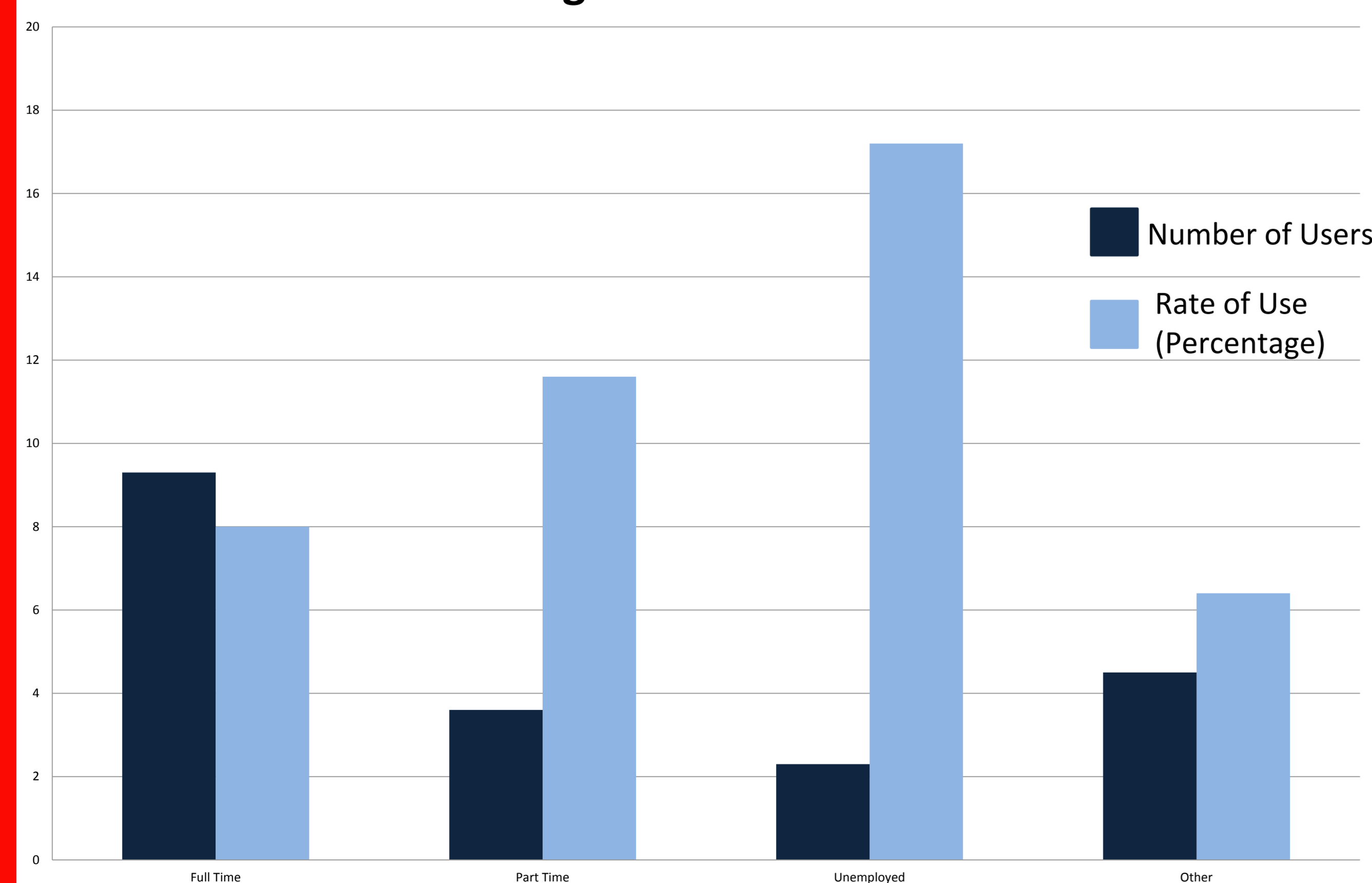
- Population: Over 308 745 000, as of 2010
- 1 in 6 American citizens struggle with poverty
- Minimum wage: \$7.25, Yearly income (with minimum wage): \$13, 900
- President Obama has reduced jobless rate from 8.1% to 7.8%

### Poverty and Addictions

- Addiction often overlooked as major health concern
- Rarely diagnosed by doctors
- Yearly poverty rate stays consistent
- Government introduced "Addiction Equity Act"
  - Law which requires health plans to provide coverage for substance use \*
- Substance abuse one of the most closely linked causes of poverty



### Illicit Drug Use in America 2011



## The Evidence

### Government Reports

- Complex social problems
- Drug and alcohol abuse rates are climbing rapidly
  - Population as a whole and as a minority
- Young teens
  - Drug use rates for teens aged 12-17: 10.1%
- Condensed or concentrated areas result in worse condition
  - Easier to receive and distribute

### Media Reports

- Connects substance abuse and poverty
- Focuses on rising poverty rate
- One main cause of poverty is debt

### National Agencies

- National Institute on Drug Abuse
  - Lists reasons for using drugs: early exposure, stress management and/or reality escape
  - Lists poverty as main risk factor for addictions
  - Suggests specialized programs for addicts living in poverty
- The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
  - Impoverished individuals aged 12 or older, 12.3% classified as being in need of substance abuse treatment
  - 9.5 million full-time workers use illegal drugs, 2.5 million unemployed people use illegal drugs

### But...

- Full-time workers only use drugs 8.2% of the time, while unemployed people use 17.4% of the time

## Conclusions

- Addiction is both a cause and effect of poverty in the United States of America
- Unemployed people use drugs more frequently
- Debt caused by addictions is prevalent when discussing poverty

## What Can Be Done?

### For the Government...

- Create more employment opportunities
- Implement a accessible health care system

### For the Schools...

- Address peer pressure, poverty, and substance abuse through assemblies and within the classroom

### For the Churches...

- Offer religious guidance
- Provide assistance in locating employment and residence opportunities
- Supply location for meetings and other fundraising events

### For the individual...

- Inform children and exemplify behaviour appropriate to be a role model
- Take the initiative to help others in the community when needed



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