

WEEK 1 (Begins with library instruction session)

For this exercise, you will work in groups of four to complete the task your group has been assigned in relation to “[Costs of Substance Abuse](http://www.drugabuse.gov/related-topics/trends-statistics)” available at this link: (<http://www.drugabuse.gov/related-topics/trends-statistics>) for the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

- **Group 1:** Track down the methodologies by which researchers arrived at the total annual cost figures for tobacco.
- **Group 2:** Track down the methodologies by which researchers arrived at the total annual cost figures for alcohol.
- **Group 3:** Track down the methodologies by which researchers arrived at the total annual cost figures for illicit drugs (Do these include misuse of prescription drugs as well as conventionally illegal drugs?).
- **Group 4:** Place these numbers in context. For example, the NIDA web page cites a \$700 billion annual cost for U.S. substance abuse. How does that number compare to annual U.S. healthcare costs total? To the U.S. GDP? To monies spent on treatment programs and research?

NOTE: Rather than just find a published article that cites the figure given on the NIDA page, the groups should try to track back to the original source for the research methods, find who completed the research, when it was completed, populations surveyed, assumptions made by the researchers, etc.

To complete this exercise, each group must take the following steps:

1. **Review the NIDA web page thoroughly** and try to assess for yourselves whether this counts as a credible source. Follow the links provided as sources for the data that appear in the table. Are these sources sufficient to answer your questions? Why or why not?
2. **Review your findings and determine where** you have enough information, where gaps remain, and any dissatisfaction with researchers’ assumptions, methods, data, transparency, etc.
3. **Create a ten-minute group PowerPoint presentation to present your findings.** All team members **MUST** present. The presentation should consist of four parts:

WEEK 2 Group presentations should address the following:

Part 1: This should show--as best you can, given time and information constraints--the sources, methods, key assumptions, researchers, currency of data, etc. that underpin the figures you were asked to investigate. Feel free to use a diagram to show how the different pieces fit together.

Part 2: This should be a list of any gaps you haven't been able to fill or questions that remain after your brief investigation.

Part 3: This should consist of "lessons learned" from this research scavenger hunt.

Part 4: A final slide where you list your sources