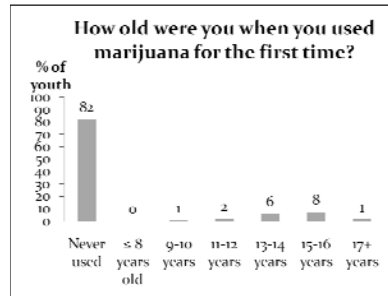


Drug Use

Over 17% of youth reported using marijuana at least once in their life

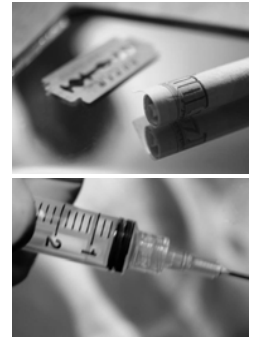
Over 17% of youth across all age groups said that they had tried smoking marijuana at least once in their life. The majority of youth who used marijuana first tried it when they were between 13 and 16 years of age. Only one percent of youth first tried marijuana when they were ten years or younger. There is no difference between males and females and the age that they reported first using marijuana. Youth in the focus groups commented that they thought the percentage of youth who had used marijuana should be higher.



Use of cocaine, heroin, crystal meth, ecstasy, inhalants among youth is low

Very few youth reported using drugs other than marijuana in the study. Less than two percent of youth across all age groups used drugs such as cocaine, heroin, methamphetamines and ecstasy in their lives. However, about 4% of youth said that they have used inhalants (sniffed glue, breathed the contents of aerosol spray cans, or inhaled paints or sprays to get high), at least once in their life.

Older youth were generally the ones who were reporting trying these other drugs (15 years or older). The use of inhalants is the exception to this though, as even 0.3% of youth 12 years and younger reported using them (compared to 0.2% of youth that age who reported using marijuana).



Marijuana use linked to use of alcohol, tobacco and other substances

Among youth 15 years and older, the amount of alcohol consumed in a month is positively linked to marijuana use. Marijuana use is also highly related to smoking, and youth who have smoked more cigarettes in their lives are more likely to smoke marijuana.

The use of marijuana is also linked to increased use of other illegal drugs such as ecstasy, glue and other inhalants, cocaine, heroin and methamphetamines. The majority of youth who reported using these other substances were also more likely to have used marijuana, and used it more frequently.



Fewer than 1% report using prescription drugs without a prescription

Youth were asked about their prescription drug use, both with a prescription and without, over the last year. With the exception of pain relief, less than 1% of students have used oxycontin, stimulants, sedatives, or Ritalin with a prescription. Over 28% of youth have used pain relief because a doctor told them to. There were no strong relationships with the gender and age of students with the exception of using pain relievers. Older students used more pain relievers with a prescription because a doctor told them to.

Prescription drug use without a doctor's prescription again was low. Less than one percent used oxycontin, sedatives and Ritalin over the last year. However, more students used stimulants without a prescription. In addition, over 21% used pain relievers without a prescription.



"[In rural areas] we minimize the use- it's OK it's only alcohol. It's an attitude. There are some who say it's only marijuana at least it's not the hard stuff."

- Key Informant