

# Illicit Drug Use Among Adolescents: Current Trends in Use and Strategies for Prevention

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# Teens and Drugs in United States: General Overview

- Burden of drug use
- Adolescence and drug use
- Prevalence and trends in use
- Determinants of use
- Strategies for prevention

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# Illicit Drug Use in the United States

- Accounts for ~17,000 deaths annually
- Morbidity and public health impacts
  - Injury and motor vehicle crashes
  - Child abuse & neglect and violence
  - Risk behaviors linked to comorbidities
- Societal costs
  - Over \$160 billion annually
  - Lost productivity, criminal justice, social services

Mokdad et al. Actual causes of death in the United States, 2000. JAMA 2004;291(10):1238-45.  
NIDA. Drug Abuse and Addiction: One of America's Most Challenging Public Health Problems, 2005.

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## Drug Use During Adolescence

- Developmental step in life
  - Identity formation and separation
  - Chemical altering of healthy brain maturation
- Establishment of high-risk behaviors
  - Sexually transmitted disease and HIV
  - Unintended pregnancy
  - Substance abuse disorders
- Negative outcomes
  - Poor academic performance
  - Depression and suicidal behaviors
  - Delinquent and violent behavior

Hallfors et al. American Journal of Preventive Medicine 2004;27(3):224-31.  
SAMHSA. The NHSDA Report: Youth violence and substance use: 2001 update.

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## National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)\*

- Representative 50 States & District of Columbia
- Include civilian, noninstitutionalized persons  $\geq$  12 yrs
- Face-to-face interviews with computer-assisted, self-administered questionnaire
- 67,784 respondents participated from January–December 2003
- 2003 data comparable with 2002 data, but not with data prior to 2002

\* Previously called National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHSDA)

Overview of Findings from the 2003 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. Office of Applied Studies, NSDUH Series H-24, DHHS Publication No. SMA 04-3963

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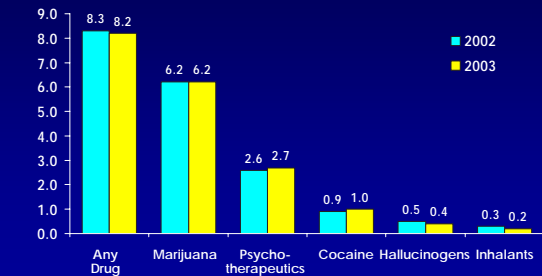
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## Use of Selected Illicit Drugs Among Persons Aged 12 or Older: 2002 and 2003

Percent Using in Past Month



Overview of Findings from the 2003 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. Office of Applied Studies, NSDUH Series H-24, DHHS Publication No. SMA 04-3963

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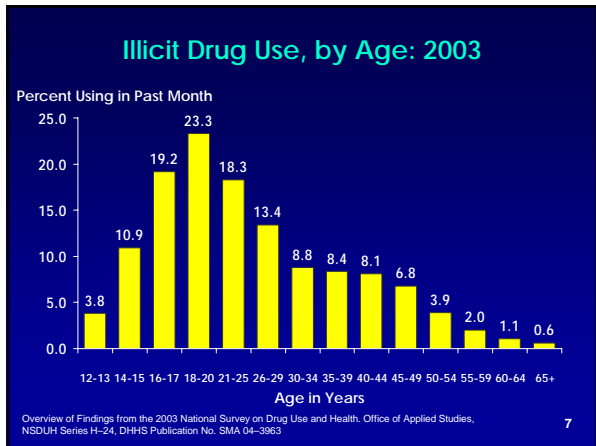
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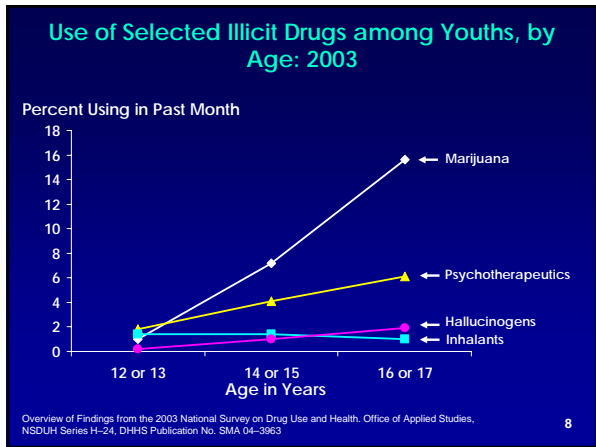
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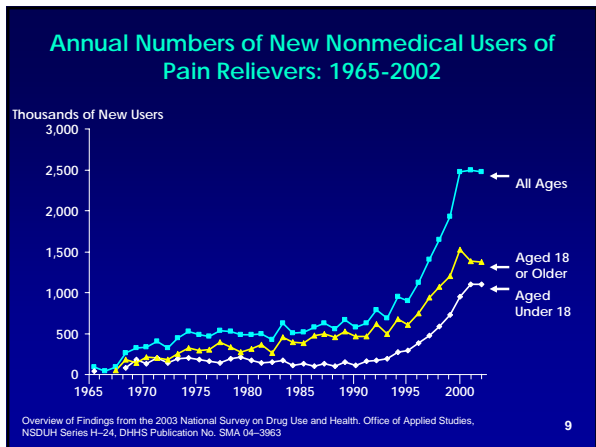
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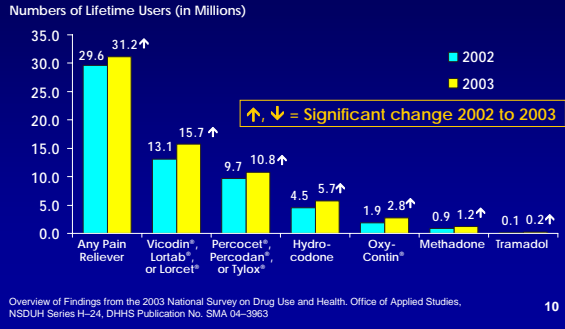
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### Lifetime Nonmedical Users of Selected Pain Relievers Among Persons Aged 12 or Older: 2002 and 2003




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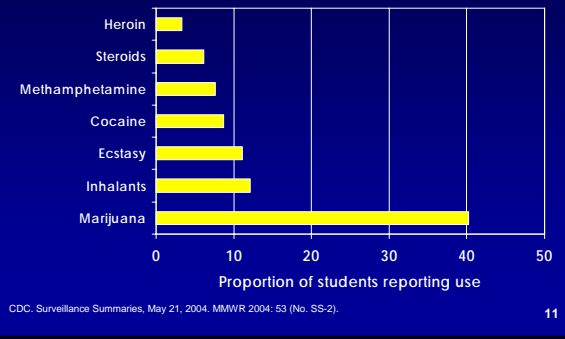
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### Adolescents and Lifetime Use of Illicit Drugs - United States, 2003




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### Trends in Adolescent Drug Use: 2002-2004

- Over 50% of teens have tried an illicit drug by time of high school completion
- Marijuana, methamphetamine, LSD, ecstasy, and steroid use declined
- Heroin, cocaine, and GHB held steady
- OxyContin and inhalant use increased
- Use trends of specific drugs influenced by perceived risk, new drug "grace" periods, and "generational forgetting" of older drugs

Johnston, et al. Monitoring the Future National Results on Adolescent Drug Use: Overview of Key Findings, 2004. NIDA, (NIH Publication No. 05-5726).

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## Determinants of Teen Drug Use

- Social acceptability
- Parental influence
- Use promotion
- Substance availability
- Drug policies

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## Social Acceptability and Parental Influence

- Linked to belief in harm to health/well-being
- Parental disapproval
- Use contrary to personal values
  - Perception of immorality associated with use
- Relationship with peer culture
  - Decreased use if teen involved in organized activities

Columbia University Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse; National survey of American attitudes on substance abuse X: teens and parents, 2005

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## Use Promotion and Availability

- 1 in 6 youths reported having been approached by someone selling drugs\* (NSDUH)
  - If approached, more likely to use
- Teens at schools where drugs used, kept, or sold more likely to use\*\*
- Popular media influences use behaviors\*\*
- Illegality of drugs deters use\*\*

\* NSDUH; \*\* CASA 2005 teen survey

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### Policy Approaches to Affect Availability

- Regulating methamphetamine precursors
- Implementing controlled substances monitoring systems
- Eliminating prescription fraud, diversion, and Internet sales
- Impacts of price adjusting

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### Environmental Strategies to Deter Use

- Drug-free school and neighborhoods
- Reliable and consistent code enforcement
- Counter-advertising
- Elimination of broken-down buildings in communities
- Citizen watch programs

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### Summary

- Illicit drug use among adolescents is a serious concern in the United States today
- Multiple factors determine teen drug use
  - Need to be considered in designing successful interventions to prevent use among youth
- A multi-strategic approach is necessary to effectively reduce the burden of drug use

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