

The NSDUH Report

March 9, 2007

Use of Marijuana and Blunts among Adolescents: 2005

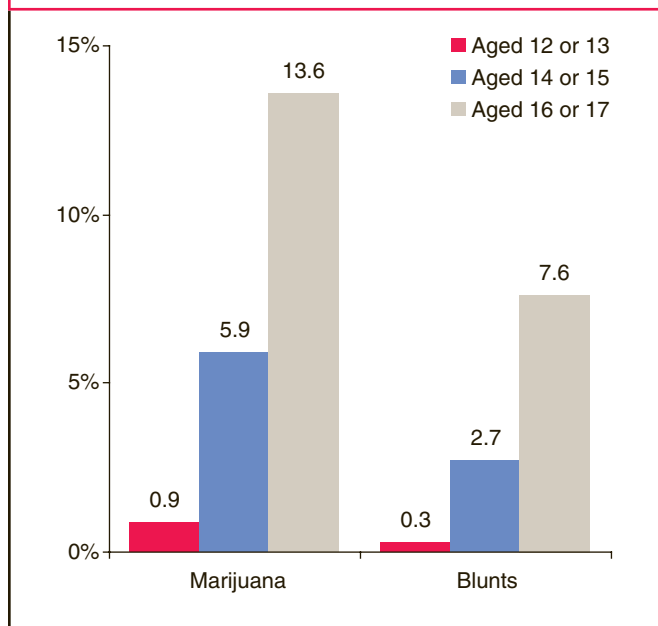
In Brief

- In 2005, 6.8 percent of youths aged 12 to 17 used marijuana in the past month, and 3.5 percent had used cigars with marijuana in them (“blunts”) in the past month
- Among youths, past month use of both marijuana and blunts increased with age and was more likely among males than females (marijuana: 7.5 vs. 6.2 percent; blunts: 4.2 vs. 2.9 percent)
- Among past month marijuana users aged 12 to 17, those in the Northeast were more likely to have used blunts in the past month than those in the Midwest and West (62.5 vs. 48.3 and 43.1 percent), and those in the South were more likely to have used blunts than those in the West (54.4 vs. 43.1 percent)

Marijuana is the most commonly used illicit drug among adolescents.¹ The replacement of tobacco in cigars with marijuana (also referred to by the slang term “blunts”²) provides a delivery mechanism for marijuana; moreover, the use of blunts among adolescents has been associated with male gender, living in a metropolitan area, lower grade point average, and truancy.^{3,4} The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) includes questions on the use of marijuana and blunts. Respondents who reported lifetime use of marijuana or blunts were asked to report when they last used these substances, including whether they used them in the 30 days prior to being interviewed (i.e., in the past month). *Blunt use* is defined as smoking part or all of a cigar with marijuana in it.

NSDUH also includes questions about academic characteristics of youths aged 12 to 17 enrolled in school. Youths aged 12 to 17 who reported being enrolled in school during the past year were asked about their average grades during the last semester or grading period.⁵ In addition, youths who were enrolled full time in the past 30 days were asked whether they skipped school in the past month.⁶

Figure 1. Percentages of Past Month Marijuana and Blunt Use among Youths Aged 12 to 17, by Age Group: 2005



Source: SAMHSA, 2005 NSDUH.

This report focuses on past month marijuana and blunt use among youths aged 12 to 17.⁷ Data are presented by demographic and academic characteristics. All findings are based on data from the 2005 NSDUH.

Past Month Marijuana Use

In 2005, 6.8 percent of youths aged 12 to 17 (1.7 million persons) used marijuana in the past month. Marijuana use increased with age (Figure 1) and was more likely among males than females in this age group (7.5 vs. 6.2 percent). American Indian or Alaska Native youths were more likely to have used marijuana in the past month than youths in other racial categories, and Asian youths were less likely to have used marijuana than those in other racial categories (Table 1). Rates of past month marijuana use were similar for different regions and county types.

Past month use of marijuana was related to academic characteristics. Among youths aged 12 to 17 who were enrolled in school in the past year, those with higher grade averages were less likely to have used marijuana in the past month than those with lower grade averages (Figure 2). For example, 17.9 percent of students with a past semester grade average of D or lower used marijuana in the past month compared with 3.1 percent of students with an A average. Among youths aged 12 to 17 who were full-time students during the month before the survey, those who skipped school were almost 4 times

Table 1. Percentages of Past Month Marijuana and Blunt Use among Youths Aged 12 to 17, by Race/Ethnicity*: 2005

Race/Ethnicity	Marijuana Use		Blunt Use	
	Percent	SE**	Percent	SE
White	7.2	0.27	3.5	0.18
Black	7.2	0.61	4.5	0.47
American Indian or Alaska Native	14.9	3.45	3.9	1.30
Asian	1.5	0.51	1.1	0.46
Two or More Races	6.8	1.19	4.9	1.02
Hispanic	6.3	0.64	3.4	0.45

Source: SAMHSA, 2005 NSDUH.

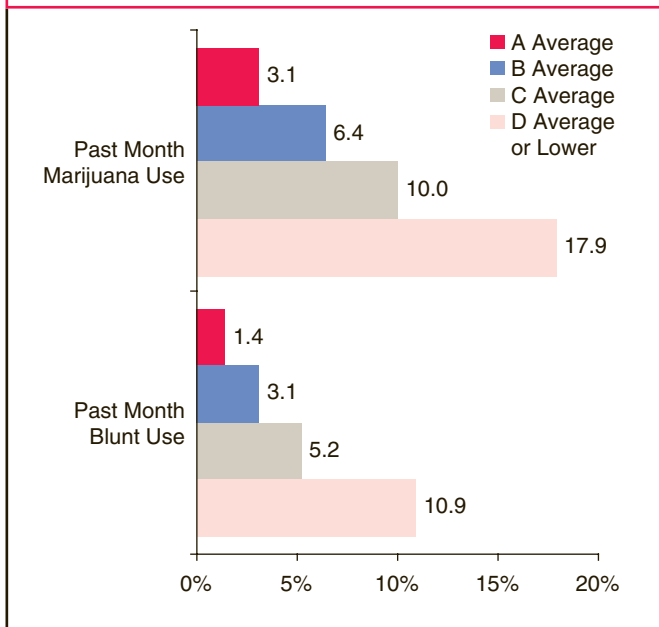
as likely as those who did not skip school to have used marijuana in the past month (17.6 vs. 4.7 percent).

Past Month Blunt Use

In 2005, among all youths aged 12 to 17, 3.5 percent (891,000 persons) had used blunts in the past month. As with marijuana use, past month blunt use was more likely among males than females (4.2 vs. 2.9 percent) and increased with age (Figure 1). Asian youths were less likely to have used blunts in the past month than youths in other racial categories (Table 1). Youths in the Northeast (5.0 percent) were more likely to have used blunts in the past month than those in the South (3.4 percent), Midwest (3.3 percent), and the West (2.9 percent). Youths in non-metropolitan areas were less likely to have used blunts in the past month than those in large and small metropolitan areas (2.4 percent vs. 3.9 and 3.5 percent, respectively).

Past month blunt use also was related to academic characteristics. Among youths aged 12 to 17 who were enrolled in school in the past year, those with higher grade averages were less likely to have used blunts in the past month than those with lower grade averages (Figure 2). Students with a past semester grade average of D or lower were 8 times as likely as students with an A average to have used blunts in the past month (10.9 vs. 1.4 percent). Among youths aged 12 to 17 who were full-time students during the month before the survey, those

Figure 2. Percentages of Past Month Marijuana and Blunt Use among Students Aged 12 to 17, by Past Semester Grade Average*: 2005**



Source: SAMHSA, 2005 NSDUH.

who skipped school were over 4 times as likely as those who did not skip school to have used blunts in the past month (9.8 vs. 2.3 percent).

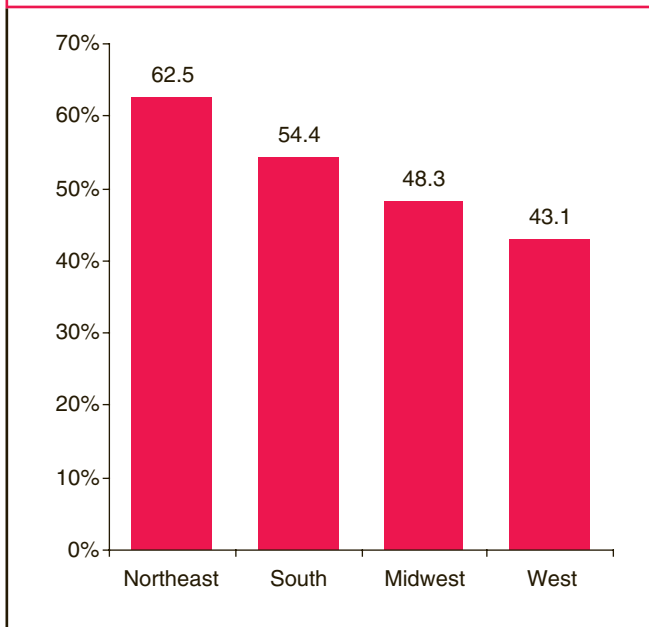
Past Month Blunt Use among Past Month Marijuana Users

In 2005, approximately half (52.0 percent) of past month marijuana users aged 12 to 17 also used blunts in the past month. Males aged 12 to 17 who used marijuana in the past month were more likely than their female counterparts to have used blunts in the past month (55.6 vs. 47.5 percent). Among past month marijuana users aged 12 to 17, those in the Northeast were more likely to have used blunts in the past month than those in the Midwest and West (62.5 vs. 48.3 and 43.1 percent), and those in the South were more likely to have used blunts than those in the West (54.4 vs. 43.1 percent) (Figure 3). Although rates of past month marijuana use among youths were similar by county type, adolescent marijuana users in non-metropolitan areas were less likely to use blunts than their counterparts in small and large metropolitan areas (37.7 percent vs. 51.0 and 56.7 percent, respectively). Among past month marijuana users, rates of past month blunt use were similar across academic characteristics.

End Notes

¹ Office of Applied Studies. (2006). *Results from the 2005 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National findings* (DHHS Publication No. SMA

Figure 3. Percentages of Past Month Blunt Use among Past Month Marijuana Users Aged 12 to 17, by Region: 2005



Source: SAMHSA, 2005 NSDUH.

06-4194, NSDUH Series H-30). Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

- ² This is not to be interpreted to mean that cigar brands with "blunts" in their names contain marijuana.
- ³ Soldz, S., Huyser, D. J., & Dorsey, E. (2003). The cigar as a drug delivery device: Youth use of blunts. *Addiction, 98*, 1379-1386.
- ⁴ Golub, A., Johnson, B. D., & Dunlap, E. (2005). The growth in marijuana use among American youths during the 1990s and the extent of blunt smoking. *Journal of Ethnicity in Substance Abuse, 4*(3-4), 1-21.
- ⁵ Youths who did not attend school in the past 12 months, students with unknown or missing data on the grade average measure, and students who indicated that they attended schools that did not give letter grades were excluded from this analysis.
- ⁶ Youths who currently (i.e., in the past 30 days) were not full-time students and students with unknown or missing data on whether they skipped school were excluded from this analysis.
- ⁷ This analysis excludes respondents for whom information on blunt use or recency of use was unknown. In addition, respondents were excluded from this analysis if they reported blunt use but not marijuana use.

Figure and Table Notes

* Race/ethnicity categories are determined by combining the responses from two separate questions. For this report, respondents identifying themselves as Hispanic were assigned to the Hispanic group regardless of their racial identification. Respondents identifying themselves as non-Hispanic were grouped according to their racial identification. Thus, "white" refers to those identifying themselves as non-Hispanic and white. Data on Native Hawaiians or Other Pacific Islanders were excluded because of low precision.

** SE = Standard Error.

***Youths who did not attend school in the past 12 months, students with unknown or missing data on the grade average measure, and students who indicated that they attended schools that did not give letter grades were excluded from this analysis.

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Research findings from the SAMHSA 2005 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)

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The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) is an annual survey sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Prior to 2002, this survey was called the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHSDA). The 2005 data used in this report are based on information obtained from 22,534 youths aged 12 to 17. The survey collects data by administering questionnaires to a representative sample of the population through face-to-face interviews at their place of residence.

The NSDUH Report is prepared by the Office of Applied Studies (OAS), SAMHSA, and by RTI International in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. (RTI International is a trade name of Research Triangle Institute.)

Information on NSDUH used in compiling data for this report is available in the following publication:

Office of Applied Studies. (2006). *Results from the 2005 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National findings* (DHHS Publication No. SMA 06-4194, NSDUH Series H-30). Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Also available online: <http://www.oas.samhsa.gov>.

Because of improvements and modifications to the 2002 NSDUH, estimates from the 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 surveys should not be compared with estimates from the 2001 or earlier versions of the survey to examine changes over time.



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