

2011

Monitoring the Future Study

HIGHLIGHTS

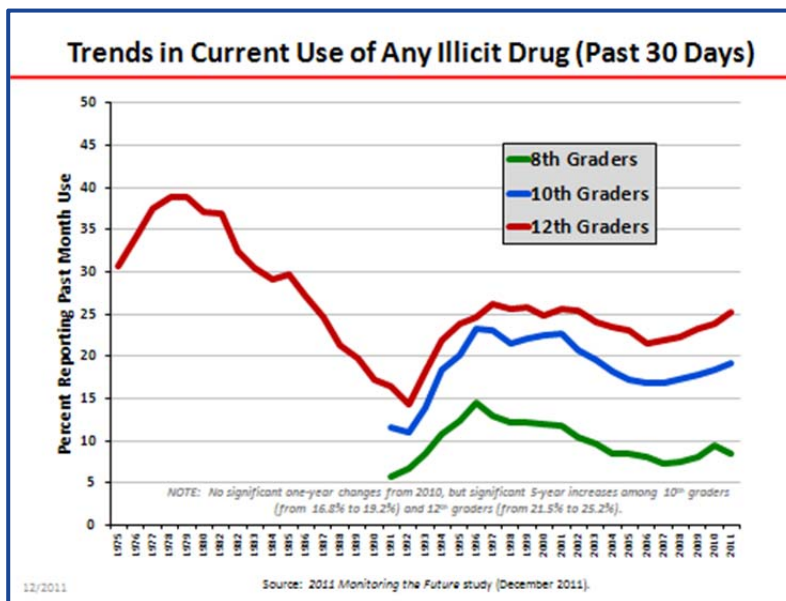
Monitoring the Future (MTF) is a nationally representative annual survey of 8th, 10th, and 12th graders conducted by the University of Michigan and funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA).

2011: No Change in Overall Drug Use, but Encouraging Reductions in Specific Drug Categories

This year's survey results, released in December 2011, indicate that overall drug use, as measured by past-month use of any illicit drug, in each of the three grades was unchanged from last year (see chart). That is, there were no statistically significant changes. However, a number of drug categories showed statistically significant reductions between 2010 and 2011 for some grades.

These include the following declines:

- Past-year use of **Vicodin** among 10th graders (7.7% to 5.9%);
- Past-year use of **any illicit drug**, including inhalants, among 8th graders (20.3% to 18.2%);
- Past-year use of **inhalants** among 8th graders (8.1% to 7.0%);
- Past-year use of **inhalants** among 10th graders (5.7% to 4.5%);
- Past-year use of **crack cocaine** among 12th graders (1.4% to 1.0%);
- Past-year use of **amphetamines** among 10th graders (7.6% to 6.6%);



- Past-year use of **tranquilizers** among 8th graders (2.8% to 2.0%);
- Past-year use of **over-the-counter cough/cold medicine** among 12th graders (6.6% to 5.3%);
- Past-month use of **hallucinogens** other than LSD among 12th graders (1.5% to 1.2%);
- Past-year and past-month use of **Ecstasy** among 8th graders (2.4% to 1.7% and 1.1% to 0.6%, respectively); and
- Past-year use of **androstenedione** (a steroid) among 12th graders (1.5% to 0.7%).

Other data from the survey showed continued decreases in the use of alcohol and tobacco products in 2011 for some grades, as well as numerous declines among all grades in the perceived availability of specific substances.

A Call for Action: New Information on the Use of Synthetic Marijuana

- One of the most noteworthy findings of the latest MTF survey involved the use by 12th graders of **synthetic marijuana (specifically “Spice” and “K2”)**, which consists of leaves of an ordinary plant sprayed by chemicals that mimic the mind-altering effects of marijuana.
- The 2011 MTF study included for the first time a question on past-year use of synthetic marijuana among high school seniors. The results indicate that the **prevalence of use in the past year among 12th graders was estimated at 11.4%**. Synthetic marijuana ranks as the second most frequently used illicit substance, after marijuana, among high school seniors.
- **Action to address this new threat.**
 - In September 2011, the DEA used its emergency scheduling authority to ban the sale of the chemicals used to manufacture K2 and Spice.
 - ONDCP has brought together public health and safety agencies from across the Federal Government to share data and coordinate the Federal response to new synthetic drugs.
 - The House of Representatives passed legislation that would ban synthetic drugs to include those marketed as “bath salts.” (And many states have taken action to ban the chemicals found in K2 and Spice, as well.)
 - Given the latest data, ONDCP will be reaching out to a nationwide network of state and local public health and safety organizations to provide them with the latest information on this public health threat and spur action at the local level.

Marijuana Drives Trends in Overall Illicit Drug Use

Although the MTF study found no statistically significant increases in past-month use of any illicit drug among the three grades between 2010 and 2011, there has been an upward trend in use over the past five years among 10th and 12th graders:

- **Past-month use of any illicit drug among 10th graders** increased from 16.8% in 2006 to 19.2% in 2011.

ONDCP seeks to foster healthy individuals and safe communities by effectively leading the Nation’s effort to reduce drug use and its consequences.

- **Past-month use of any illicit drug among 12th graders** increased from 21.5% in 2006 to 25.2% in 2011.

For 8th graders, the 2011 estimate of 8.5% is statistically unchanged from the 2006 estimate of 8.1%.

Because most drug users use marijuana either by itself or in combination with other substances, marijuana typically drives the trends in estimates of any illicit drug use. Not surprisingly, then, the trends in past-month use of marijuana mirror the trends for past-month use of any illicit drug in all three grades:

- **Past-month use of marijuana among 10th graders** increased from 14.2% in 2006 to 17.6% in 2011.
- **Past-month use of marijuana among 12th graders** increased from 18.3% in 2006 to 22.6% in 2011.

For 8th graders, the 2011 estimate of 7.2% is statistically unchanged from the 2006 estimate of 6.5%.

These data on marijuana use are of particular concern since trends in the perception of harm of smoking marijuana also have been declining over the same period of time. Prior research indicates that declines in these perceptions are predictive of increases in use.

Warning Signs

The latest survey results found very few increases in the use of specific substances in the three grades between 2010 and 2011. Those increases included:

- Past-month use of **Ecstasy** among 12th graders (1.4% to 2.3%);
- Lifetime use of **Rohypnol** among 8th graders (0.9% to 2.0%); and
- Past-year use of **steroids** among 8th graders (0.5% to 0.7%).

A Balanced National Drug Control Strategy

While the 2011 MTF Study indicates some encouraging downward trends in the use of some substances, overall drug use has increased since 2006 and remains unacceptably high. The Obama Administration is pursuing a balanced strategy to:

- prevent illicit drug use in our communities;
- intervene early in the health care system;
- strengthen drug treatment services and support those in recovery;
- break the cycle of drug use, crime, and incarceration;
- disrupt domestic drug production and trafficking;
- strengthen international partnerships; and
- improve drug-related information systems.



Office of National Drug Control Policy

www.WhiteHouse.gov/ondcp

www.TheAntiDrug.com

www.AboveTheInfluence.com

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