

# The NHSDA Report

November 1, 2002

## Illicit Drug Use among Hispanic Females

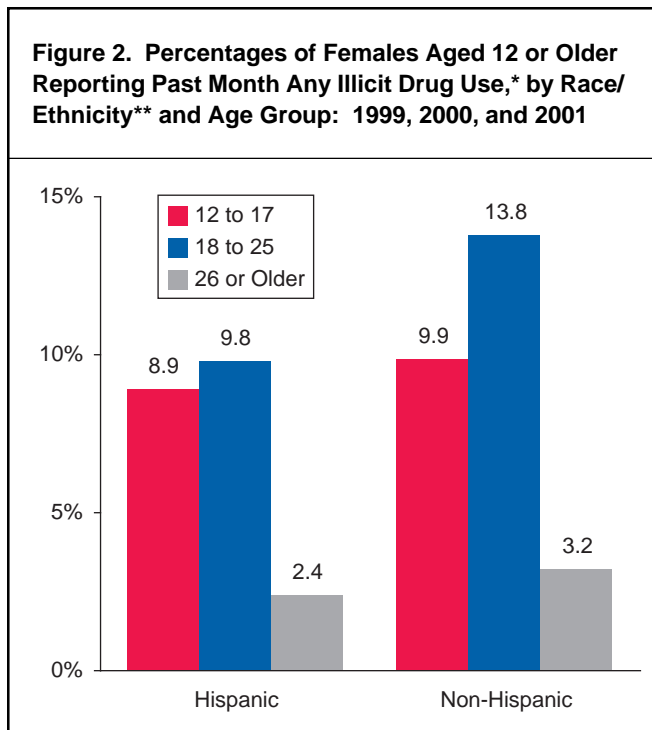
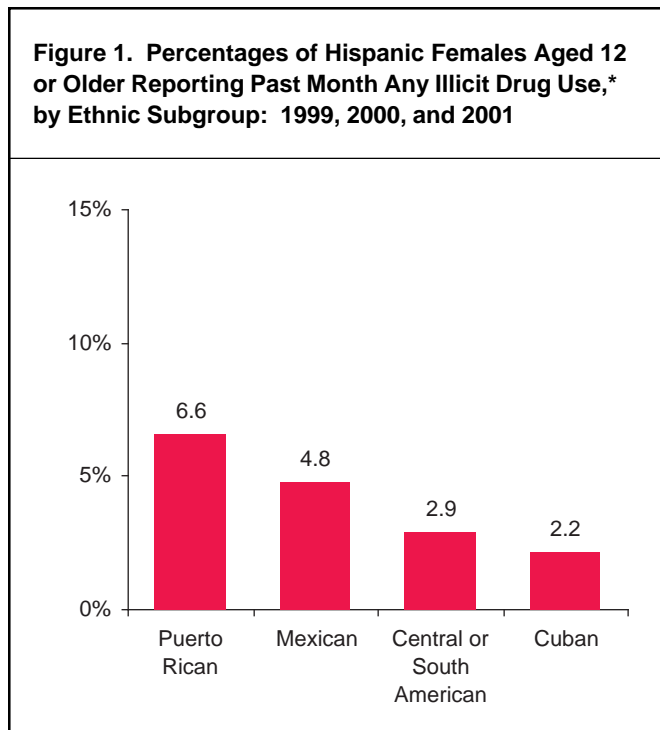
### In Brief

- Hispanic females were less likely than Hispanic males to use illicit drugs, and rates were similar among Hispanic and non-Hispanic females
- Puerto Rican or Mexican Hispanic females were more likely to use illicit drugs than were their Central or South American or Cuban peers
- In nonmetropolitan counties, Hispanic females were more likely to use illicit drugs than non-Hispanic females

The National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHSDA) asks respondents aged 12 or older about their use of illicit drugs during the month prior to the survey interview. “Any illicit drug” refers to marijuana/hashish, cocaine (including crack), inhalants, hallucinogens, heroin, or any prescription-type drugs used nonmedically. The survey also asks females aged 15 to 44 about their pregnancy status at the time of the interview. Data were analyzed by race and ethnic subgroups and by geographic region for comparative purposes.<sup>1</sup> Findings for subgroups of Hispanic and non-Hispanic females are annual averages based on combined data from the 1999, 2000, and 2001 NHSDAs.<sup>2</sup>

### Prevalence of Illicit Drug Use among Hispanic Females

In 2001, there were an estimated 25 million Hispanics aged 12 or older in the United States, 13 million of whom were female. Hispanic females (5 percent) were less likely than Hispanic males (8 percent) to use illicit



drugs during the past month. Among females aged 12 or older, rates were similar for Hispanic and non-Hispanic females (6 percent). During 1999–2001, the annual average rate of past month any illicit drug use was higher among Puerto Rican or Mexican females compared with Central or South American or Cuban females (Figure 1).

### Age Differences

Among Hispanic and non-Hispanic females, youths aged 12 to 17 and young adults aged 18 to 25 were more likely than older adults aged 26 or older to use any illicit drug during the past month (Figure 2). Among non-Hispanic females, the rate was higher for those aged 18 to 25 compared with the rate for 12 to 17 year olds. Rates of any illicit drug use during the past month were similar among Hispanic and non-Hispanic females aged 12 to 17, but older Hispanic females were less likely

than their non-Hispanic peers to use any illicit drug during the same time period.

### Geographic Differences

During 1999–2001, Hispanic females from the Midwest (8 percent) were more likely than those from the South (3 percent) or West (5 percent) to report past month use of any illicit drug. Among non-Hispanic females, however, the rate was higher in the West (6 percent) relative to the other regions (5 percent each).

### County Type

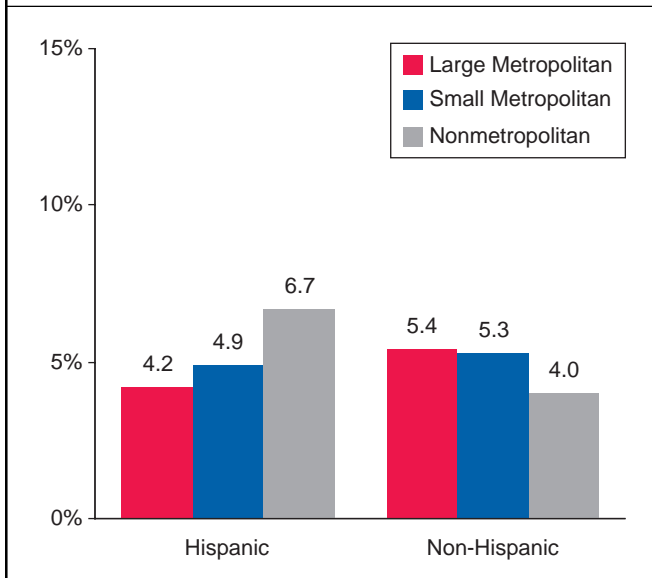
Among females living in counties in large metropolitan areas, Hispanics were less likely to use an illicit drug during the past month than were non-Hispanics (Figure 3).<sup>3</sup> In counties in nonmetropolitan areas, this relationship was reversed; Hispanic females were more likely to use an illicit drug during the past

month than their non-Hispanic peers.

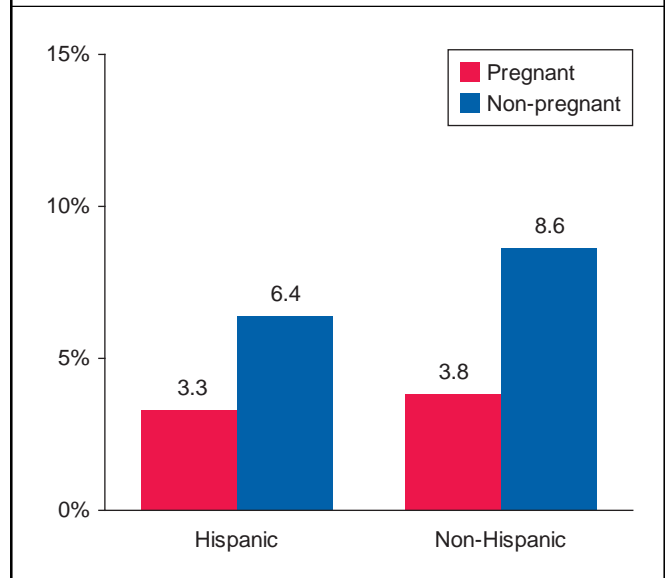
### Illicit Drug Use among Pregnant Females<sup>4</sup>

The annual average rate of past month any illicit drug use was lower among Hispanic pregnant females aged 15 to 44 (3 percent) relative to non-pregnant Hispanic females aged 15 to 44 (6 percent) (Figure 4). A similar finding was observed for non-Hispanic females (4 percent among pregnant vs. 9 percent among non-pregnant).

**Figure 3. Percentages of Females Aged 12 or Older Reporting Past Month Any Illicit Drug Use,\* by Race/Ethnicity\*\* and County Type: 1999, 2000, and 2001**



**Figure 4. Percentages of Females Aged 15 to 44 Reporting Past Month Any Illicit Drug Use,\* by Race/Ethnicity\*\* and Pregnancy Status: 1999, 2000, and 2001**



**End Notes**

- Regions include the following groups of States:
  - Northeast Region:** Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania.
  - Midwest Region:** Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri.
  - South Region:** Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee, West Virginia, Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, District of Columbia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana.
  - West Region:** Idaho, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, California, Oregon, Washington, Hawaii, Alaska.
- These analyses are based on data obtained from 13,422 Hispanic females aged 12 or older.
- Large metropolitan areas have a population of 1 million or more. Small metropolitan areas have a population of fewer than 1 million. Nonmetropolitan areas are outside of Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), as defined by the Office of Management and Budget.
- Note that these are conservative estimates of illicit drug use during pregnancy because they reflect use only in the past month, not during the entire pregnancy.

**Figure Notes**

Source (all figures): SAMHSA, 1999–2001 NHSDAs.

\* “Any illicit drug” refers to marijuana/hashish, cocaine (including crack), inhalants, hallucinogens, heroin, or any prescription-type drugs used nonmedically.

\*\* Includes white, black, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, or more than one race.

The National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHSDA) is an annual survey sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The 1999, 2000, and 2001 data are based on information obtained from 207,470 persons aged 12 or older (about 70,000 each year), of which 13,422 were Hispanic females aged 12 or older. 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 NHSDA Report is prepared by the Office of Applied Studies (OAS), SAMHSA, and by RTI in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina.

Information and data for this issue are based on the following publication and statistics:

Office of Applied Studies. (2000). *Summary of findings from the 1999 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse* (DHHS Publication No. SMA 00-3466, NHSDA Series: H-12). Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Office of Applied Studies. (2001). *Summary of findings from the 2000 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse* (DHHS Publication No. SMA 01-3549, NHSDA Series: H-13). Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Office of Applied Studies. (2002). *Results from the 2001 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse: Volume I. Summary of national findings* (DHHS Publication No. SMA 02-3758, NHSDA Series H-17). Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Also available on-line: <http://www.DrugAbuseStatistics.samhsa.gov>.

Additional tables available upon request.



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