

MetLife Foundation

THE PARTNERSHIP™
AT DRUGFREE.ORG

2012 PARTNERSHIP ATTITUDE TRACKING STUDY
Sponsored by MetLife Foundation

Teens and Parents

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THE PARTNERSHIP[™] AT DRUGFREE.ORG

Ninety percent of addictions start in the teenage years. [The Partnership at Drugfree.org](#) is dedicated to solving the problem of teen substance abuse. Together with experts in science, parenting and communications, [The Partnership at Drugfree.org](#) translates research on teen behavior, addiction and [treatment](#) into useful and effective resources for both individuals and [communities](#).

Working toward a vision where all young people will be able to live their lives free of drug and alcohol abuse, The Partnership at Drugfree.org works with parents and other youth influencers to help them [prevent](#) and [get help](#) for drug and alcohol abuse by teens and young adults. The organization depends on donations from individuals, corporations, foundations and the public sector and is thankful to SAG-AFTRA and the advertising and media industries for their ongoing generosity.

*The Partnership at Drugfree.org is
dedicated to helping families solve the
problem of teen substance abuse.*

MetLife Foundation

For more than 20 years, MetLife Foundation has provided support for initiatives focusing on substance abuse prevention and education.

Since 1999, the Foundation has collaborated with The Partnership at Drugfree.org on a national public awareness campaign to help parents and caregivers communicate with children about the risks of drug use.

MetLife Foundation has sponsored the MetLife Foundation / Partnership Attitude Tracking Study since 2009.

MetLife Foundation was established in 1976 to continue MetLife's longstanding tradition of corporate contributions and community involvement. The Foundation is committed to building a secure future for individuals and communities worldwide. Since it was established, MetLife Foundation has provided more than \$530 million in grants to nonprofit organizations addressing issues that have a positive impact in their communities.

For more information about the Foundation, visit MetLife.org.

THE PARTNERSHIP ATTITUDE TRACKING STUDY, SPONSORED BY METLIFE FOUNDATION

The 2012 Partnership Attitude Tracking Study, sponsored by MetLife Foundation, consists of two nationally projectable samples: a survey that measures substance abuse attitudes and behaviors of parents with at least one child aged 10 to 19 and a teen sample for students in grades nine through twelve.

The 2012 survey is the 24th wave of research conducted since 1987. Beginning in 1993 the teen study has been conducted in schools and since 1995 the parents sample has been conducted in homes. Respondent anonymity was maintained for both studies to assure confidentiality.

Prior to those years, the studies were conducted by interviews in central location malls. These studies are based on self-reported data which represent the dominant methodology used in survey research in this area.

Since 2007, deKadt Marketing and Research, Inc. has conducted the in-home parent survey and since 1993, GfK Roper Public Affairs & Corporate Communications has conducted the teen study. In 2012, the parents/caregivers sample was 817 and surveying was conducted from August to October 2012. The margin of error for the parent sample is +/- 3.4 percentage points. In 2012 the teen sample was 3,884, and surveying was conducted from February to June 2012. The margin of error for the teens sample is +/- 2.1 percentage points.

Significant differences on tables, charts or graphs in this report are at the .05 level and are annotated with either an asterisk or a letter.

*** = Significant at .05 level**

A/B/C = Significant at .05 level

Data points from the 2006 teen survey are omitted, because the investigators believe them to be inaccurate due to sampling error.

QUESTIONNAIRE DEVELOPMENT

deKadt Marketing and Research, Inc. and GfK Roper Public Affairs & Corporate Communications developed the questionnaires in cooperation with The Partnership at Drugfree.org[®] and MetLife Foundation.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Changing Landscape

The 2012 PATS report comes in the midst of a continuing epidemic of prescription drug misuse and abuse as declared by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC)¹, and a changing drug landscape marked by marijuana legalization (as well as medicalization and decriminalization). The 2012 PATS study sheds light on some of these developments among teens and young adults, providing encouraging insights and presenting some growing concerns for parents and families.

Prescription Drug Misuse and Abuse

Teen prescription drug misuse and abuse continues to be a significant health problem threatening the well-being of American youth. Currently, one in four teens (24 percent) admits to having misused or abused a prescription drug at least once in their lifetime. It is a bigger problem than many parents know or really understand.

Parent permissiveness and lax attitudes toward misuse and abuse of prescription medicines, coupled with teens' ease of access to prescription medicines in the home are linked to teen medicine misuse and abuse. The availability of prescription drugs (in the family medicine cabinet, in the homes of friends and family) makes them that much easier to misuse and abuse, and the new survey findings stress that teens are more likely to misuse and abuse prescription medicines if they think their parents are okay with it.

Parents and caregivers are missing a key opportunity to play an active role in helping curb the trend of teen medicine misuse and abuse. Parents can safeguard prescriptions in their home, educate themselves about the dangers and risks of this dangerous behavior (for their teens and themselves), and communicate those risks to their children.

Marijuana

Marijuana prevalence rates have plateaued after increasing substantially in 2009. Almost half of teens (45 percent) now report that they have used marijuana in their lifetime, and unfortunately, marijuana use is seen as a normative behavior, while risk perceptions continue to decline.

As with prescription drugs, perceived parental permissiveness is also related to the prevalence of teen marijuana use, as 14 percent of teens believe their parents would be okay if they used marijuana sometimes, and these teens are much more likely to report smoking marijuana.

Legalization may also have an impact on teen marijuana use, since many teens who use marijuana say that they would be more likely to use marijuana if it were legal. This suggests that legalization of marijuana might have the effect of increasing usage among current users, including teens who are already smoking marijuana almost daily.

Alcohol

More than half of teens (57 percent) report using alcohol within the past year, a significant increase of 10 percent since 2008. According to 2012 PATS data, there is a strong relationship between alcohol use and marijuana use, as only 14 percent of teens who have used marijuana in the past year have not used alcohol within that time.

Likewise, perceived parental permissiveness is also related to teen alcohol use, as four in ten teens (38 percent) believe their parents would be okay if they drank beer once in a while, and these teens are more likely to report using alcohol.

Other Trends in Teen Substance Abuse

With the exception of prescription drugs, marijuana and alcohol, past-year teen substance abuse has remained relatively stable since 2008, with some fluctuation – this includes substances such as meth, cocaine, inhalants and over-the-counter cough medicine.

Newer synthetic drugs were also measured in 2012 and the results show that bath salts is not a common drug used among teens, with only 3 percent of teens reporting use of bath salts within the past year. Synthetic marijuana (known as “K2” or “Spice”), however, has been used by 12 percent of teens within the past year.

Social Disapproval and Accessibility of Drugs

Two encouraging trends are developing in 2012: teens in general are more likely to disapprove of their peers’ substance use than in 2010, and teens are less likely than they were in 2008 to see abusable substances as accessible. Social disapproval in particular has been shown historically to correlate strongly with reduced prevalence of teen drug use.

Parental Involvement

In addition to communicating the risks of substance abuse and safeguarding prescriptions, it’s important for parents to monitor their teens’ behavior, and model healthy behavior themselves, in order to help prevent teens from abusing substances.

Unfortunately, 9 percent of parents say they “use marijuana in front of their children,” 16 percent “consume too much alcohol in front of their children” and 14 percent of parents say that they themselves have misused or abused prescription drugs within the past year. This behavior is sending the wrong message to children, implicitly communicating that the risks of misuse or abuse of medicines are low, and that their parents wouldn’t be upset if their children engaged in these behaviors.

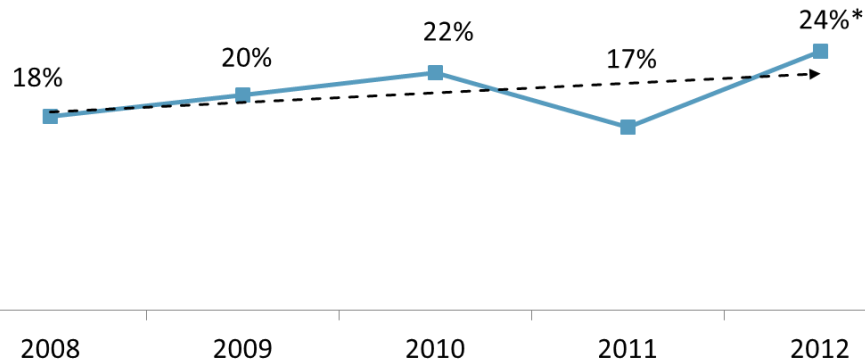
DETAILED FINDINGS

Teen Prescription Drug Misuse and Abuse

Prevalence of Teen Prescription Misuse and Abuse

The concerning trend of teen prescription misuse and abuse has continued increasing steadily since 2008. In fact, now one in four teens (24 percent) reports having misused or abused prescription drugs at least once in their lifetime. This prevalence rate has been increasing over the past five years, and is now 33 percent higher than it was in 2008. Furthermore, Hispanic teens are more likely to misuse and abuse prescription drugs than Caucasian and African American teens.

Prevalence of Teen Prescription Drug Misuse & Abuse % Used at least once in lifetime (n=3884)

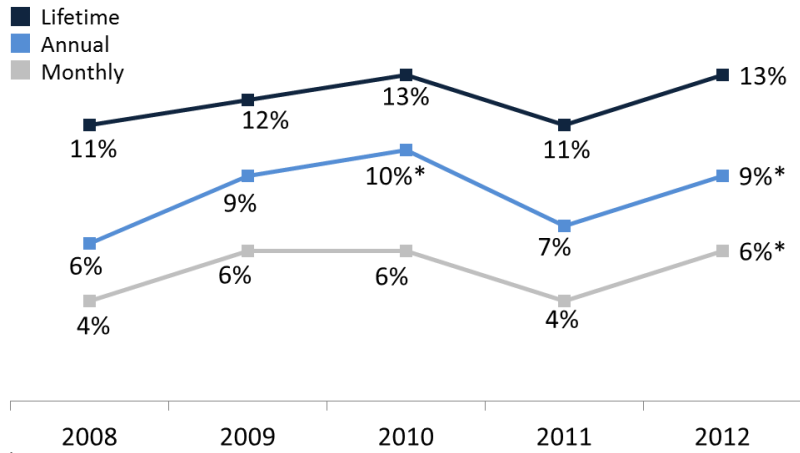


* Significantly higher than 2008 and 2011 at the 95% confidence level.

"How many times have you ever tried any prescription drug (when a doctor did not prescribe it for you) in order for you to get high or change your mood?"

The new data show a directional increase in the lifetime misuse and abuse of prescription stimulants (as shown from the chart below), with one in eight teens (13 percent) now misusing or abusing Ritalin or Adderall at least once in their lifetime. In fact, almost one-third of parents (29 percent) say they believe ADHD medication can improve a teen's academic or testing performance, even if the teen does not have ADHD, and one in four teens (26 percent) believes prescription drugs can be used as a study aid.

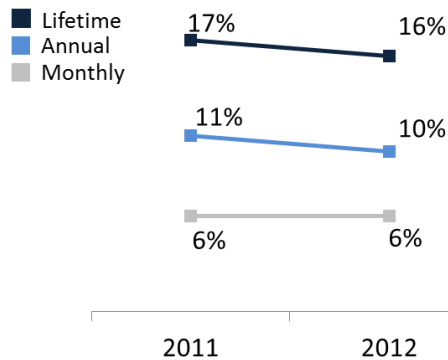
Prevalence of Teen Prescription Stimulant Misuse & Abuse
% Used at Least Once (n=3884)



* Indicates a significant difference from 2008 at the 95% confidence level.
 "(In your lifetime/in the past 12 months/in the past 30 days), how many times have you used the prescription drugs Ritalin or Adderall when a doctor did not prescribe it for you?"

Teen misuse and abuse of prescription pain relievers, such as Vicodin and OxyContin, has remained stable since 2011, with one in six (16 percent) teens having misused or abused prescription pain relievers at least once within their lifetime. The same plateauing trend is prevalent for past-year use, which is at 10 percent, and past-month use at 6 percent.

Prevalence of Teen Rx Pain Reliever Misuse & Abuse
% Used at least once (n=3884)



"(In your lifetime/in the past 12 months/in the past 30 days), how many times, if any, have you done each of the following.... used a prescription pain reliever like Vicodin or OxyContin when a doctor did not prescribe it for you?"

Reasons for Misusing and Abusing Prescription Drugs

When teens who have misused or abused a prescription drug were asked “what was the main reason why you last tried a prescription drug without a prescription,” most say they did so to relax, have fun or to “feel good.” However, the vast majority of teens (70 percent) do not know why they misused or abused a prescription drug.

Reasons for Using Rx Drugs (n=3884)	2012
To help me relax	18%
To have fun	16%
Because being high feels good	14%
To help me forget my troubles	13%
To deal with pressures and stress of school	11%
My friends are using	11%
To help deal with problems at home	8%
To feel better about myself	8%
To look cool	6%
It’s a habit, I can’t stop	4%
Don’t know	70%

“What was the main reason why you last used a prescription drug without a prescription?”

Parent and Teen Attitudes Toward Prescription Drugs

Parents and teens share the same misconceptions regarding prescription drug misuse and abuse. One in six parents (16 percent) believes that using prescription drugs to get high is safer than using street drugs, and more than one in four teens (27 percent) shares the same belief. One-third of teens (33 percent) say they believe “it’s okay to use prescription drugs that were not prescribed to them to deal with an injury, illness or physical pain.”

One in four teens (25 percent) says there is little or no risk in using prescription pain relievers without a prescription, and more than one in five teens (22 percent) says the same for Ritalin or Adderall. Additionally, one in five teens (20 percent) says pain relievers are not addictive.

Teen Access to Prescription Drugs from Friends, Parents and Other Guardians

Teens’ ease of access to prescription drugs in their own homes and in the homes of family and friends enables teens to misuse and abuse prescriptions. In fact, four in ten teens (40 percent) indicate prescription drugs are everywhere, while 43 percent indicate prescription drugs are easier to get than illegal drugs.

More than half of teens (56 percent) say it's easy to get prescription drugs from their parent's medicine cabinet, and about half of parents (49 percent) say anyone can access their medicine cabinet.

% Agree Strongly/Somewhat	2009	2010	2011	2012
Parents Indicate: "Anyone in the house can access the medicine cabinet where I keep Rx meds"	56%	48%	59%	49%
Teens Indicate: "It's easy to get Rx drugs from parent's medicine cabinet"	63%	47%	53%	56%

In fact, more than four in ten teens (42 percent) who have misused or abused a prescription drug obtained it from their parent's medicine cabinet, while 49 percent say that they obtained them from a friend.

Initiation Age of Prescription Drug Misuse and Abuse

As of 2012, one in five kids (20 percent) who has misused or abused a prescription drug in their lifetime has done so before the age of 14. This is cause for particular concern because kids who begin using at a younger age are more likely to struggle with substance use disorders than those who start using at an older age during their teenage years.

Parents Communicating the Dangers of Prescription Drug Misuse and Abuse

The 2012 PATS data show that parents are not as concerned with prescription drug misuse and abuse as they are with illicit drug abuse: 70 percent of parents are "at least somewhat concerned" about prescription drug misuse and abuse, compared to 80 percent of parents who are "at least somewhat concerned" about illicit drug abuse. Yet the sobering reality is that their teens are more likely to have misused or abused prescription medicine than many other substances, with 15 percent of teens abusing inhalants, 12 percent abusing Ecstasy and 9 percent abusing crack/cocaine at some point in their lifetime.

Further evidence of this relative lack of attention to prescription drug abuse on the part of parents is the fact that, according to teens, parents are 30 percent less likely to discuss the risks of prescription drugs with their teens today than they have been in the past. Teens reported that during the last conversation they had with their parents regarding substance abuse, only 16 percent said they discussed the abuse of prescription pain relievers with their parents, and just 14 percent indicate the same for discussions for any type of prescription drug. In comparison, a majority of teens (81 percent) say they have discussed the risks of marijuana use with their parents, 80 percent have discussed alcohol, and almost one-third of teens (30 percent) have discussed crack/cocaine.

Discussed Drugs with Parents – Trended

% Discussed Drugs with Parents	2010	2011	2012
Rx Pain Relievers without prescription	23%	17%	16%*
Any Rx Drug without prescription	22%	16%	14%*

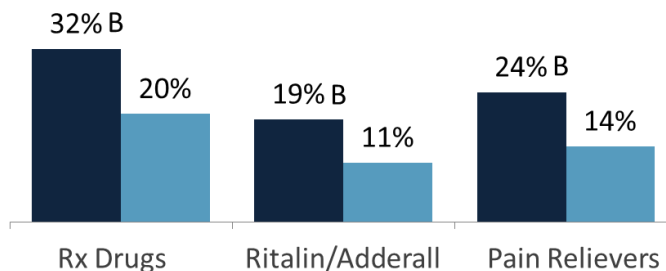
* Indicates a significant difference from 2010 at the 95% confidence level.
“The last time one or both of your parents talked to you about drugs, what specific drugs did they talk about?”

The marked decrease in parent-teen discussions about the dangers of prescription drug misuse and abuse has troubling implications for teens, whose behavior is linked to how they think their parents would react to their prescription drug misuse or abuse. Almost one in four teens (23 percent) indicates their parents wouldn’t care as much if they were caught using prescription drugs without a prescription compared to illicit drugs, and as shown from the chart below, these teens are more likely to misuse or abuse prescription drugs.

Teens who agree with the statement “parents don’t care as much if you are caught using prescription drugs without a doctor’s prescription, than they do if you get caught using illegal drugs” are more likely to abuse prescription drugs over their lifetime compared to teens who disagree with the statement.

Teens’ Lifetime Rx Drug Usage by Perceived Parental Permissiveness (% Used at Least Once)

■ Teens who say “Parents **don’t** care as much” (% Agree Strongly/Somewhat) (n=920) (A)
 ■ Teens who say “Parents **do** care as much” (% Disagree Strongly/Somewhat) (n=2506) (B)



A-B indicates a significant difference at the 95% confidence level.
“Parents don’t care as much if you get caught using prescription drugs without a doctor’s prescription than they do if you get caught using illegal drugs.”
“In your lifetime, how many times have you used (any prescription drug in order for you to get high or change your mood/a prescription pain reliever like Vicodin or OxyContin/the prescription drugs Ritalin or Adderall) when a doctor did not prescribe it for you?”

Parents may be sending mixed signals to teens that prescription drugs are okay to misuse or abuse, as one in five parents (20 percent) indicates they have given their teen a prescription drug that was not prescribed to them, and 17 percent of parents also report that they do not throw away expired prescriptions.

Parents can improve upon their own current perceptions of prescription drug misuse and abuse and learn about the realities and dangerous risks of this behavior. It’s evident that parental communication of risk is related to teens having misused or abused prescription

drugs over their lifetime. As seen from the chart below, even learning a little bit from your parents goes a long way.

Teens who have learned “a lot” or “a little” from their parents/ grandparents are less likely to abuse Rx drugs over their lifetime than teens who have learned “nothing.”

Teens' Rx Abuse by How Much A Teen Learns About the Risks of Drug Use from Parents/Grandparents			
% Teens used at least once in lifetime	How Much Learned From Parents/Grandparents		
	A lot (A) (n=1404)	A little (B) (n=1497)	Nothing (C) (n=788)
Rx Drugs	19%	21%	33% AB
Pain Relievers	12%	15%	24% AB
Ritalin	10%	10%	20% AB

A-C indicates a significant difference at the 95% confidence level.

“In your lifetime, how many times have you used (any prescription drug in order for you to get high or change your mood/a prescription pain reliever like Vicodin or OxyContin/the prescription drugs Ritalin or Adderall) when a doctor did not prescribe it for you?”

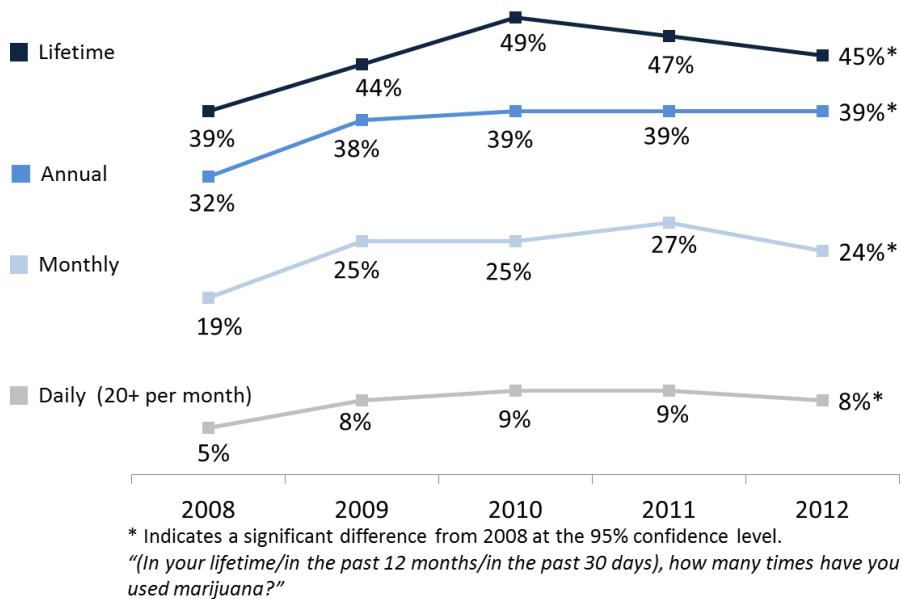
“How much have you learned about the risks of drugs from each of the following: Parents or grandparents?”

Teen Marijuana Use

Prevalence of Teen Marijuana Use

Marijuana use seems to have plateaued, as prevalence rates have remained relatively elevated and stable since 2009. In 2012, almost half of teens (45 percent) have used marijuana in their lifetime, four in ten (39 percent) have used in the past year and one in four has used within the past month (24 percent). Disturbingly, almost one in ten teens (8 percent or about 1.7 million teens) uses nearly every day (20+ times per month).

Prevalence of Teen Marijuana Use % Used at Least Once (n=3884)



Hispanic Teen Marijuana Use

Another trend emerging from the 2012 PATS data is that one-third (33 percent) of Hispanic teens have used marijuana within the past month (in comparison with 24 percent of teens overall), and this trajectory has been steadily increasing since 2008.

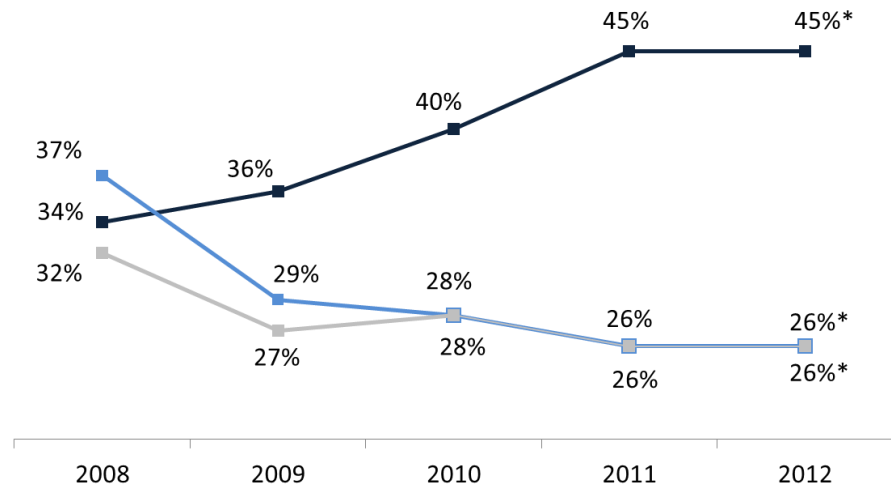
Hispanic teens attribute their use of marijuana to different reasons than those given by non-Hispanic teens. Although the majority of teens in general use marijuana to “have fun,” “relax” or “feel good,” more Hispanic teens report that they use marijuana to forget troubles or escape problems related to home or school. Hispanic teens are also more likely to say they smoke marijuana because “it’s a habit, I can’t stop.”

Marijuana Use as a Normative Behavior

Teens continue to view marijuana use as a normative behavior, as seen from the trends in the chart below. According to the data, only one in four teens (26 percent) says “none of my friends use marijuana,” and “in my school, most teens don’t smoke marijuana,” while more than four in ten teens (45 percent) agree that today’s music makes marijuana seem cool.

Marijuana Use as a Normative Behavior

- Music that teens listen to makes marijuana seem cool (%Agree Strongly/Somewhat)
- In my school, most teens don't smoke marijuana (% Agree Strongly/Somewhat)
- None of my friends use marijuana



* Indicates a significant difference from 2008 at the 95% confidence level.

Perceived Risks of Using Marijuana

The levels of perceived risks for using marijuana are at the lowest points they have been since the past decade. Almost two-thirds of teens (63 percent) say there is “only a slight or no risk” in using marijuana once or twice, and nearly one-third (31 percent) of teens have the same sentiment towards using marijuana regularly.

It’s also evident from the 2012 PATS data that teens relate the risk of using marijuana regularly to “messing up his or her life.” Currently, 71 percent of teens say there is risk in using marijuana and “messing up their life,” and this measure has been steadily declining since 2008.

Younger teens (9th graders) and Hispanic teens have been the main influencers driving these perceived risk levels lower. Since the perception of risk for using a substance correlates closely with actual use, this means more young teens and Hispanic teens are vulnerable to using marijuana. Also, teens who have never used marijuana are less likely than in previous years to see risk in using marijuana once or twice.

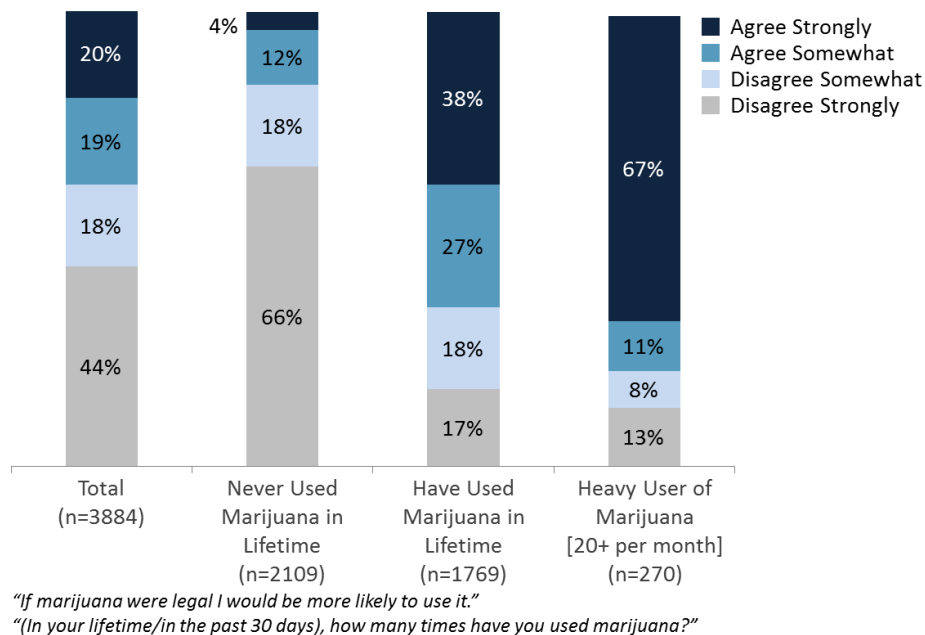
Initiation Age of Marijuana Use

These trends could result in the average initiation age of marijuana use – which is currently at 14 ½ years old – moving even younger. Those who initiate use at a younger age are more likely to report frequent use of marijuana, as well as using other substances, compared to those who reported first use at an older age.

Legalization of Marijuana

Legalization has become a topical issue given the recent initiatives in Colorado and Washington. The 2012 PATS data provide some insight into how teens may behave if legalization were to become more widespread: the same teens who said they would be more likely to use marijuana if it were legal, were likely to report already using marijuana. Teens who are not currently using marijuana are more likely to say that legalization won't have an impact on their likelihood of using. One possible scenario suggested by these data is that even if legalization does not drive up overall prevalence of teen marijuana use, it may lead to increased use among those already using, including teens who are already smoking marijuana almost daily.

Increased Likelihood of Consumption Among Teens if Marijuana Were Legal
"If marijuana were legal I would be more likely to use it."



Synthetic Marijuana

The 2012 PATS data indicates that the use of marijuana is related to the use of synthetic marijuana (also known as "K2" or "Spice"). Currently, 12 percent of teens report using synthetic marijuana in the past year, and of these teens, 3 percent have not used marijuana during the same timeframe. As with the use of regular marijuana, Hispanic teens are also more likely to use synthetic marijuana than non-Hispanic teens.

Parental Permissiveness and Teen Marijuana Use

Teens' marijuana use is related to their perception of their parents' permissiveness. Currently, 14 percent of teens indicate that their parents "would be okay" if they smoked marijuana, and 10 percent of parents indicate they "would be okay" if their teen smoked marijuana.

As seen from the chart below, teens who perceive that their parents are permissive about marijuana use are much more likely to use marijuana compared to teens who believe their parents would not be okay with it. There is a large discrepancy in

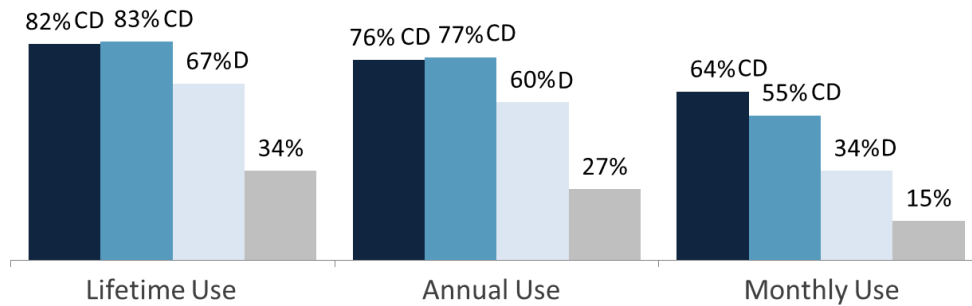
prevalence rates between a teen who “disagrees somewhat” and a teen who “disagrees strongly” with the same statement, suggesting that this is a sensitive relationship and parents need to emphasize absolute disapproval of marijuana use in preventive efforts.

The more teens believe their parents would be okay with them smoking marijuana, the more likely they are to do so.

Teens’ Marijuana Use by Perceived Parental Permissiveness
 (% Used at Least Once)

“My parents would be OK if I smoked marijuana once in a while”

■ % Agree Strongly (n=215) (A) ■ % Agree Somewhat (n=255) (B) ■ % Disagree Somewhat (n=513) (C) ■ % Disagree Strongly (n=2879) (D)



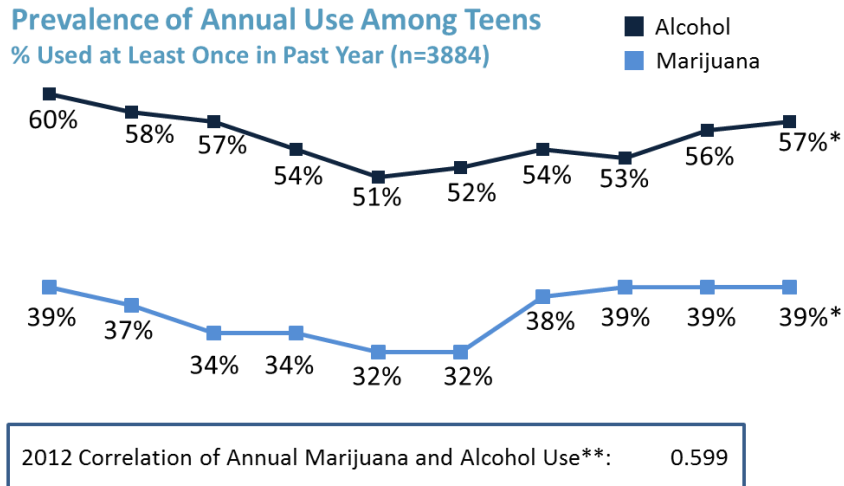
A-D indicates a significant difference at the 95% confidence level.
 “My parents would be OK if I smoked marijuana once in a while”
 “(In your lifetime/in the past 12 months/in the past 30 days), how many times have you used marijuana?”

Teen Alcohol Use

Prevalence of Teen Alcohol Use

The prevalence of past year alcohol consumption among teens has been steadily increasing for the past five years. Currently, more than half (57 percent) of all teens have used alcohol within the past year, which amounts to a significant increase of 10 percent since 2008. This alarming trend has been driven mostly by 9th and 10th graders, as both grade levels have reported a 16 percent increase in consumption rates.

The consumption of alcohol within the past year has a strong relationship to the rates of yearly use of marijuana, more so than any other substance measured by 2012 PATS. In fact, only 14 percent of teens who have used marijuana in the past year have *not* used alcohol during the same timeframe. As seen from the graph below, the trends of these two prevalence rates have trended closely since 2002.



2002 2003 2004 2005 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012

* Indicates a significant difference from 2008 at the 95% confidence level.
 ** Spearman's correlation shown for comparison.
 "In the past 12 months, how many times have you used (marijuana/alcohol)?"

Parental Permissiveness and Teen Alcohol Use

As with prescription drugs and marijuana, parental permissiveness is associated with teen alcohol use. Almost four in ten teens (38 percent) say their parents “would be okay” if they drank beer once in a while. As seen from the chart below, this measure has significantly increased by nearly 20 percent since 2010 (when it was 32 percent).

% Agree Strongly/Somewhat	2010	2011	2012
My parents would be okay if I drank beer once in a while	32%	36%	38%*

* Indicates a significant difference from 2010 at the 95% confidence level.

Other Trends in Teen Substance Abuse

The abuse of other substances has remained relatively stable over the past five years, with a few notable fluctuations. Specifically, past year teen Ecstasy use increased during 2009, yet in 2012, the prevalence declined and is now comparable to 2008 rates. Similar trends occur for the past-year use of over-the-counter cough medicine, inhalants and the monthly use of cigarettes, as the prevalence rate for each of these substances spiked in 2009 or 2010, and then returned to rates comparable to those of 2008.

In 2012, PATS measured the prevalence rates for newer substances, including synthetic marijuana, salvia and “bath salts”. The prevalence rates for these substances are mixed, as 4 percent of teens have used salvia, 3 percent have used “bath salts” and 12 percent of teens have used synthetic marijuana within the past year.

Prevalence of Teen Substance Abuse (n=3884)	2008 (A)	2009 (B)	2010 (C)	2011 (D)	2012 (E)
Past Year Use - % Used at least once					
Smokeless Tobacco	NA	NA	NA	NA	16%
Synthetic Marijuana (K2 or Spice)	NA	NA	NA	NA	12%
Ecstasy	6%	10% A	10% A	9% A	8%
Cocaine	7%	8%	8%	7%	7%
Inhalants	9%	10% E	10%	7%	7%
OTC Cough Medicine	7%	8%	11% ADE	7%	7%
Crack	4%	4%	5%	4%	4%
Meth	4%	5%	5%	4%	4%
Salvia	NA	NA	NA	NA	4%
Bath Salts	NA	NA	NA	NA	3%
Past Month Use - % Used at least once					
Cigarettes	23%	25%	27% ADE	22%	22%

A-E indicates a significant difference at the 95% confidence level.
"How many times have you used.... in the past (12 months/30 days)?"

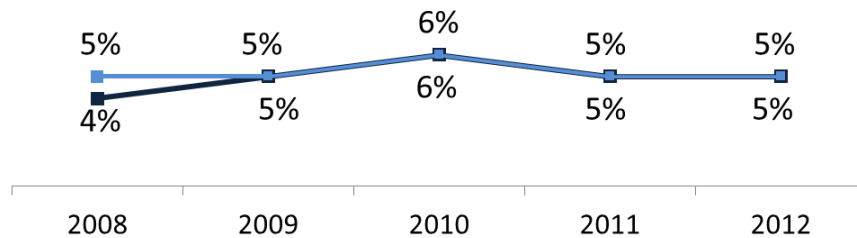
Teen Steroid Abuse

The abuse of steroids and human growth hormones among teens has remained stable since 2008. Currently, 5 percent of teens have abused steroids, and another 5 percent have abused human growth hormones at least once in their lifetime.

Prevalence of Teen Steroid/HGH Abuse

% Used at least once in lifetime (n=3884)

- Steroids
- Human Growth Hormones



"In your lifetime, how many times, if any, have you done each of the following.... used (steroids/human growth hormones) for athletic performance or physical appearance when a doctor did not prescribe them for you used the prescription?"

The low prevalence rates likely reflect that a majority of teens (more than four in five) believe abusing steroids and human growth hormones is a risky behavior; and another substantial proportion of teens (89 percent) believe that "teens who use steroids are at risk for severe health problems."

This is encouraging, especially since 87 percent of teens say “it’s not okay for a teen to use performance enhancing drugs in athletics if it’s the only way to win.” Furthermore, the number of teens who agree that “knowing that some successful athletes use performance enhancing substances makes me more likely to use or consider using them” is significantly lower in 2012 (19%) compared to 2008 (24%).

Social Disapproval and Accessibility of Substances

Social Disapproval

In 2012, more adolescents overall disapproved of their peers’ substance abuse than in the past two years, as indicated from the chart below. About six in 10 teens disapproved of their peers getting drunk or using marijuana, and more than eight in 10 teens disapproved of their peers using other substances such as prescription drugs, over-the-counter cough medicine, cocaine and heroin. These trends show a widening gap in the disapproval ratings between alcohol and marijuana versus other drugs.

Social Disapprove of Peers Using Substances – Trended

% Strongly Disapprove/Disapprove	2010	2011	2012
Using heroin	84%	84%	89%*
Using cocaine	82%	82%	88%*
Using inhalants	82%	83%	87%*
Using OTC cough medicine to get high	NA	81%	86%*
Using Vicodin or OxyContin to get high	NA	79%	85%*
Using LSD	81%	81%	85%*
Using ecstasy	78%	79%	84%*
Using Rx drugs to get high	78%	80%	84%*
Using marijuana	61%	61%	65%
Getting drunk	60%	59%	62%

* Indicates a significant difference from 2010 or 2011 at the 95% confidence level.

“Please answer how much you disapprove of teens your age ...”

Accessibility of Substances

Teen perception of the accessibility of substances has been steadily declining since 2008, and has remained stable since 2011. It’s not clear whether these drugs are actually more difficult to get, or if teens simply perceive these drugs as more difficult to get, but it is an encouraging trend. As indicated by the chart below, alcohol is perceived as the easiest substance to get, with 79 percent of teens saying it is “at least fairly” accessible, while meth is considered the least accessible with only 17 percent of teens indicating the same thing.

The most notable decline in accessibility is for over-the-counter cough medicine. The perceived accessibility of this product decreased from 65 percent in 2010 to 47 percent

in 2012 (which is a 38% decline). On the other hand, prescription stimulants (such as Ritalin or Adderall) are perceived as easier to get compared to 2011.

Perceived Accessibility of Substances – Trended

% Very/Fairly Easy to Get	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Alcohol	NA	NA	75%	78%	79%
Marijuana	74%	73%	70%	68%	73%
OTC Cough Medicine	NA	NA	65%	48%	47%**
Rx Pain Relievers	57%	53%	48%	43%	43%*
Rx Stimulants	50%	45%	43%	33%	40%*
Ecstasy	36%	34%	35%	30%	30%*
Cocaine	40%	34%	32%	26%	26%*
Steroids	30%	26%	20%	20%	19%*
Meth	25%	22%	21%	17%	17%*

* Indicates a significant difference from 2008 at the 95% confidence level.

** Indicates a significant difference from 2010 at the 95% confidence level.

“How difficult or easy do you think it would be for you to get each of the following...”

Parental Involvement

Teens who report that their parents show concern for them and are monitoring their behaviors are less likely to abuse substances, which is not the case for teens who report that their parents check in with them on a daily basis asking “who they were with, where they went and what they did.” According to teens, however, parental concern and monitoring has remained at its lowest levels since it was first measured in 2007.

Affect of Teen Perception of Parental Concern & Monitoring

% Agree Strongly/Somewhat	Have Never Used Drugs in Lifetime (n=1740) (A)	Have Used Drugs in Lifetime (n=2120) (B)
Every day or nearly every day, they ask me about how my day went	81% B	67%
They make and enforce rules about my behavior	75% B	64%
Every day or nearly every day, they praise me for good behavior	68% B	54%
Every day they ask me who I was with, where I went, and what I did	59%	55%
Every day, they monitor my activities	59% B	45%

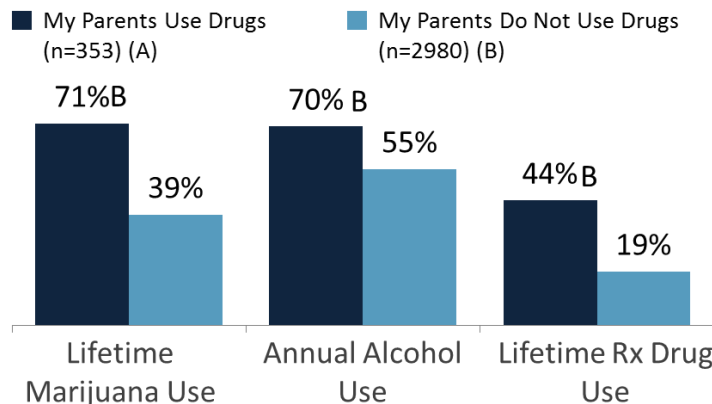
A-B indicates a significant difference at the 95% confidence level.

Teens are also less likely to use substances if their parents teach them about the risk of using substances. Unfortunately, more than one in five teens (21 percent) say they have learned nothing about this topic from their parents.

The example parents set when it comes to substance use is also related to teens' own substance abuse, including abuse of prescription drugs, marijuana and alcohol. As detailed in the chart below, if a teen believes his or her parents use drugs, then that teen is more likely to use drugs as well. Currently, one in seven parents (14 percent) has used a prescription drug not prescribed to them in the past year, one in 10 parents (9 percent) has smoked marijuana in front of their teens, and one in six parents (16 percent) has "consumed too much alcohol" in front of their teens.

Teens who perceive that their parents use drugs are more likely to use substances themselves, compared to teens who perceive that their parents do **not** use drugs.

Teens' Lifetime Substance Use by Perceived Parental Drug Use (% Used at Least Once)



A-B indicates a significant difference at the 95% confidence level.
"In your lifetime, how many times have you used (marijuana/alcohol/prescription drugs without a prescription in order for you to get high or change your mood)?"
"Do either of your parents use drugs (like marijuana, cocaine, Ecstasy, or prescription drugs without a doctor's prescription)?"

Lastly, taking measures to safeguard substances is imperative as it helps protect teens. About half of parents report that abusable substances are accessible to teens in their homes. Specifically, 57 percent of parents say anyone can access their alcohol, 66 percent say anyone can access their over-the-counter cough medicine, and 49 percent say anyone can access their prescription medicine cabinet.

IMPLICATIONS

The United States is truly at a crossroads: as federal funding for prevention evaporates and effective substance abuse treatment remains widely inaccessible, we are failing to protect our children and minority populations from the clear negative implications of greater availability of abusable drugs and more permissive social norms.

As a society, we know what works – prevention, early intervention and treatment efforts, along with support for recovery. With our PATS data showing a gradual increase since 2008 in substance use by teens (notably prescription drugs and marijuana), we must find the will and the resources to put these policies and programs in place.

While there is encouraging evidence that teens disapprove of prescription drug abuse by their peers, perceptions of the risks of prescription drug abuse remain low, and easy access in the home makes it far too easy for interested teens to obtain, misuse, abuse and share prescription medicines. In particular, abuse of the prescription stimulants Ritalin and Adderall has risen steadily in recent years.

The new social norm that marijuana legalization is helping to create in Colorado, Washington State and elsewhere is very much the context in which we view the continuing high prevalence of marijuana use among teens, with 8% of teens reporting nearly daily use (more than 20 times in the last month).

The implication for parents is clear: they can do more to communicate the risks of medicine misuse and abuse to their children, to safeguard medicines at home and properly dispose of unused medications. They should also avoid modeling risky behavior themselves by not misusing and abusing prescription drugs.

Perhaps even more importantly, parents must make very clear their expectations of non-use, as parent permissiveness is clearly related to teen use of substances. Teens who perceive that their parents “would be okay if they smoked marijuana” are more likely to smoke marijuana. Teens who believe their parents would be less concerned about the misuse or abuse of prescription drugs are more likely to misuse or abuse prescription drugs, and teens who believe that their parents “would be okay if they drank beer once in a while,” are more likely to drink.

Finally, the higher prevalence of prescription drug misuse and abuse and marijuana use among Hispanic teens when compared to that of Caucasian and African American teens, points to a need for more effective and accessible prevention and treatment efforts targeting the Hispanic community. Some of these efforts should be focused on providing Hispanic teens alternative mechanisms for coping with stress and dealing with problems at home and in school, instead of abusing substances.

SOURCES

1. Source: "Prescription Painkiller Overdoses in the US", Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES. November, 2011. Web. 8 Apr. 2013.
<<http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/PainkillerOverdoses/index.html>>