

A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

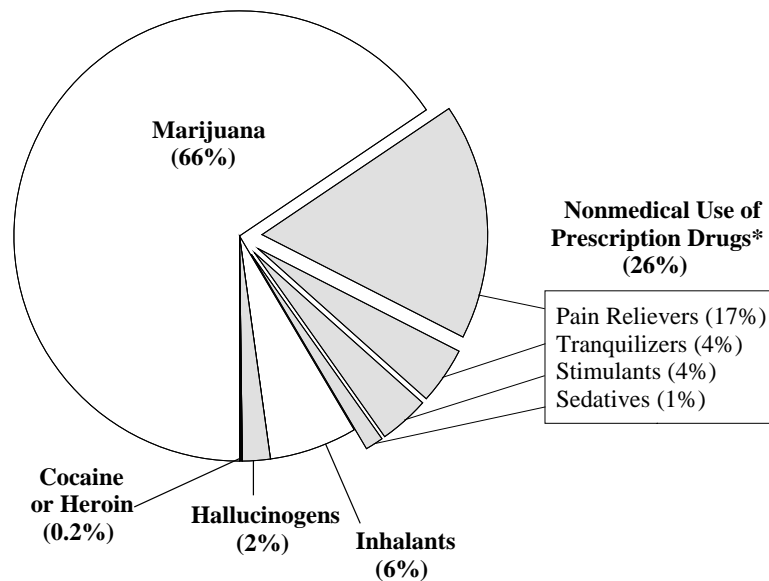
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Two-Thirds of U.S. Residents Who First Started Using Drugs in the Past Year Began with Marijuana; 26% Started with Nonmedical Use of Prescription Drugs, Primarily Pain Relievers

An estimated 2.9 million persons ages 12 or older used an illicit drug other than alcohol or a prescription drug nonmedically for the first time in the past year, according to data from the 2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. Two-thirds (66%) of these new users reported that marijuana was the first drug they tried. Slightly more than one-fourth (26%) reported that prescription drugs used nonmedically were the first drug they tried, including pain relievers (17%), tranquilizers (4%), stimulants (4%), and sedatives (1%). Less than 10% reported that their first use of drugs involved inhalants and hallucinogens, and very few initiates started using with cocaine or heroin. These findings suggest that drug use prevention efforts might focus on marijuana and the nonmedical use of prescription drugs, as these are the drugs that are most often used first.

First Drug Used by U.S. Residents Who First Started Using Drugs in the Past Year, 2012

(an estimated 2,883,000 residents, based on 68,309 completed interviews)



*Nonmedical use of prescription drugs is defined as use of pain relievers, tranquilizers, stimulants, and/or sedatives without a prescription belonging to the respondent or use that occurred simply for the experience or feeling the drug caused. It does not include use of over-the-counter drugs.

NOTE: Percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding and because some respondents initiated multiple drugs on the same day.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Results from the 2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Detailed Tables*, 2013. Available online at <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/NSDUH/2012SummNatFindDetTables/Index.aspx>.

CESAR Wishes You a Very Happy Holiday Season!

This is the final issue of the *CESAR FAX* for 2013. The *CESAR FAX* will resume with Volume 23, Issue 1 on January 6, 2014. Thank you for your support during the past year!

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