

6

Substance Use: Addressing Addiction and Emerging Issues

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Public Health
Learning Modules

Using **Healthy People 2020**
to Improve Population Health

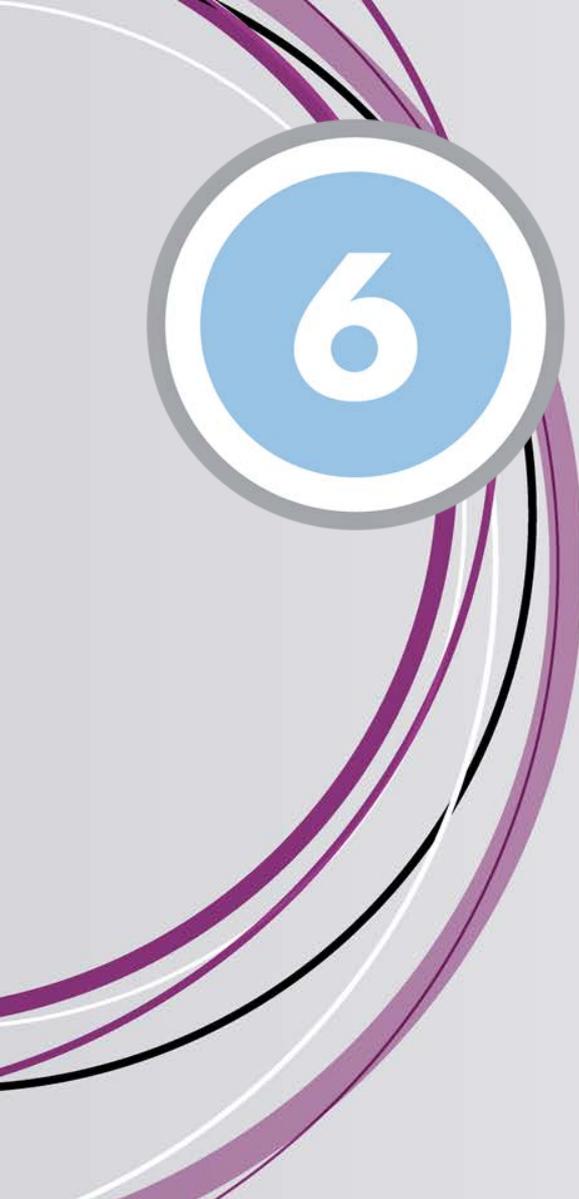


ASSOCIATION FOR PREVENTION TEACHING AND RESEARCH



College of Health Professions
and Social Work
TEMPLE UNIVERSITY*

Module 6: Substance Use



6

Part 4: Regulation of Marijuana



Public Health
Learning Modules

Using **Healthy People 2020**
to Improve Population Health

Healthy People 2020 Substance Abuse

- Objective SA-13:
 - “Reduce the proportion of unauthorized marijuana use during the past 30 days”
- Learning Objective:
 - Improve knowledge of the prevalence and trends of unauthorized use of marijuana, issues and challenges of regulating medical use of marijuana through current policies and preventive programs

Overview of Marijuana (2011)

- Most commonly used illicit drug in the U.S. - 18.1 million users
 - ~17 million individuals (≥ 12 yrs) reported past-month use
- 374,000 emergency room visits annually
- Marijuana is classified as Schedule I under the Controlled Substances Act
 - Not approved by the Food & Drug Administration
 - Approved by 20 states and the District of Columbia for 'medical use'
- Use of marijuana poses health care, criminal justice, political, social and economic policy challenges

[SAMHSA, 2012; Slater, 2011]

Prevalence & Trends of Marijuana (2011)

- Most commonly used illicit drug
 - 18.1 million users \geq 12 years (7%) similar to 2010 (17.4 M, 6.9%)
- 4.2 million Americans met clinical criteria for dependence or abuse of marijuana in past year
- Use of marijuana in teens 7.9% of youth (12-17 years) similar to 7.4% (2010)
- 44.7% of teens (12-17 years) reported access to obtaining marijuana as “fairly easy” or “very easy”
- Decrease in percentage of teens (12-17 years) who perceive great risk in smoking marijuana 1-2 times/week, 44.8% (2011) from 5.46% (2007)

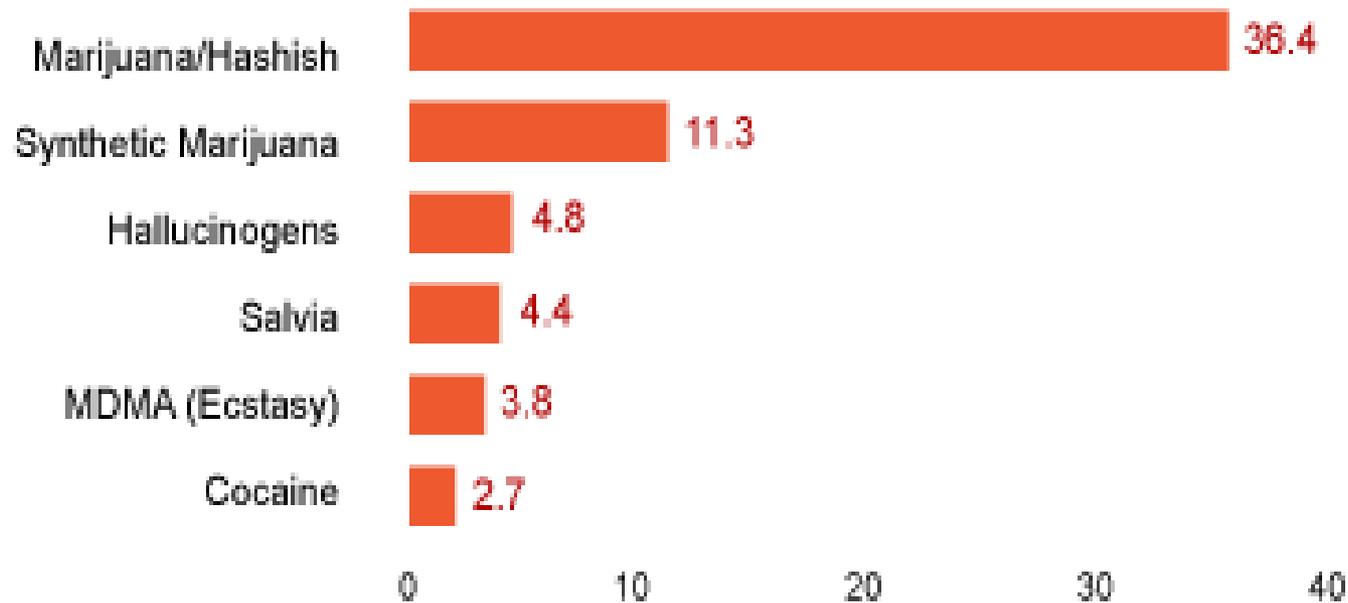
[SAMHSA, 2012]

Initiation of Marijuana

- 2.6 million (≥ 12 years) reported marijuana as initial drug use in past 12 months
 - 57.7% of 2.6 million users were < 18 years
 - Increase in initial use from 2010 (2.4 million)
- Marijuana use in teens continues to be widespread

[SAMHSA, 2012; Slater, 2011]

Past-Year Use of Illicit Drugs by High School Seniors (percent)



Source: University of Michigan, 2012 Monitoring the Future Study

NIDA, 2012

History of Federal Regulation of Marijuana

- 1936 Government began regulating as medical marijuana
- 1937: Marijuana Tax Act
- 1968: US Supreme Court declared the Marijuana Tax Act unconstitutional
- 1970: Congress passed the Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act (Title II, the Controlled Substances Act)
- 1975: Government sanctioned a medical marijuana program:
 - “Investigative New Drug Compassionate Access Program”
- 1992: Program closed by President George H. W. Bush Administration
- 1998: Omnibus Consolidated Appropriations Act of 1999 - prohibited state law that tries to circumvent the process by legalizing marijuana or any other Schedule I drug for medical use without FDA approved scientific evidence

Office of National Drug Control Policy on Marijuana

- Use is harmful and should be discouraged
- Research shown marijuana smoke to contain 50-70% more carcinogenic hydrocarbons than tobacco smoke and an irritant to the lungs
- Studies have shown an association of chronic marijuana use with
 - 'Dependence, respiratory & mental illness, poor motor performance, impaired cognitive & immune system functioning, & other negative effects'
 - Distorted perceptions, difficulty in thinking & problem solving, & problems with memory and learning
 - Increased rates of anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts and schizophrenia

[ONDCP, 2012]

Drug Enforcement Administration's Policy on Marijuana

- “Marijuana is properly categorized under Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act. 21 U.S.C. § 801, et seq.”
- DEA supports ongoing research into potential medicinal uses of marijuana's active ingredients

[DEA, 2011, p. 2]

FDA Regulation of Marijuana

- FDA has not approved any form of marijuana for medicinal use
- FDA has approved one only drug that contains synthetic form of THC
 - Marinol® (dronabinol)
 - Schedule III drug
 - Available in pill form by prescription
 - Approved indications
 - Relief of nausea and vomiting associated with chemotherapy for cancer patients
 - Appetite improvement for patients with AIDS who have anorexia (loss of appetite) associated with weight loss

[DEA, 2011, p. 6]

Professional Health Care and Non-Governmental Organizations' * Policies on Marijuana

- Endorse scientific well-controlled studies of marijuana related cannabinoids in patients with serious conditions for which there is some evidence suggesting possible efficacy.
- Endorse the rigor of the federal drug approval procedures
- Do not endorse smoking of marijuana as a means for drug delivery
- Do not endorse legalizing marijuana

*American Medical Association, American Society of Addiction Medicine, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Cancer Society, the American Glaucoma Society, the National Multiple Sclerosis Society

[ONDCP; DEA, 2013]

Department of Justice (DoJ) Policy on Regulation of Marijuana

- 2009: DoJ issued formal Guidelines for Federal Prosecutors in States that have Enacted Laws Authorizing Use of Marijuana for Medical Purpose
- DoJ Guidelines affirm:
 - Enforcement of the Controlled Substances Act in all states & DC
 - Focus of federal resources is not on individuals who actions are in compliance with existing state laws
 - State laws do not 'legalize' marijuana or provide legal defense to a violation of the federal law
 - Continued investigation and prosecution of
 - Violations of state and federal law by individuals claiming compliance with state and local laws
 - Concealment of operations inconsistent with the purposes, conditions and terms of state and local laws.

[DEA, 2011, p. 2]

New Department of Justice Policies on Drug Sentences

- August 2013, DoJ announced changes in prosecution practices, sentencing and incarceration policies to reduce costs of incarceration and address inequities in justices system
 - Increase use of drug-treatment programs as alternatives to incarceration
 - Expand programs of “compassionate release” for elderly inmates who have served significant sentencing time for non-violent crimes
 - Increase number of crime cases moved to state courts

[Savage, 2013]

New Department of Justice Policies on Drug Sentences

- August 2013, DoJ updated federal marijuana enforcement policy
 - Additional state initiatives legalizing and regulating possession, production, sale and use of marijuana
 - Updated federal policy identifies enforcement prevention priorities:
 - Possession, growing or use of marijuana on federal property
 - Distribution to minors
 - Diversion of sales revenues to criminal organizations and activities
 - Diversion of marijuana to other states
 - Drugged driving and consequences of other adverse effects of marijuana use
 - Using state-authorized activities as pretext/cover for illegal activities

[US Department of Justice, 2013]

ONDCP's National Youth Anti-drug Media Campaigns (2005-2009)

"Be Under Your Own Influence" and "Above the Influence"

- Goal: to reduce marijuana use by teens
- Strategy: disseminate tailored messages
 - Across various media and venues (national campaign, in-school/community campaign)
 - Aligned with adolescent developmental needs, e.g. autonomy, competence
 - Position marijuana use as inconsistent with autonomy and competence
- Outcomes:
 - "Trending towards positive impacts on attitudes and behaviors"
 - Associated with (self-reported) reduced marijuana use

[Slater, et al., 2011, 2012]

State Medical Marijuana Laws

- As of September 2013, 20 states & the District of Columbia, have enacted laws permitting use of medical marijuana
 - 1996, California was 1st state to permit the medical use of marijuana
- States have laws supporting medical marijuana but do not necessarily guarantee legal protection if person happens to be prosecuted by federal government

[NCLS, 2013; CDC, 2013; Lynne-Landsman, et al., 2013]

Overview of State Medical Marijuana Law Provisions

- General statutory provisions
 - State Patient Registry or Identification Cards
 - Regulation of access to marijuana
 - Regulation of medical practice
 - Specified health conditions
 - Recognize patients from other states
 - Legal defenses and protections for patient

[NCLS, 2013; CDC, 2013; Lynne-Landsman, 2013]

State-Approved Indications/Conditions for Medical Marijuana Use

- ALS
- Alzheimer's disease
- Cachexia
- Cancer
- Crohn's disease
- Glaucoma
- HIV/AIDS
- Hepatitis C
- Post-traumatic stress disorder
- Severe and chronic pain
- Severe nausea, seizures
- Severed or persistent muscle spasms (including multiple sclerosis)
- Terminal illness and/or hospice care
- Wasting syndrome
- Or other conditions approved by respective state departments of health

[NCLS, 2013]

Policy Conflicts Regarding Medical Marijuana

- Substance abuse vs. recreational use
- Substance abuse vs. medical treatment
- Federal policy vs. state policy
- Conflicting US Department of Justice Guidelines
- Criminal enforcement (public safety) policies vs. health care treatment (public health) policies
 - E.g. incarceration, drug courts with/without treatment, 'harm reduction' approaches, substance abuse and mental health treatment

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