

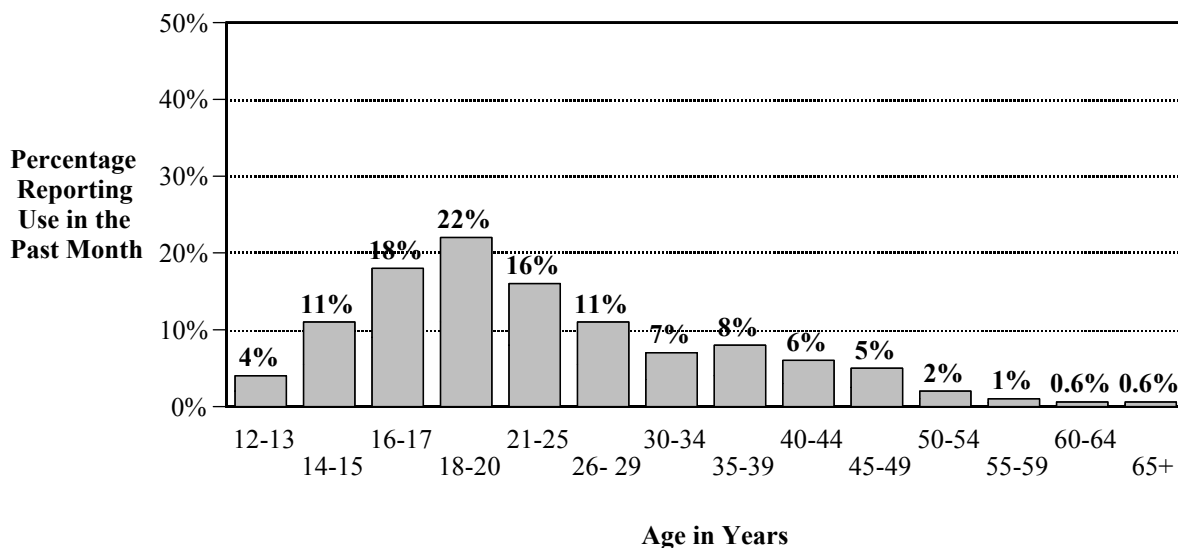
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

Past Month Illicit Drug Use Rates Peak Between Ages 18 and 20

An estimated 7% of U.S. household residents reported using at least one illicit drug (primarily marijuana) in the past month, according to data from the recently released 2001 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse. However, rates of illicit drug use varied greatly by age. Four percent of 12-13 year olds reported using at least one illicit drug in the month prior to the survey, compared to 11% of 14-15 year olds and 18% of 16-17 year olds. Illicit drug use peaked among youths ages 18-20 (22%) and declined after that point to less than 1% among persons 60 and older (see figure below). These findings demonstrate the continued need for drug prevention and educational efforts that target youths.

Percentage of U.S. Household Residents Reporting Past Month Illicit Drug Use, by Age, 2001



NOTES: Illicit drug use includes use of marijuana, cocaine, heroin, hallucinogens, inhalants, and nonmedical use of prescription-type pain relievers, tranquilizers, stimulants, and sedatives. Respondents were asked to report only use of drugs that were not prescribed for them or that they took only for the feeling they caused.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Office of Applied Studies, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Results from the 2001 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse: Volume I. Summary of National Findings*, 2002. Available online at <http://www.samhsa.gov/oas/nhsda.htm#NHSDAinfo>.