CESAR FAX

December 16, 2002
Vol. 11, Issue 50
Distribution 6,011

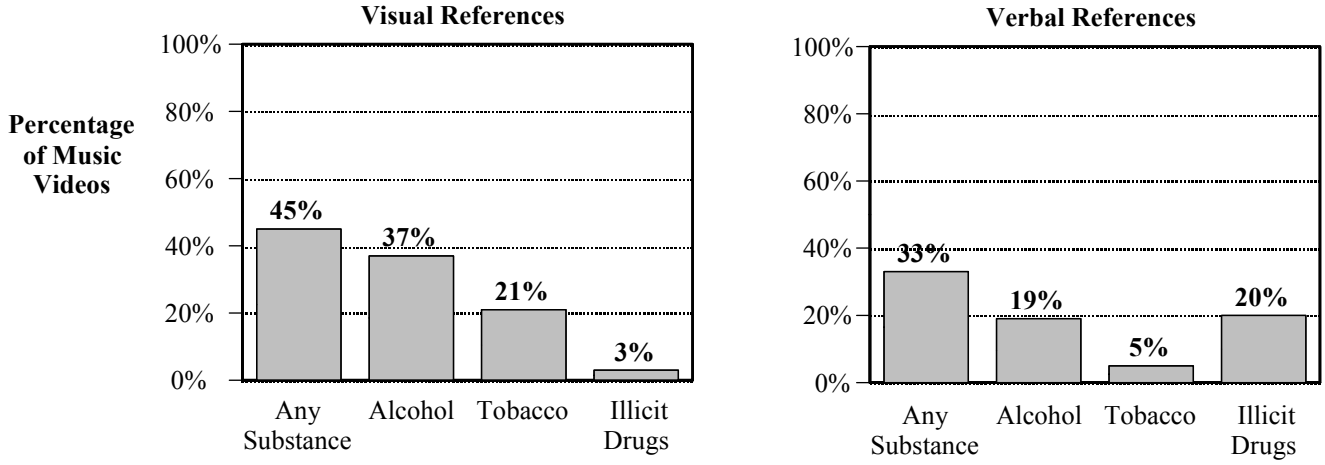
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

Alcohol, Tobacco, or Illicit Drugs Appear in Almost One-Half of Music Videos

Alcohol, tobacco, or illicit drugs appear visually in 45% and verbally in 33% of music videos, according to a study of videos aired on three U.S. music television networks. Alcohol and tobacco were more likely to be shown visually while illicit drugs—primarily marijuana—were more likely to be referred to in the song lyrics (see figure). While references to substances in music videos is relatively low compared to movies and television (see *CESAR FAX* Volume 8, Issue 37 and *CESAR FAX* Volume 9, Issue 46), the study found that music videos portray alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use as behaviors people naturally do when they socialize and rarely leads to consequences of any kind. According to the authors, "The substances are simply there, common elements of everyday activity. Unfortunately, it is this characterization that may function to normalize substance use among young viewers, thus making it seem like an accepted part of adolescent life" (p. 40).

Percentage of Music Videos Containing Visual and Verbal References to Substances
(N=258 music videos)



NOTES: The sample consisted of non-repetitious videos aired in the fall of 2000 on three different networks—Black Entertainment Television (BET), Music Television (MTV), and Video Hits-1 (VH-1). Specially trained coders examined the visual and verbal content of the music videos for the frequency and nature of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug portrayals.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from the Office of National Drug Control Policy, *Substance Use In Popular Music Videos*, 2002. Available online at http://www.mediacampaign.org/pdf/mediascope.pdf.

CESAR Wishes You a Very Happy Holiday Season!

This is the final issue of Volume 11 of the *CESAR FAX*. The *CESAR FAX* will resume with Volume 12, Issue 1, on January 6, 2003. Thank you for your support during the past year!

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CESAR FAX is supported by a grant from the Governor's Office of Crime Control & Prevention.