

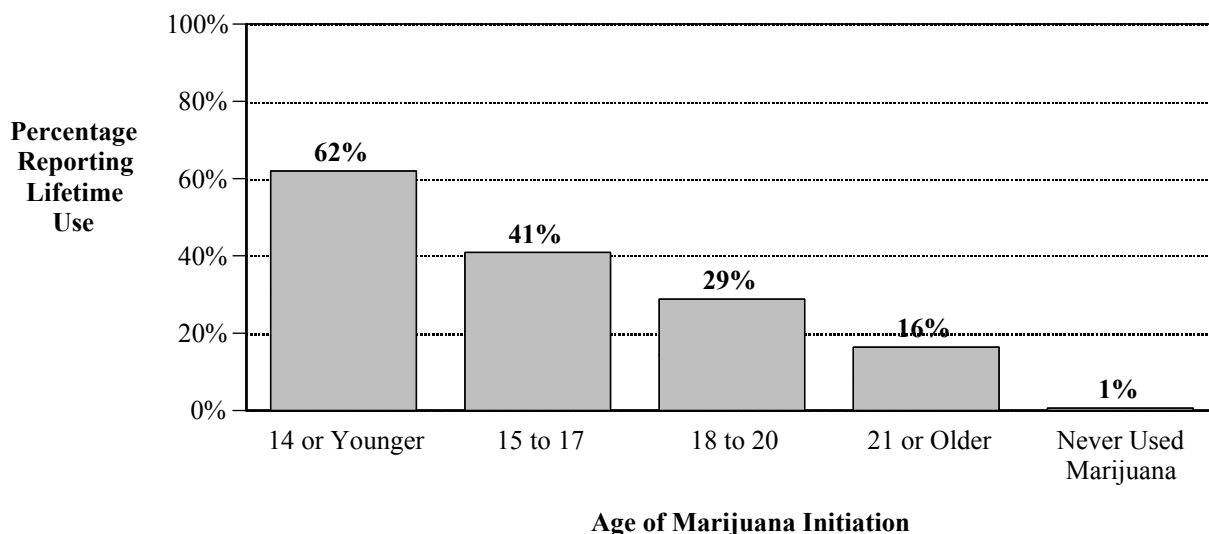
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

Youths Who Begin Using Marijuana Before Age Fifteen Are More Likely To Report Lifetime Cocaine Use

The earlier youths begin using marijuana the more likely they are to use cocaine at some point in their lives, according to data from the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHSDA). Nearly two-thirds (62%) of adults age 26 or older who reported first using marijuana before age 15 also reported using cocaine at least once in their life, compared to only 16% of those who began using marijuana at age 21 or older and 1% of those who never used marijuana. Similar results were found for lifetime use of heroin and psychotherapeutic drugs (e.g., pain relievers, tranquilizers, stimulants, sedatives). According to the authors, "Delaying the onset of marijuana initiation could be important in preventing the progression into heavy drug involvement and other drug-related health risk behaviors, as well as in decreasing the social burdens of illicit drug use" (p. 7).

Percentage of U.S. Adults Age 26 or Older Reporting Lifetime Use of Cocaine, by Age of Marijuana Initiation, 1999 and 2000 Combined



SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Office of Applied Studies, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Initiation of Marijuana Use: Trends, Patterns and Implications*, 2002. Available online at <http://www.samhsa.gov/oas/MJinitiation/MJinitiation.pdf>.

CESAR Needs Your Feedback

We are preparing funding proposals to maintain programs like the *CESAR FAX*. Please let us know what services have benefited you most. Write a letter to Dr. Eric Wish, Director, 4321 Hartwick Rd, Ste 501, College Park, MD 20740, 301-403-8342 (fax), cesar@cesar.umd.edu. With your help, we can ensure that CESAR continues to provide the most current and complete information available with which to monitor drug trends and inform policy.

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