

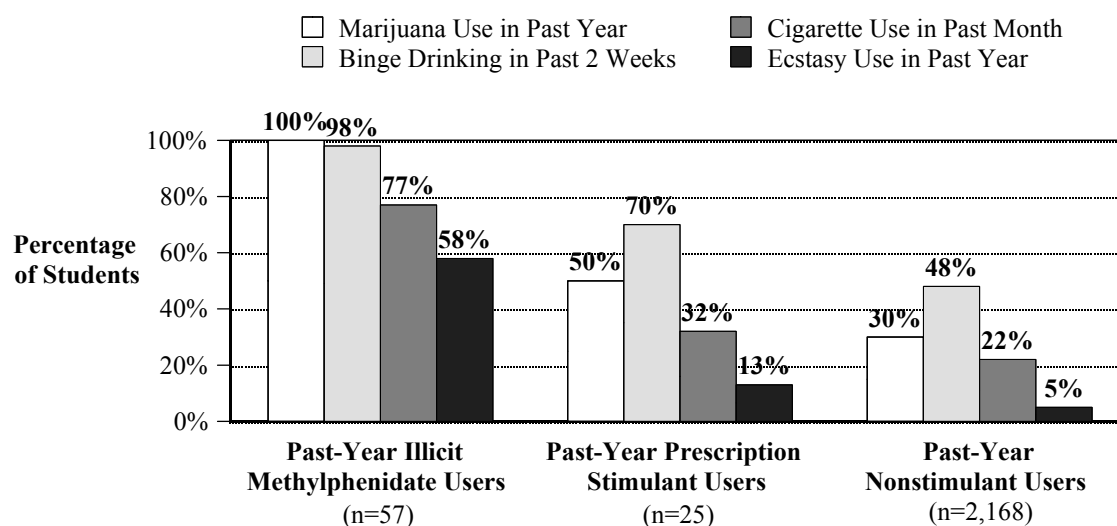
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

College Students Who Use Methylphenidate Illicitly Are More Likely to Be Poly-Drug Users

Illicit methylphenidate (e.g., Ritalin®, Methylin®) users were significantly more likely to use alcohol and other drugs than prescription stimulant users or non-stimulant users, according to a study of undergraduate students at the University of Michigan. Of the 2,250 students surveyed, 3% reported past-year illicit methylphenidate use. Every student surveyed who reported using methylphenidate illicitly in the past year also reported using marijuana during the same period, compared to one-half of the prescription stimulant users, and 30% of the nonstimulant users. Similarly, nearly all (98%) of the illicit methylphenidate users reported binge drinking during the two weeks prior to the survey, compared to 70% of prescription stimulant users and 48% of nonstimulant users. Ecstasy and cigarette use were also significantly higher among illicit methylphenidate users than for the other groups. According to the authors, “Our findings suggest that the factors associated with illicit methylphenidate use are very similar to those previously found to be associated with other illicit drugs among college students” (p. 615).

Percentage of College Students Reporting Marijuana, Binge Drinking, Cigarette, and Ecstasy Use, by Past-Year Use of Methylphenidate and Prescription Stimulants, March to April 2001 (N=2,250)



NOTES: Illicit users differed from nonstimulant users and prescribed users at $p < 0.01$. A random sample of 3,500 full-time undergraduate students was drawn from the Registrar's Office and were sent letters via e-mail describing the study and inviting students to self-administer the Web-based survey via an e-mail link. The response rate was 64%.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Teter, C., Esteban, S., Boyd, C., and Guthrie S., "Illicit Methylphenidate Use in an Undergraduate Student Sample: Prevalence and Risk Factors," *Pharmacotherapy* 23(5):609-617, 2003. For more information, contact Dr. Christian J. Teter, Pharm.D. at cjteter@umich.edu.

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