

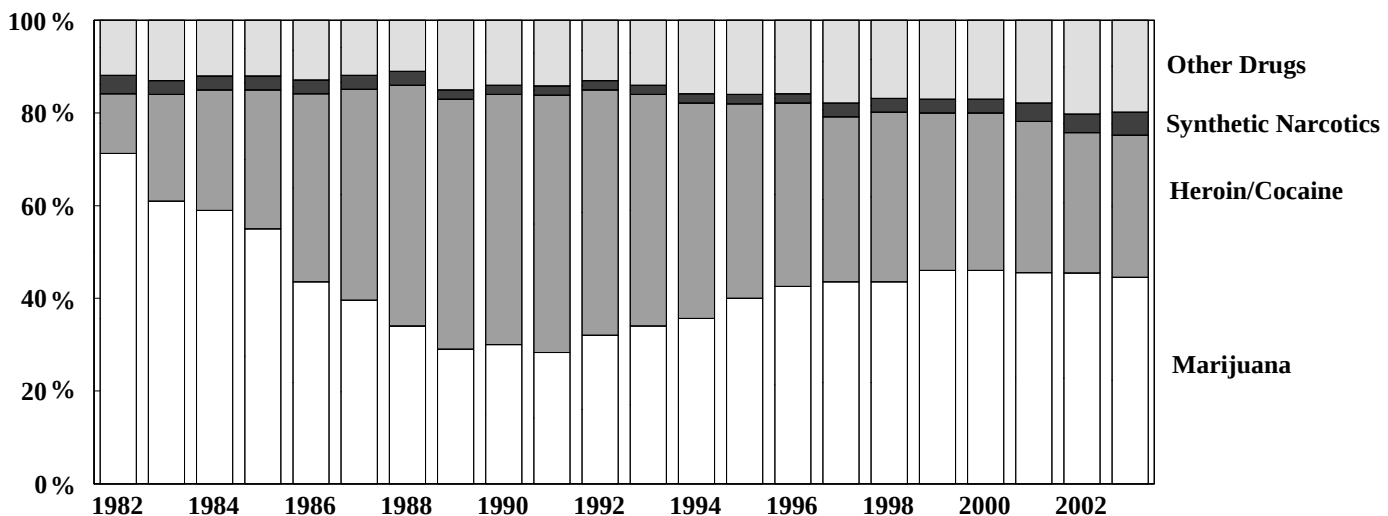
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

National Arrest Data Reveal Shift in Proportion of Drug Abuse Violations for Marijuana and Heroin/Cocaine

In 1982, nearly three-quarters of arrests for drug abuse violations in the United States were for the sale, manufacturing, or possession of marijuana, compared to 13% for heroin or cocaine violations, according to data from the national Uniform Crime Reports. However, by 1990 marijuana comprised slightly less than one-third of all drug abuse arrests, while heroin/cocaine accounted for more than one-half of such arrests. In 2003, the proportion of arrests for marijuana and heroin/cocaine violations had once again shifted; 45% of all drug abuse arrests were for marijuana violations and 30% were for heroin/cocaine violations. These trends likely reflect both changes in prevalence and subsequent enforcement practices. For example, marijuana use peaked in the U.S. during the late 70s and early 80s, reached record lows in the early 90s, and then increased again in the late 90s (see *CESAR FAX*, Volume 12, Issue 39 and Volume 8, Issue 2).

Percent Distribution of Arrests for U.S. Drug Abuse Violations, by Type of Drug, 1982-2003



NOTES: The category "heroin/cocaine" includes opium or cocaine and their derivatives (i.e. morphine, heroin, codeine). The category "synthetic narcotics" includes manufactured narcotics that can cause addiction (i.e. Demerol®, methadone). The category "other drugs" includes all other drugs that do not fall within the other three categories.

SOURCES: Adapted by CESAR from U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States, 2003, 2004* (available online at <http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/03cius.htm>); and U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics Online* (available online at <http://www.albany.edu/sourcebook/pdf/t429.pdf>), accessed 11/17/04..

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