

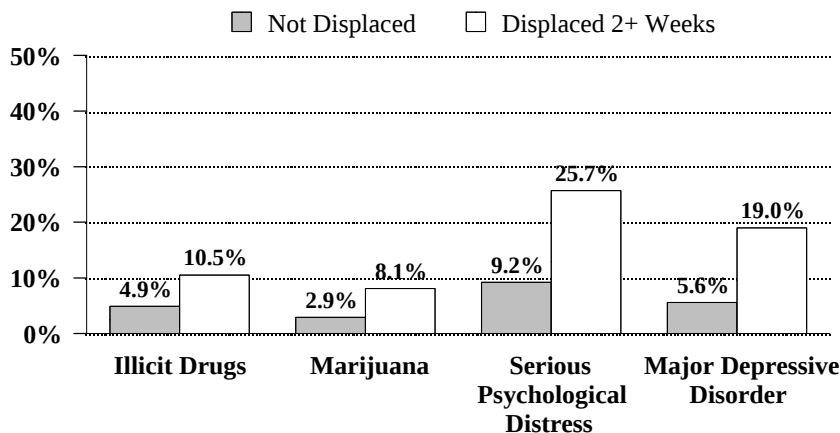
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita Had Little Impact on Overall Substance Use and Mental Health Problems; Greatest Impact Seen on Persons Displaced from Their Homes

“Most adults affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita did not evidence increased levels of mental health or substance abuse problems,” according to a recently published analysis of data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (*News Release*, p. 1). For example, there were no significant changes in past month illicit drug use, binge alcohol use, and tobacco use problems before and after these hurricanes among adults who lived in the Gulf State Disaster Area,* and marijuana use actually decreased (data not shown). However, residents displaced from their homes for 2 weeks or longer had significantly higher rates of past month substance use and mental health problems than those who were not displaced (see figure below). These higher rates remained even after controlling for age, gender, education, race/ethnicity, family income, and State of residence.

Percentage of Gulf State Disaster Area Residents* Ages 18 or Older Reporting Substance Use (Past Month) and Mental Health Problems (Past Year), by Displacement from Their Homes Due to Hurricane Katrina and/or Hurricane Rita, 2006



*The Gulf State Disaster Area is defined as counties and parishes in Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas that were declared by FEMA as eligible for Assistance (Individual and/or Public) following Hurricane Katrina and/or Hurricane Rita, with the exception of counties and parishes declared as eligible only for Public Assistance.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from SAMHSA, “Impact of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita on Substance Use and Mental Health,” *The NSDUH Report*, January 31, 2008 (available online at www.oas.samhsa.gov/2k8/katrina/katrina.cfm) and SAMHSA, “New Study Indicates That People Who Experienced Prolonged Displacement from Their Homes after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita Had Higher Rates of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Problems,” *SAMHSA News Release*, January 31, 2008 (available online at www.samhsa.gov/newsroom/advisories/0801311441.aspx).

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