

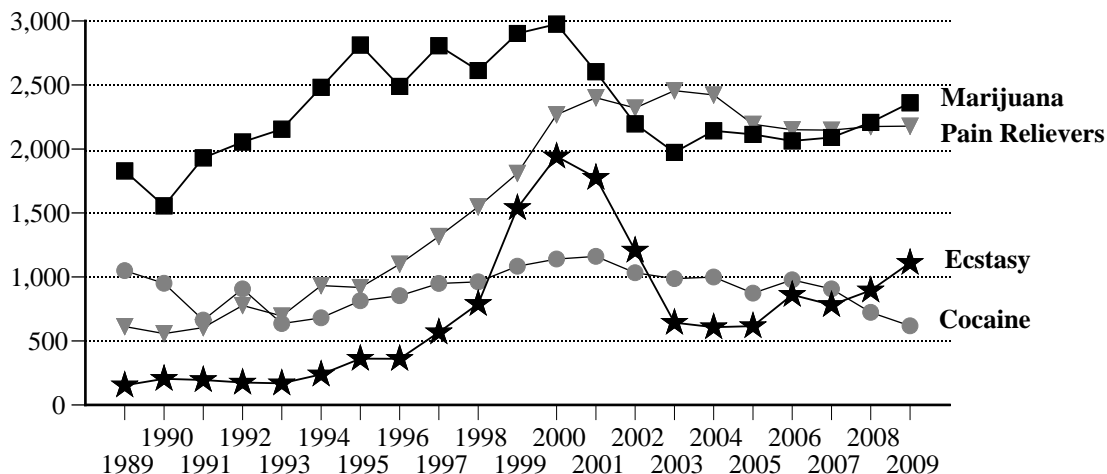
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

First Time Users of Marijuana and Ecstasy Increase; Number of New Users of Prescription Pain Relievers Remains Stable While New Cocaine Users Continue to Decrease

The number of people using marijuana for the first time increased for the third year in a row and the number of new ecstasy users increased for the second year in a row, according to estimates from the 2009 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH). More than 2.3 million persons ages 12 or older used marijuana for the first time in 2009, compared to nearly 2.1 million in 2007. Increases were also seen in the number of new ecstasy users (from 781,000 in 2007 to more 1.1 million in 2009). While the estimated number of first-time nonmedical users of prescription-type pain relievers continues to rival that of marijuana, there have been no significant changes in the past five years. In contrast, the number of new cocaine users has been decreasing steadily since 2001. There were an estimated 617,000 new users of cocaine in 2009, the lowest number since 1973. Changes in initiation levels are often leading indicators of emerging patterns of substance use. Thus, these findings suggest that 1) marijuana and ecstasy use may be making a resurgence; 2) the growth in the misuse of prescription pain relievers may have slowed; and 3) there are no signs of growth in cocaine use in this population.

**Estimated Number (in thousands) of New Users of Marijuana, Pain Relievers*,
Ecstasy, and Cocaine per Year, 1989-2009**
(U.S. Residents Ages 12 and older)



*Use of pain relievers refers to the nonmedical use of prescription-type pain relievers and does not include over-the-counter drugs.

NOTE: Estimates from 1989 to 2001 were produced using data from the 2002-2004 NSDUH and are based on initiation during that year. Estimates from 2002 to 2009 refer to initiation in the 12 months prior to the survey, and are produced independently based on the data from the survey conducted that year.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Results from the 2009 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings*, 2010. Available online at <http://oas.samhsa.gov/nsduhLatest.htm>.