

**A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research**

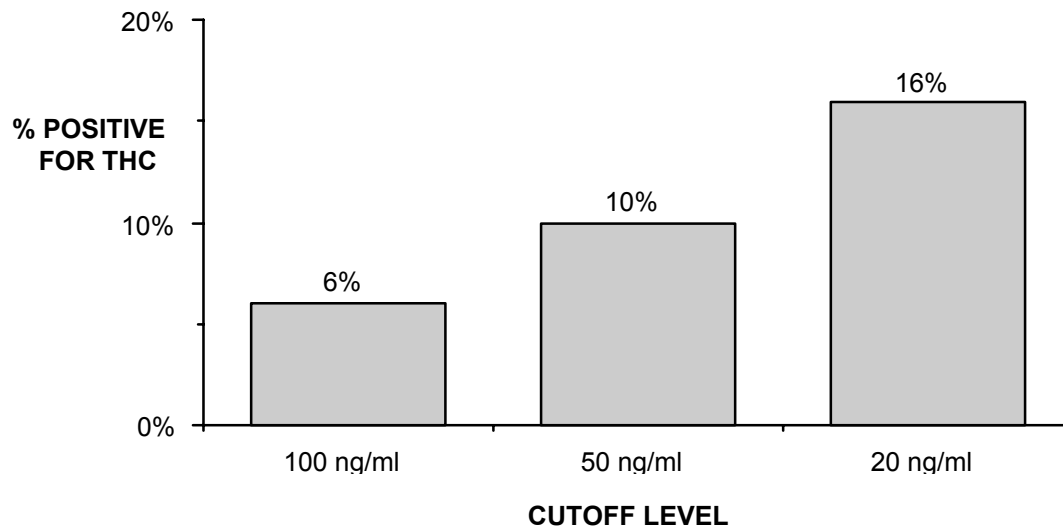
University of Maryland at College Park\*

## ***Detecting Marijuana Use By Urinalysis: Estimates Vary, Depending on Cutoff Level***

Drug test results from a recent study of juvenile offenders in the Baltimore area show that the number of youths testing positive for marijuana almost triples when a low cutoff is used to test urine specimens. The percentage of youths testing positive for marijuana increased from 6% at the 100 ng/ml cutoff level to 16% when tested at a cutoff of 20 ng/ml. Some experts believe that the 100 ng/ml cutoff is too conservative and misses many users. The lower cutoff level may be more appropriate in testing juveniles for marijuana when the interest is in targeting high risk youths for treatment and prevention programs.

### **Percentage of Youths Testing Positive for Marijuana (THC), By Test Cutoff Level**

(N = 89 Youths Tested at 3 Different Cutoffs)



SOURCE: Gray, TA and Wish, ED. 1993. "Estimates of Drug Use in Juvenile Detainees in Maryland: A Summary Report of a Pilot Study Conducted at the Thomas J.S. Waxter Children's Center in Laurel, Maryland."

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\* CESAR FAX is supported by a grant from the Governor's Drug and Alcohol Abuse Commission.