

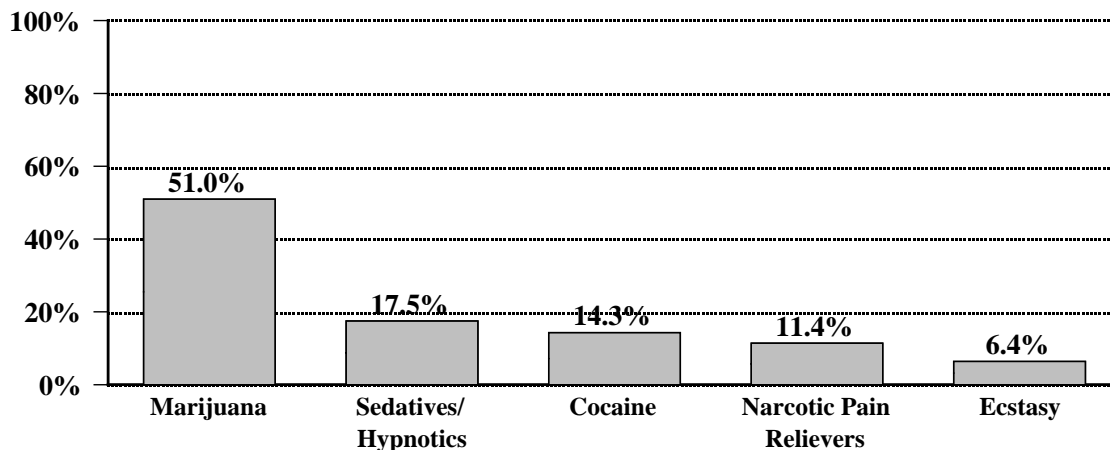
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

Emergency Department Data Reveals Opportunity to Intervene with Underage Alcohol and Other Drug Users

Nearly one-third (30.5%) of alcohol-related emergency department (ED) visits made by underage youth and young adults also involved illicit or pharmaceutical drugs in 2009, according to data from the Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN). The most prevalent drug reported was marijuana (51.0%), followed by sedatives/hypnotics (17.5%), cocaine (14.3%), and narcotic pain relievers (11.4%). Slightly more than 6% of underage alcohol-related ED visits involved ecstasy—more than twice as many as in 2008. All other drugs made up less than 5%. The study also found that nearly two-thirds (64.4%) of these visits that involved other drugs did not receive any follow-up care, defined as admission to an inpatient unit in the hospital, transfer to another health care facility, or referral to a detoxification program or substance abuse treatment. According to the authors, these findings suggest that “ED health care providers may be missing an excellent opportunity to intervene with underage drinkers to prevent or reduce their use of alcohol and drugs.”

Percentage of Youth and Young Adults Under Age 21 Reporting Alcohol-Related ED Visits Involving Other Drugs (Illicit and Pharmaceutical), 2009



NOTE: Percentages do not sum to 100% because each ED visit may involve more than one substance.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from data from Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN), *National Estimates of Drug-Related Emergency Department Visits, 2004-2009*, online at <https://dawninfo.samhsa.gov/data> (accessed 3/25/11); and SAMHSA, “Emergency Department Visits Involving Underage Alcohol Use in Combination with Other Drugs,” *The Dawn Report*, 2011. Available online at <http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/2k11/DAWN025/AlcDrugsComboHTML.pdf>.

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Please note that no *CESAR FAX* issue was published last Monday because the University was closed for Spring Break.