

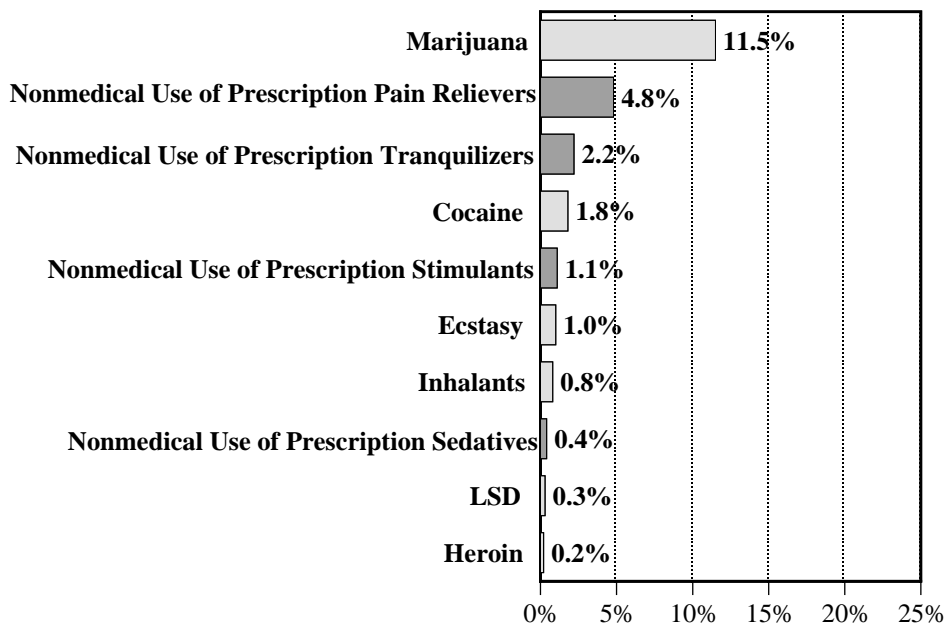
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

Nonmedical Use of Prescription Pain Relievers and Tranquilizers More Prevalent in U.S. Than Use of All Types of Illicit Drugs Except Marijuana

U.S. residents continue to be more likely to report the nonmedical use of prescription drugs[†] than the use of almost all types of illicit drugs, according to recently released data from the 2010 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH). Approximately 5% of persons ages 12 or older reported using prescription pain relievers nonmedically in the past year and 2% reported the nonmedical use of prescription tranquilizers—more than any type of illicit drug with the exception of marijuana. The nonmedical use of prescription stimulants was slightly less prevalent at 1.1%. All other substances, including ecstasy and prescription sedatives used nonmedically, were used by 1% or less of U.S. residents. These rankings have remained relatively unchanged over the past five years (see *CESAR FAX*, Volume 15, Issue 36).

Percentage of U.S. Residents (Age 12 or Older) Reporting Past Year Substance Use, 2010



[†]Nonmedical use of prescription drugs refers to using a prescription pain reliever, tranquilizer, stimulant, or sedative without a personal prescription or only for the experience or feeling it causes. It also includes drugs within these groupings that originally were prescription medications but currently may be manufactured and distributed illegally, such as methamphetamine, which is included under stimulants.

NOTE: NSDUH is representative of the civilian, noninstitutionalized population aged 12 and older living in the U.S., which represents approximately 98% of the population. The survey excludes homeless persons who do not use shelters, military personnel on active duty, and residents of institutional group quarters, such as jails, hospitals, and residential drug treatment centers.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), *Results from the 2010 National Household Survey on Drug Use and Health: Detailed Tables*, 2011. Available online at <http://oas.samhsa.gov/NSDUH/2k10NSDUH/tabs/Cover.pdf>.