

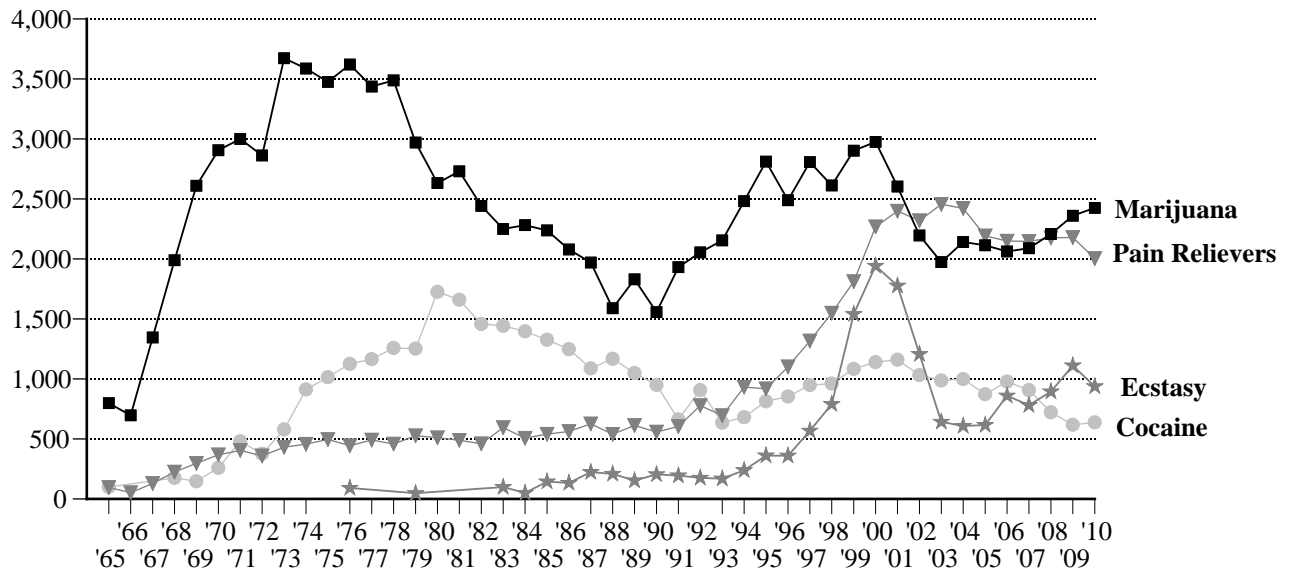
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

Number of First Time Users of Marijuana Increasing; Growth in First Time Use of Prescription Pain Relievers and Ecstasy Stable

The estimated number of people using marijuana for the first time appears to be increasing, according to data from the 2010 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH). More than 2.4 million persons ages 12 or older used marijuana for the first time in 2010, compared to the most recent low of 2.1 million in 2006. While the number of first-time nonmedical users of prescription pain relievers continues to rival that of marijuana, the 2010 estimate of 2.0 million is significantly lower than most recent high of 2.5 million in 2003. The number of new ecstasy users has been increasing since 2005, reaching slightly more than 1.1 million in 2009. However, there was no significant change between 2009 and 2010. The number of new cocaine users, which had been decreasing steadily since 2001, has not changed significantly since 2008. Changes in initiation levels are often leading indicators of emerging patterns of substance use. Thus, these findings suggest that 1) marijuana use may be making a resurgence; 2) the growth in the misuse of prescription pain relievers and in the use of ecstasy 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, 1965-2010
(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 1965 to 2001 are based on initiation data reported during the 2002-2004 NSDUH and may be subject to recall error. 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 (SAMHSA), *Results from the 2010 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Detailed Tables*, 2011 (<http://oas.samhsa.gov/NSDUH/2k10NSDUH/tabs/Cover.pdf>); and SAMHSA, *Results from the 2004 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Detailed Tables*, 2005 (<http://oas.samhsa.gov/NSDUH/2k4nsduh/2k4tabs/2k4TabsCover.pdf>).