

A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

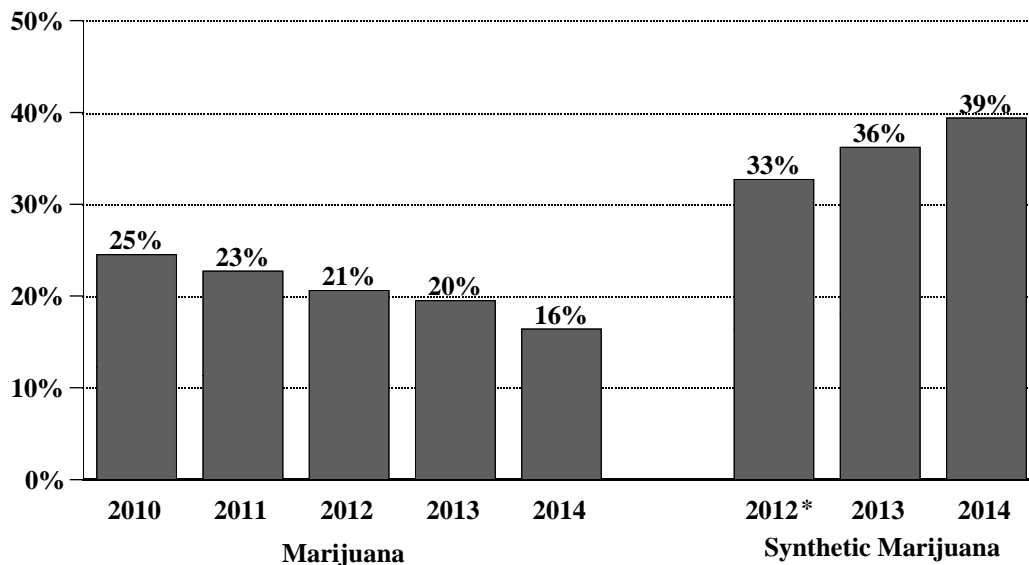
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U.S. 12th Graders' Perceptions of Risk from Occasional Use of Marijuana Declines, Even as Perceived Risk from Synthetic Marijuana Rises

An indicator of marijuana use, the perceived risk, is declining among U.S. 12th graders, even as the perceived risk of using synthetic marijuana increases. The percentage of high school seniors who perceived great risk from occasional use of synthetic marijuana increased from 33% in 2012 (the first year it was included) to 39% in 2014. A recent press release from the Monitoring the Future survey reported that the side effects of using synthetic marijuana are numerous, and may include acute psychosis and heart attack, in addition to other effects noted in two previous *CESAR FAX* issues (see Volume 20, Issue 17 and Volume 22, Issue 7). These findings are important because prior surveys have found marijuana use increases as perceived risk declines (see *CESAR FAX*, Volume 22, Issue 2).

Editor's Note: The original survey used the term "synthetic marijuana". CESAR uses the term synthetic cannabinoids instead because synthetic cannabinoid products typically consist of plant material treated with chemicals that may or may not have effects on the brain similar to those from marijuana.

Percentage of U.S. 12th Graders Reporting that Occasional Use of Marijuana or Synthetic Marijuana Results in a Great Risk of Harm (Physically or in Other Ways), 2010-2014



*The Monitoring the Future survey first included questions about synthetic marijuana in 2012.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Johnston, L. D., Miech, R. A., O'Malley, P. M., Bachman, J. G., & Schulenberg, J. E., "Use of Alcohol, Cigarettes, and a Number of Illicit Drugs Declines Among U.S. Teens," *Monitoring the Future Press Release*, December 16, 2014. Available online at http://www.monitoringthefuture.org/pressreleases/14drugpr_complete.pdf.