

Substantial Underreporting of Drug Use Found Among Youths Surveyed in 1984 and 1988

As part of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, individuals aged 14-21 years were interviewed twice, in 1984 and 1988, concerning their lifetime use of marijuana and cocaine. Approximately one-third (31% to 39%) of the respondents reported less lifetime use of these substances in 1988 than they originally reported in 1984. Further, 19% of those who had originally admitted to lifetime use of cocaine completely denied any use in 1988; 12% denied lifetime use of marijuana in 1988. These findings are consistent with the possibility that respondents became less likely to report illicit drug use in surveys in the late 1980s as public intolerance toward drugs grew.

Percent of These Persons Who In 1988 Reported:	Persons Who Reported In 1984	<u>Ever</u> Using:
	<u>Marijuana</u> (N=6,204)	<u>Cocaine</u> (N=1,589)
Never using the drug	12%	19%
Less lifetime use than they reported in 1984	19%	20%
	31%	39%
The same or more lifetime use of the drug than they reported in 1984	69%	61%
	100%	100%

¹The subsample used for this analysis consists of all respondents who answered questions about marijuana or cocaine use in 1984 and 1988 and reported ever using marijuana or cocaine in 1984.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from M. Fendrich, and C. Vaughn. 1994. "Diminished Lifetime Substance Use Over Time: An Inquiry Into Differential Underreporting," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 58:96-123. For more information, contact Michael Fendrich at 312-413-1084.

CESAR NEEDS YOUR HELP!

CESAR is seeking to identify effective interventions for violent, substance-abusing youth. Please contact Marie Ragghianti at 301-403-8329 (telephone), 301-403-8342 (fax), or Marie@cesar.umd.edu (e-mail) if you have information or suggestions. Thank you!

For more information about today's topic or to be placed on the distribution list, please call CESAR at 301-403-8329.

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