

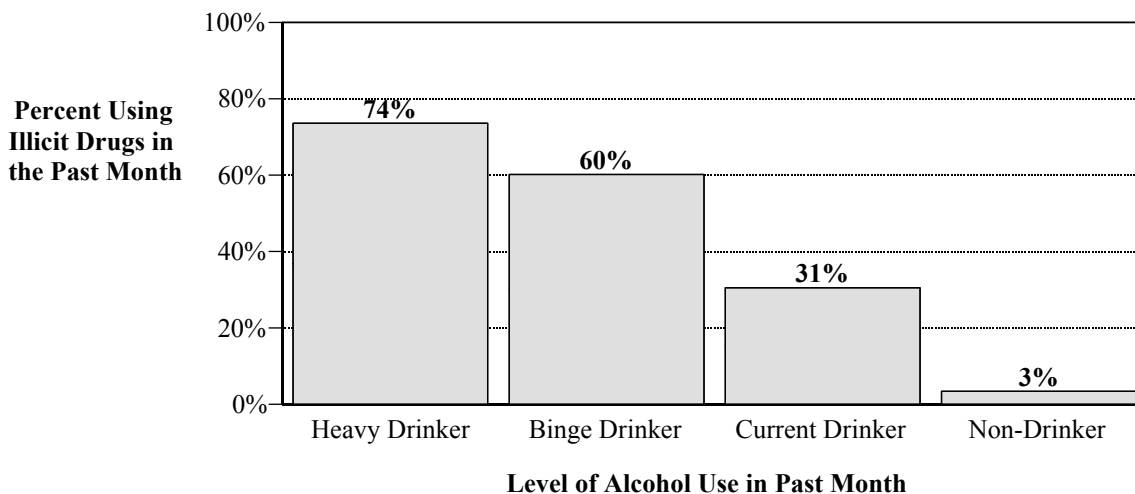
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

Youth Who Drink and Smoke Much More Likely to Use Illicit Drugs

Youth who have as little as one alcoholic drink or one cigarette per month are ten times more likely to also use illicit drugs, according to data from the 1997 National Household Survey of Drug Abuse. Thirty-one percent of youth who reported having at least one drink in the month prior to the survey ("current drinkers") said that they had used illicit drugs during the same period, compared to only 3% of non-drinkers. Binge drinkers and heavy drinkers reported even higher rates of illicit drug use (60% and 74%, respectively). Among smokers, 43% reported using illicit drugs in the past month, compared to 4% of non-smokers.

Percentage of U.S. Household Residents Aged 12 to 17 Reporting Past Month Use of Illicit Drugs, by Level of Past Month Alcohol Use, 1997*



*Heavy Drinker: Five or more drinks on the same occasion on at least five different days in the past month.

Binge Drinker: Five or more drinks on the same occasion at least once in the past month (excludes heavy drinkers).

Current Drinker: At least one drink in the past month (excludes heavy and binge drinkers).

Smoker: Use of cigarettes at least once in the past month.

Illicit Drug Use: Use at least once in the past month of marijuana or hashish, cocaine (including crack), inhalants, hallucinogens (including PCP and LSD), heroin, or any prescription-type psychotherapeutic used nonmedically.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from data from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), "Preliminary Results from the 1997 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse," (WWW document; URL <http://www.samhsa.gov/oas/nhsda/nhsda97/httoc.htm>; accessed 8/21/98).