



Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods
at Case Western Reserve University

2018 Cuyahoga County Youth Risk Behavior Survey: Illegal and Prescription Drug Use

Introduction

The Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods (PRCHN) at Case Western Reserve University has administered the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) in school districts throughout Cuyahoga County since 2000. The YRBS is a cross-sectional tool developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to track adolescent risk behavior over time. In Fall of 2018, the PRCHN conducted the YRBS among 7th and 8th grade students in Cuyahoga County middle schools. A more detailed description of the methodology is available at our website, http://prchn.org/yrbs_home.aspx.

This brief report presents results from the 2018 Cuyahoga County Middle School Youth Risk Behavior Survey, with a particular focus on Illegal and Prescription Drug Use. In this brief report, we present:

- [Overall Prevalence](#)
- [Regional Prevalence](#)
- [Demographic Prevalence](#)
- [Trend Report](#)

Data for similar behaviors can be found at our website, http://prchn.org/yrbs_home.aspx.

Illegal and Prescription Drug Use

Illegal drug use can lead to unhealthy behaviors and negative consequences. Drug abuse may contribute to depression and suicide, unintended pregnancy, school failure, violent behavior, delinquency, and transmission of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV.ⁱ

Marijuana is used for the intoxication or high that it gives users. For most youth, marijuana is not difficult to obtain.ⁱⁱ Many think marijuana is not as harmful as other illicit drugs; however, it has both short and long-term health effects. The short-term effects include memory problems, loss of coordination, anxiety attacks, and increased heart rate.ⁱⁱⁱ Possible long-term effects include respiratory problems, a weakened immune system, and cognitive deficits.^{iv} Research shows that 1 in 6 people who use marijuana as adolescents become addicted to it.^v

Nationally, 4.9% of adolescents aged 12-17 used prescription drugs for nonmedical reasons in 2017.^{vi} Prescription and over the counter medications are widely available, free or inexpensive, and falsely believed to be safer than illicit drugs. Misuse of prescription drugs among youth is associated with higher rates of cigarette use, heavy drinking, and other illicit drug use (including marijuana and cocaine). In 2006, 2.1 million teens abused prescription drugs and an additional 2.1 million had misused over the counter cough and cold medications at least once in their lifetime.^{vii}

Overall Prevalence

The following table summarizes illegal and prescription drug use among the 12,936 middle school students who completed the 2018 Cuyahoga County YRBS. Prevalence estimates and 95% confidence intervals were computed for all variables.

Risk Behavior	% (95% Confidence Interval)
Ever used marijuana (Used marijuana one or more times during their life.)	9.5 (8.9 - 10.3)
Tried marijuana before age 11 years	2.0 (1.7 - 2.3)
Current marijuana use (Used marijuana one or more times during the 30 days before the survey.)	5.8 (5.3 - 6.4)
Ever used inhalants (Sniffed glue, breathed the contents of aerosol spray cans, or inhaled any paints or sprays one or more times during their life.)	5.9 (5.4 - 6.5)
Taken prescription pain medicine without a doctor's prescription or differently than how a doctor prescribed (Including codeine, Vicodin, OxyContin, Hydrocodone, and Percocet; during the past 12 months.)	5.6 (5.1 - 6.2)
Ever taken other prescription drug that was not pain medicine without a doctor's prescription or differently than how a doctor prescribed (Including Adderall, Ritalin, Valium, or Xanax; during their life.)	4.7 (4.2 - 5.3)
Used an illicit drug (Any form of cocaine, heroin, methamphetamines, ketamine, speed, LSD, or ecstasy; one or more times; during the past 12 months.)	0.7 (0.6 - 0.9)
Offered, sold, or given illegal drugs on school property (One or more times during the 12 months before the survey.)	6.8 (6.0 - 7.7)

Regional Prevalence

The table below represents illegal and prescription drug use by the six regions of Cuyahoga County. This division was conducted to provide a geographic representation of the prevalence of different risk behaviors in Cuyahoga County. In 2018, we were able to weight to 4 of 6 regions in Cuyahoga County. The columns under Outer Ring - West and Outer Ring - East do not include data because school participation within these regions was insufficient to permit weighting.

Risk Behavior	CMSD East % (95% CI)	CMSD West % (95% CI)	Inner Ring East % (95% CI)	Inner Ring West % (95% CI)	Outer Ring East % (95% CI)	Outer Ring West % (95% CI)
Ever used marijuana (Used marijuana one or more times during their life.)	18.4 (15.6 - 21.6)	18.1 (15.8 - 20.7)	11.3 (10.1 - 12.7)	8.5 (7.1 - 10.1)	N/A	N/A
Tried marijuana before age 11 years	4.6 (3.4 - 6.1)	4.1 (3.1 - 5.3)	2.0 (1.5 - 2.6)	1.6 (1.1 - 2.3)	N/A	N/A
Current marijuana use (Used marijuana one or more times during the 30 days before the survey.)	10.2 (8.4 - 12.2)	10.9 (8.9 - 13.3)	7.1 (6.1 - 8.3)	5.4 (4.3 - 6.8)	N/A	N/A
Ever used inhalants (Sniffed glue, breathed the contents of aerosol spray cans, or inhaled any paints or sprays one or more times during their life.)	7.5 (6.2 - 9.2)	7.5 (6.1 - 9.1)	7.4 (6.5 - 8.5)	7.1 (5.9 - 8.4)	N/A	N/A
Taken prescription pain medicine without a doctor's prescription or differently than how a doctor prescribed (Including codeine, Vicodin, OxyContin, Hydrocodone, and Percocet; during the past 12 months.)	7.5 (6.2 - 9.2)	7.9 (6.5 - 9.5)	6.6 (5.7 - 7.7)	5.7 (4.6 - 6.9)	N/A	N/A

Risk Behavior	CMSD East % (95% CI)	CMSD West % (95% CI)	Inner Ring East % (95% CI)	Inner Ring West % (95% CI)	Outer Ring East % (95% CI)	Outer Ring West % (95% CI)
Ever taken other prescription drug that was not pain medicine without a doctor's prescription or differently than how a doctor prescribed (Including Adderall, Ritalin, Valium, or Xanax; during their life.)	5.6 (4.6 - 6.9)	8.2 (6.5 - 10.3)	4.9 (4.1 - 5.7)	5.1 (4.2 - 6.1)	N/A	N/A
Used an illicit drug (Any form of cocaine, heroin, methamphetamines, ketamine, speed, LSD, or ecstasy; one or more times; during the past 12 months.)	0.9 (0.5 - 1.5)	0.9 (0.5 - 1.6)	0.6 (0.4 - 0.8)	1.1 (0.7 - 1.8)	N/A	N/A
Offered, sold, or given illegal drugs on school property (One or more times during the 12 months before the survey.)	6.4 (4.9 - 8.2)	7.8 (6.5 - 9.3)	5.6 (4.8 - 6.5)	6.8 (5.6 - 8.2)	N/A	N/A

Demographic Prevalence

The tables below allow for further comparisons of illegal and prescription drug use between demographic groups. Data are presented by gender, race/ethnicity, and grade level. A statistically significant difference exists between groups if the 95% confidence intervals do not overlap.

Ever used marijuana		
Category	%	CI
Gender		
Female	9.3	8.4 - 10.3
Male	9.6	8.7 - 10.7
Race/Ethnicity		
White	5.9	5.1 - 6.8
Black	13.9	12.7 - 15.3
Hispanic	19.0	15.9 - 22.4
Other/Multiple	13.0	10.8 - 15.6
Grade		
7th	6.3	5.4 - 7.3
8th	12.2	10.9 - 13.6
Total	9.5	8.9 - 10.3

Tried marijuana before age 11 years		
Category	%	CI
Gender		
Female	1.2	0.9 - 1.5
Male	2.6	2.2 - 3.1
Race/Ethnicity		
White	0.8	0.6 - 1.1
Black	2.6	2.2 - 3.3
Hispanic	7.6	5.1 - 11.0
Other/Multiple	4.7	3.2 - 6.9
Grade		
7th	1.6	1.3 - 2.1
8th	1.8	1.4 - 2.2
Total	2.0	1.7 - 3.1

Current marijuana use		
Category	%	CI
Gender		
Female	5.8	5.1 - 6.6
Male	5.8	5.1 - 6.5
Race/Ethnicity		
White	3.6	3.1 - 4.3
Black	8.2	7.3 - 9.3
Hispanic	12.6	9.9 - 15.8
Other/Multiple	8.6	6.6 - 11.1
Grade		
7th	3.6	3.0 - 4.3
8th	7.6	6.6 - 8.6
Total	5.8	5.3 - 6.4

Ever used inhalants		
Category	%	CI
Gender		
Female	6.3	5.7 - 7.1
Male	5.4	4.6 - 6.3
Race/Ethnicity		
White	4.6	3.8 - 5.5
Black	6.9	6.1 - 7.7
Hispanic	10.9	8.3 - 14.2
Other/Multiple	8.5	6.7 - 10.7
Grade		
7th	5.3	4.6 - 6.0
8th	6.0	5.1 - 7.0
Total	5.9	5.4 - 6.5

Taken prescription pain medicine without a doctor's prescription or differently than how a doctor prescribed		
Category	%	CI
Gender		
Female	5.8	4.9 - 6.7
Male	5.3	4.6 - 6.2
Race/Ethnicity		
White	3.9	3.2 - 4.7
Black	7.0	6.1 - 8.0
Hispanic	11.6	9.1 - 14.8
Other/Multiple	9.3	7.1 - 12.1
Grade		
7th	4.9	4.2 - 5.7
8th	5.7	4.9 - 6.7
Total	5.6	5.1 - 6.2

Ever taken prescription drug other than pain medicine without a doctor's prescription or differently than how a doctor prescribed		
Category	%	CI
Gender		
Female	5.0	4.2 - 5.9
Male	4.4	3.8 - 5.1
Race/Ethnicity		
White	3.4	2.7 - 4.3
Black	5.3	4.4 - 6.2
Hispanic	11.6	9.0 - 14.9
Other/Multiple	9.4	7.2 - 12.1
Grade		
7th	3.6	3.1 - 4.3
8th	5.2	4.3 - 6.2
Total	4.7	4.2 - 5.3

Used an illicit drug		
Category	%	CI
Gender		
Female	0.5	0.4 - 0.8
Male	0.9	0.6 - 1.2
Race/Ethnicity		
White	0.6	0.4 - 0.9
Black	0.7	0.5 - 1.1
Hispanic	1.6	1.0 - 2.5
Other/Multiple	0.7	0.3 - 1.4
Grade		
7th	0.7	0.5 - 0.9
8th	0.7	0.5 - 1.0
Total	0.7	0.6 - 0.9

Offered, sold, or given illegal drugs on school property		
Category	%	CI
Gender		
Female	6.4	5.4 - 7.5
Male	7.0	6.1 - 8.1
Race/Ethnicity		
White	6.8	5.6 - 8.2
Black	5.8	5.0 - 6.6
Hispanic	11.5	9.0 - 14.6
Other/Multiple	10.0	7.8 - 12.8
Grade		
7th	4.7	4.0 - 5.5
8th	8.4	7.1 - 9.8
Total	6.8	6.0 - 7.7

Cuyahoga County Trend Data

The following table presents the prevalence of illegal and prescription drug use among Cuyahoga County middle school students in 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016 and 2018. The prevalence for each year is given (when available), with 95% confidence intervals below. ¹

Cuyahoga County, 2010	Cuyahoga County, 2012	Cuyahoga County, 2014	Cuyahoga County, 2016	Cuyahoga County, 2018
Ever used marijuana (Used marijuana one or more times during their life.)				
12.7% (11.4 - 14.0)	10.9% (10.1 - 11.7)	10.3% (9.7 - 11.0)	8.7% (8.3 - 9.2)	9.5% (9.5 - 10.3)
Tried marijuana before age 11 years				
2.3% (1.8 - 2.9)	2.0% (1.7 - 2.3)	2.3% (2.0 - 2.6)	1.7% (1.5 - 1.9)	2.0% (2.0 - 2.3)
Current marijuana use (Used marijuana one or more times during the 30 days before the survey.)				
7.0% (6.0 - 7.9)	6.5% (5.9 - 7.1)	5.8% (5.3 - 6.2)	5.1% (4.7 - 5.5)	5.8% (5.3 - 6.4)
Current unauthorized prescription drug use (Used prescription drugs without a doctor's prescription at least once during the 30 days before the survey.)				
N/A	9.6% (9.0 - 10.3)	7.9% (7.5 - 8.4)	N/A	N/A
Offered, sold, or given drugs on school property (One or more times during the 12 months before the survey.)				
9.0% (8.1 - 9.8)	9.3% (8.6 - 10.0)	8.1% (7.6 - 8.6)	N/A	6.8% (6.0 - 7.7)
Ever used inhalants (Sniffed glue, breathed the contents of aerosol spray cans, or inhaled any paints or sprays one or more times during their life.)				
N/A	N/A	7.1% (6.6 - 7.7)	5.4% (5.1 - 5.7)	5.9% (5.4 - 6.5)
Students believe it is very wrong for someone their age to smoke marijuana				
72.8% (71.3 - 74.3)	72.5% (71.3 - 73.6)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Students perceive that their parents believe it is very wrong for them to smoke marijuana				
89.2% (88.2 - 90.1)	89.2% (88.2 - 90.1)	N/A	N/A	N/A

¹ The YRBS questions with two or more data points over 2010-2018 are included. The new 2018 questions are not included for the purpose of demonstrating trends. For those questions not asked in 2018, refer to the PRCHN archives at www.prchn.org.aspx for more detailed information.

Cuyahoga County, 2010	Cuyahoga County, 2012	Cuyahoga County, 2014	Cuyahoga County, 2016	Cuyahoga County, 2018
Students perceive great risk of harm from trying marijuana once or twice (Physically or in other ways.)				
42.5% (40.8 - 44.2)	45.3% (44.1 - 46.5)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Students perceive great risk of harm from smoking marijuana regularly (Physically or in other ways.)				
69.5% (67.8 - 71.2)	68.1% (67.0 - 69.3)	N/A	N/A	N/A

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