



Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods
at Case Western Reserve University

2014 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 spring of 2014, 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.apsx>.

This brief report presents results from the 2014 Cuyahoga County Middle School Youth Risk Behavior Survey, with a particular focus on Illegal and Prescription Drug Use. In this brief report, we present:

- [Healthy People 2020](#)
- [Overall Prevalence](#)
- [Regional Prevalence](#)
- [Demographic Prevalence](#)
- [Trend Report](#)

Data for similar behaviors can be found at our website, <http://prchn.org/yrbs.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} While causation is complex, teens that use marijuana, are also more likely to have lower achievement, more delinquent behavior and aggression, and weaker relationships with parents.

Nationally, nine percent (9.1%) of teens aged 12-17 misused prescription drugs in 2005. In 2006, there were as many new abusers of prescription drugs as there were new users of marijuana.^v Prescription and over the counter medications are widely available, free or inexpensive, and falsely believed to be safer than illicit drugs. 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.^{vi}

Healthy People 2020

Where possible, the Cuyahoga County Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) data are compared to the Healthy People 2020 benchmarks.^{vii} This allows us to consider Cuyahoga County's progress towards the 10-year national objectives aimed at improving the health of all Americans.

Healthy People 2020 Objectives	Cuyahoga County 2014
AH-7: Reduce the proportion of adolescents who have been offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property to no more than 20.4%	8.1% of Cuyahoga County middle school students reported being offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property.
SA-13.1: Reduce the proportion of adolescents reporting use of alcohol or any illicit drugs during the past 30 days to no more than 16.5%.	16.9% of Cuyahoga County middle school students reported using alcohol, marijuana or unauthorized prescription drugs in the past 30 days.
SA-13.2: Reduce the proportion of adolescents reporting use of marijuana during the past 30 days to no more than 6.0%	5.8% of Cuyahoga County middle school students reported using marijuana at least once during the past 30 days.

Overall Prevalence

The following table summarizes illegal and prescription drug use among the 12,607 middle school students who completed the 2014 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.)	10.3% (9.7-11.0)
Tried marijuana before age 11 years	2.3% (2.0-2.6)
Current marijuana use (Used marijuana one or more times during the 30 days before the survey.)	5.8% (5.3-6.2)
Current unauthorized prescription drug use (Used prescription drugs without a doctor's prescription one or more times during the 30 days before the survey.)	7.9% (7.5-8.4)
Offered, sold, or given drugs on school property (One or more times during the 12 months before the survey.)	8.1% (7.6-8.6)
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.)	7.1% (6.6-7.7)

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 2014, we were able to weight to 5 of 6 regions in Cuyahoga County. The column under Outer Ring-West does not include data because school participation within this region 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.)	19.1% (16.5-21.9)	17.8% (15.3-20.6)	12.5% (11.1-14.0)	9.9% (7.8-12.4)	5.0% (3.8-6.5)	N/A
Tried marijuana before age 11 years	4.4% (3.2-5.9)	4.6% (3.6-5.8)	2.9% (2.3-3.8)	1.3% (0.7-2.4)	0.9% (0.5-1.6)	N/A
Current marijuana use (Used marijuana one or more times during the 30 days before the survey.)	10.4% (8.6-12.6)	10.6% (8.7-12.9)	6.3% (5.4-7.2)	6.0% (4.6-7.6)	2.3% (1.7-3.1)	N/A
Current unauthorized prescription drug use (Used prescription drugs without a doctor's prescription one or more times during the 30 days before the survey.)	9.1% (7.7-10.7)	9.0% (7.5-10.9)	10.5% (9.4-11.8)	8.0% (6.3-10.0)	6.7% (5.6-8.1)	N/A
Offered, sold, or given drugs on school property (One or more times during the 12 months before the survey.)	10.8% (9.2-12.6)	8.5% (7.1-10.0)	9.4% (8.3-10.6)	8.6% (7.1-10.3)	5.5% (4.4-6.8)	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.)	9.4% (7.9-11.2)	7.7% (6.1-9.8)	11.4% (10.1-12.9)	6.7% (5.0-8.9)	4.8% (3.6-6.3)	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	8.5-	10.1
Male	11.1	10.2-	12.2
Race/Ethnicity			
White	6.6	5.8-	7.4
Black	15.4	14.2-	16.7
Hispanic	16.1	13.8-	18.7
Other/Multiple	11.2	9.0-	13.7
Grade			
7th	6.4	5.7-	7.1
8th	13.7	12.5-	15.0
Total	10.3	9.7-	11.0

Tried marijuana before age 11 years			
Category	%	CI	
Gender			
Female	1.3	1.0-	1.6
Male	3.0	2.6-	3.5
Race/Ethnicity			
White	1.1	0.9-	1.3
Black	3.4	2.9-	4.1
Hispanic	6.3	4.8-	8.2
Other/Multiple	5.0	3.4-	7.4
Grade			
7th	2.0	1.6-	2.5
8th	2.1	1.7-	2.6
Total	2.3	2.0-	2.6

Current marijuana use		
Category	%	CI
Gender		
Female	5.1	4.6- 5.7
Male	6.1	5.5- 6.8
Race/Ethnicity		
White	3.8	3.3- 4.3
Black	8.0	7.2- 9.0
Hispanic	10.7	8.8- 12.9
Other/Multiple	8.5	6.3- 11.4
Grade		
7th	3.5	3.0- 4.1
8th	7.5	6.8- 8.3
Total	5.8	5.3- 6.2

Current unauthorized prescription drug use		
Category	%	CI
Gender		
Female	9.7	9.0- 10.5
Male	6.1	5.5- 6.7
Race/Ethnicity		
White	6.1	5.5- 6.6
Black	9.8	8.9- 10.7
Hispanic	12.9	11.2- 14.9
Other/Multiple	15.4	12.9- 18.2
Grade		
7th	6.8	6.1- 7.5
8th	8.6	7.9- 9.4
Total	7.9	7.5- 8.4

Offered, sold, or given drugs on school property		
Category	%	CI
Gender		
Female	6.5	5.8- 7.1
Male	9.5	8.8- 10.3
Race/Ethnicity		
White	6.9	6.3- 7.6
Black	9.4	8.5- 10.3
Hispanic	12.4	10.3- 14.9
Other/Multiple	9.2	7.4- 11.3
Grade		
7th	6.8	6.2- 7.6
8th	9.0	8.3- 9.8
Total	8.1	7.6- 8.6

Ever used inhalants		
Category	%	CI
Gender		
Female	7.9	7.1- 8.8
Male	6.2	5.6- 6.9
Race/Ethnicity		
White	4.7	4.1- 5.4
Black	9.8	8.9- 10.9
Hispanic	12.5	10.2- 15.1
Other/Multiple	10.5	8.6- 12.7
Grade		
7th	6.8	6.1- 7.5
8th	7.1	6.3- 8.0
Total	7.1	6.6- 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 2008, 2010, 2012 and 2014. The prevalence for each year is given (when available), with 95% confidence intervals below. ¹

Cuyahoga County, 2008	Cuyahoga County, 2010	Cuyahoga County, 2012	Cuyahoga County, 2014
Ever used marijuana (Used marijuana one or more times during their life.)			
9.9% (9.0-10.8)	12.7% (11.4-14.0)	10.9% (10.1-11.7)	10.3% (9.7-11.0)
Tried marijuana before age 11 years			
2.4% (1.7-3.1)	2.3% (1.8-2.9)	2.0% (1.7-2.3)	2.3% (2.0-2.6)
Current marijuana use (Used marijuana one or more times during the 30 days before the survey.)			
6.2% (5.5-6.9)	7.0% (6.0-7.9)	6.5% (5.9-7.1)	5.8% (5.3-6.2)
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	N/A	9.6% (9.0-10.3)	7.9% (7.5-8.4)
Offered, sold, or given drugs on school property (One or more times during the 12 months before the survey.)			
6.3% (5.6-6.9)	9.0% (8.1-9.8)	9.3% (8.6-10.0)	8.1% (7.6-8.6)
Students believe it is very wrong for someone their age to smoke marijuana			
75.3% (73.3-77.4)	72.8% (71.3-74.3)	72.5% (71.3-73.6)	N/A
Students perceive that their parents believe it is very wrong for them to smoke marijuana			
91.5% (89.9-93.0)	89.2% (88.2-90.1)	88.7% (88.0-89.5)	N/A
Students perceive great risk of harm from trying marijuana once or twice (Physically or in other ways.)			
N/A	42.5% (40.8-44.2)	45.3% (44.1-46.5)	N/A
Students perceive great risk of harm from smoking marijuana regularly (Physically or in other ways.)			
N/A	69.5% (67.8-71.2)	68.1% (67.0-69.3)	N/A

¹ The YRBS questions with two or more data points over 2008-2014 are included. The new 2014 questions are not included for the purpose of demonstrating trends. For those questions not asked in 2014, refer to the PRCHN archives at www.prchn.org.aspx for more detailed information.

Contact Information

Prepared by:
Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods
Case Western Reserve University
10900 Euclid Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44106-7069
www.prchn.org

For more information please contact:
Erika S. Trapl, PhD
Assistant Professor, Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics
Associate Director, Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods
Case Western Reserve University
Erika.trapl@case.edu
216-368-0098

Jean L. Frank, MPH
Manager of Community Initiatives
Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods
Case Western Reserve University
Jean.frank@case.edu
216-368-5913

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