Arizona Criminal Justice Commission

Arizona Youth Survey 2010

Marijuana Fact Sheet

Our mission is to sustain and enhance the coordination, cohesiveness, productivity and effectiveness of the criminal justice system in Arizona

August 2011

The Arizona Youth Survey (AYS)

In 2010, the Arizona Youth Survey (AYS) obtained data from 63,784 students in 8th, 10th, and 12th grade from all 15 Arizona counties. Among the data collected were reported measures of lifetime and past 30-day substance use. According to the 2010 AYS data lifetime and 30-day substance use, marijuana was the third most prevalent substance used by junior high and high school students in Arizona, after alcohol and cigarettes. This report summarizes the results from the 2004, 2006, 2008, and 2010 AYS for youth marijuana use relative to county, respondent demographics, risk and protective factors, age of initiation and other selected measures.

Table 1. Percentage of Youth Who Reported Having Used Marijuana in Their Lifetime by County

County	2004	2006	2008	2010
Apache	55.4	46.5	43.7	38.9
Cochise	30.6	23.5	26.5	24.9
Coconino	44.7	41.1	35.5	36.9
Gila	41.3	35.5	35.7	44.9
Graham	36.7	33.5	26.0	31.5
Greenlee	35.1	34.9	29.9	34.1
La Paz	30.9	30.9	32.1	31.7
Maricopa	28.1	26.5	25.3	28.4
Mohave	37.2	38.2	30.7	31.6
Navajo	44.2	39.3	42.1	29.2
Pima	33.2	35.6	32.0	40.9
Pinal	41.0	34.4	31.8	33.2
Santa Cruz	25.0	23.9	26.8	28.4
Yavapai	30.2	32.1	27.3	29.4
Yuma	18.4	20.9	16.5	23.3
State of Arizona	**31.3**	**29.2**	**27.4**	**29.9**

Table 2. Percentage of Youth Who Reported Having Used Marijuana in the Past 30 Days by County

County	2004	2006	2008	2010
Apache	24.6	22.9	22.0	20.8
Cochise	11.9	8.6	11.3	12.8
Coconino	20.2	17.4	16.1	16.7
Gila	16.5	16.3	14.3	22.2
Graham	15.5	16.2	10.5	14.0
Greenlee	13.3	13.8	13.4	14.9
La Paz	12.2	13.4	14.4	10.6
Maricopa	12.6	12.1	11.9	14.3
Mohave	15.0	16.7	13.1	16.2
Navajo	20.5	18.6	19.3	14.0
Pima	14.7	15.8	13.8	18.8
Pinal	18.9	17.1	13.9	15.1
Santa Cruz	9.7	10.1	10.3	12.6
Yavapai	10.7	13.8	12.0	14.3
Yuma	8.4	7.8	7.0	10.8
State of Arizona	**13.8**	**13.1**	**12.5**	**14.8**

Lifetime and 30-Day Marijuana Use by Arizona Youth

In 2010, 29.9 percent of Arizona youth reported having used marijuana in their lifetime (Table 1). Lifetime marijuana use among youth in Arizona decreased consistently from 2004 to 2008; however, the 2010 AYS revealed an increase in lifetime marijuana use. Of the 15 Arizona counties, respondents in nine counties reported higher lifetime usage rates compared to the state average. Gila, Pima, and Apache counties reported the highest lifetime marijuana usage rates that were 1.5 times, 1.4 times, and 1.3 times higher than the state, respectively. Yuma and Cochise counties had the lowest lifetime marijuana usage rates.

The 2010 AYS also revealed that, 14.8 percent of Arizona students reported having used marijuana during the 30 days prior to taking the 2010 survey (Table 2). Not surprisingly, after decreasing consistently from 2004 to 2008, 30-day marijuana use also increased in 2010 and reached its highest level across the four most recent administrations of the AYS. In 2010, seven Arizona counties reported higher 30-day marijuana usage compared to the state. Gila, Apache, and Pima counties reported the highest rates of 30-day marijuana use that were 1.5 times, 1.4 times, and 1.3 times higher than the state, respectively. La Paz and Yuma counties reported the lowest 30-day marijuana usage rates.

Risk and Protective Factors

At the core of the Arizona Youth Survey are questions based on a risk and protective factor prevention model. This model is based on research that has identified several risk and protective factors for delinquency and substance use. The 2010 AYS data reveal that as risk factors accumulate in youth's lives, the percentage of youth who reported using marijuana in the past 30 days also increases. Conversely, as protective factors increase, the percentage of youth who report marijuana use decreases (Chart 1).

Chart 1. Relationship Between Those Youth Who Used Marijuana in the Past 30 Days and Accumulated Risk and Protective Factors

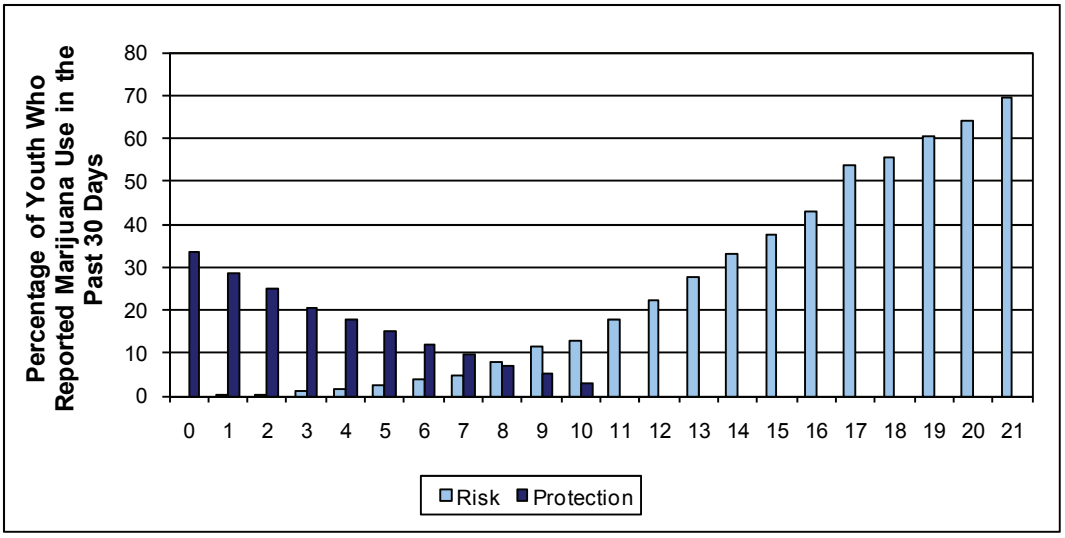
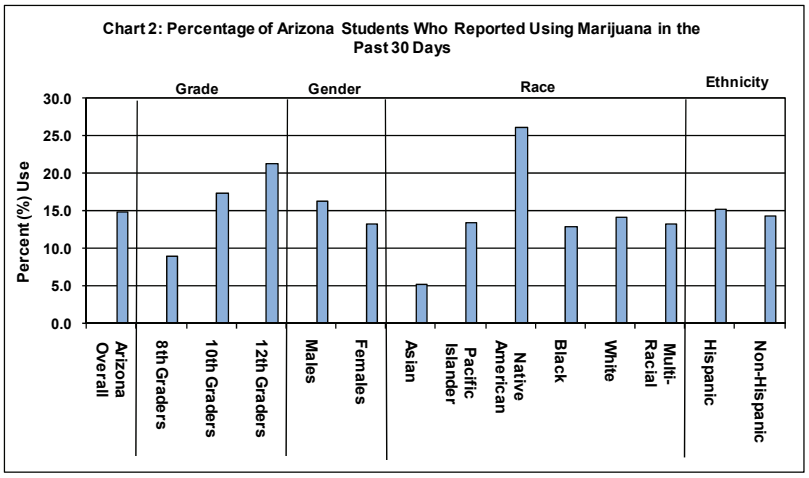


Table 3. Percentage of Youth Who Reported Having Used Marijuana in the Past 30 Days by Demographics				
	2004	2006	2008	2010
Overall	13.8	13.1	12.5	14.8
Grade				
8th Grade	9.7	8.5	7.6	8.9
10th Grade	16.2	15.7	15.1	17.4
12th Grade	18.5	18.1	18.7	21.3
Gender				
Male	15.3	15.0	13.6	16.3
Female	12.4	11.5	11.4	13.3
Race				
Asian	7.8	7.0	4.6	5.2
Pacific Islander	14.0	13.7	12.8	13.4
Native American	25.9	25.3	27.4	26.1
Black	10.5	12.2	10.5	13.0
White	12.6	12.0	12.3	14.1
Multi-Racial	n/a	n/a	12.6	13.3
Ethnicity				
Hispanic	13.4	12.5	11.8	15.3
Non-Hispanic	n/a	n/a	12.8	14.4

Note: n/a indicates that the question was not asked in that particular administration of the survey.

30-Day Marijuana Use by Respondent Demographics

As mentioned earlier, in 2010, 14.8 percent of Arizona youth reported using marijuana during the 30 days preceding the survey which was an 18.4 percent increase from 2008. Usage rates for marijuana also increase with grade level, with 8th graders using marijuana the least, followed by 10th graders, and then 12th graders (Table 3). AYS data from 2004-2010 reveal that marijuana use reached its lowest point for nearly every demographic in 2008 before increasing again in 2010. The exception was for Native American youth. While Native American youth reported nearly two times higher usage rates of marijuana than any other racial group, this population did experience a 4.7 percent decrease in reported 30-day marijuana use between 2008 and 2010. Asian youth reported substantially lower marijuana usage rates compared to the other races.



Youth Perceptions About Marijuana Use

Less than half of the youth surveyed in 2004, 2006, 2008, and 2010 believed there was great or moderate risk involved with trying marijuana once or twice (Table 4). From 2008 to 2010, youth's perceived risk of trying marijuana decreased by 10.7 percent. Similarly, the perception of the risk involved with smoking marijuana regularly has consistently decreased over time. Youth perceptions of parent disapproval and peer disapproval for smoking marijuana also decreased from 2006 to 2010. Finally, AYS data from 2004-2010 reveal that, overtime, fewer youth have come to believe it is very easy or sort of easy to get marijuana.

Table 4. Perceptions of Youth Regarding Marijuana Use					
Outcome	Definition	2004	2006	2008	2010
Perception of Risk (People are at Moderate or Great Risk of harming themselves if they...)	Try Marijuana once or twice	43.2	47.3	48.6	43.4
	Smoke Marijuana Regularly	79.0	78.3	75.8	71.0
Perception of Parent Disapproval (Parents feel it would be Wrong or Very Wrong to...)	Smoke Marijuana	94.1	94.2	93.9	93.3
Perception of Peer Disapproval (I think it is Wrong or Very Wrong for someone my age to...)	Smoke Marijuana	77.8	78.6	78.4	75.3
Percentage of youth that felt it would be easy or sort of easy to get marijuana	Ease of Obtaining Marijuana	56.1	53.9	53.3	52.9

Age of Initiation

While much of the AYS data on marijuana use suggests increased use by youth, it is promising to note that, overall, the age of youth's first marijuana use has increased consistently over time, indicating that youth were starting to use marijuana at an older age (Table 5). The 2010 AYS data also revealed that female youth started using marijuana at an older age than males. Of the students surveyed, Asian and White youth were older when they started using marijuana than youth of other racial groups. Native American youth were the youngest when they first tried marijuana compared to youth of other racial groups. Finally, the average age of initiation of marijuana use for Hispanic youth was younger than Non-Hispanic youth.

Table 5. Average Age of First Substance Use By Demographics				
County	2004	2006	2008	2010
Overall	13.2	13.2	13.5	13.6
Gender				
Male	13.1	13.1	13.4	13.5
Female	13.4	13.4	13.3	13.8
Race				
Asian	13.9	13.6	13.9	14.2
Pacific Islander	13.1	13.5	13.7	13.9
Native American	12.5	12.5	12.6	12.9
Black	12.9	12.9	13.4	13.4
White	13.6	13.7	14.0	14.1
Multi-Racial	n/a	n/a	13.2	13.4
Ethnicity				
Hispanic	13.0	13.0	13.2	13.4
Non-Hispanic	n/a	n/a	13.7	13.8

Arizona's Implementation of the Medical Marijuana Act

The recent implementation of the Medical Marijuana Act has a provision that allows for youth to obtain a medical marijuana card with the permission of their custodial parent or legal guardian. Due to the passage of this Act, future administrations of the AYS will be assessing youth's use of medical marijuana and changes in illicit marijuana use, their perceptions of the risk of marijuana use, and their perceived availability of marijuana.

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