

# The NSDUH Report

August 19, 2005

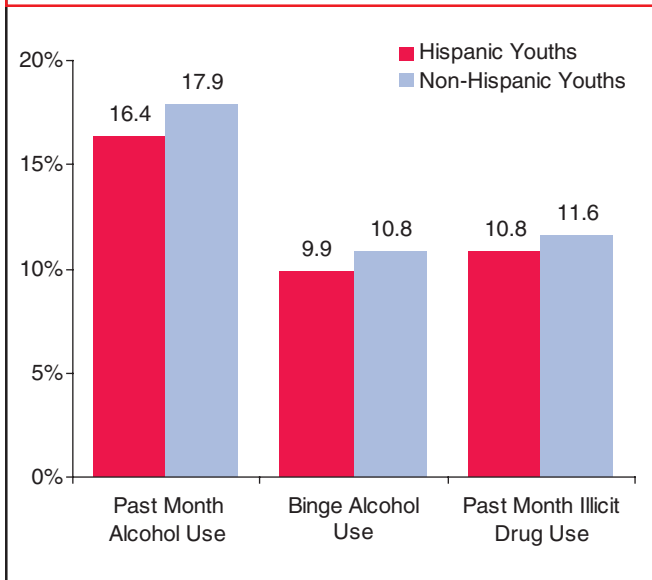
## Substance Use among Hispanic Youths

### In Brief

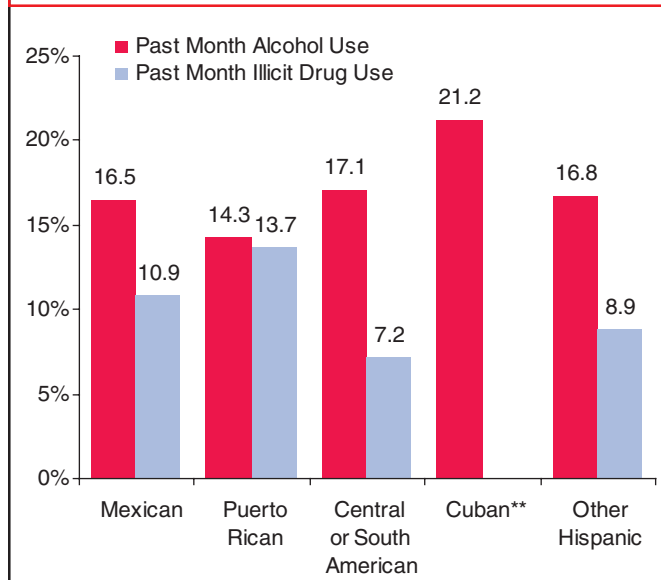
- Hispanic youths aged 12 to 17 were less likely to report past month alcohol use and past month marijuana use than non-Hispanic youths
- Among Hispanic youths, Cuban youths had the highest rates of past month alcohol use while Puerto Rican youths had the highest rates of past month illicit drug use
- Hispanic youths who were born in the United States were more likely to have used illicit drugs in the past month than Hispanic youths not born in the United States

Research has found mixed results when comparing the extent of substance use among Hispanic youths with use among non-Hispanic youths.<sup>1,2</sup> The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) asks persons aged 12 or older about their use of illicit drugs and alcohol, including binge alcohol use, in the past month. Binge alcohol use is defined as drinking five or more drinks on the same occasion (i.e., at the same time or within a couple of hours of each other) on at least 1 day in the past 30 days. NSDUH defines illicit drugs to include marijuana/hashish, cocaine (including crack), inhalants, hallucinogens, heroin, or prescription-type drugs used nonmedically.<sup>3</sup> This report examines the prevalence of alcohol and illicit drug use among Hispanic<sup>4</sup> youths aged 12 to 17. All findings presented in this report are annual averages based on combined 2002 and 2003 NSDUH data.

**Figure 1. Percentages of Past Month Alcohol, Binge Alcohol, and Illicit Drug Use among Hispanic and Non-Hispanic Youths Aged 12 to 17: 2002 and 2003**



**Figure 2. Percentages of Past Month Alcohol Use and Illicit Drug Use among Hispanic Youths Aged 12 to 17, by Hispanic Subgroup\*: 2002 and 2003**



## Percentages of Hispanic Youths in the United States

In 2002 and 2003, there were about 24.9 million youths aged 12 to 17 in the United States. Of these youths, almost 4 million (16.1 percent) were of Hispanic origin. The majority of Hispanic youths reported they were Mexican (71.2 percent), followed by Puerto Rican (11.8 percent), Central or South American (10.9 percent), Cuban (3.0 percent), and other Hispanic<sup>5</sup> (3.1 percent). Approximately 3.1 million (77.8 percent) Hispanic youths were born in the United States.

## Prevalence of Alcohol Use

Overall, Hispanic youths aged 12 to 17 were less likely to use alcohol in the past month (16.4 percent) than non-Hispanic youths (17.9

percent) (Figure 1). An estimated 16.5 percent of Mexican youths, 14.3 percent of Puerto Rican youths, 17.1 percent of Central or South American youths, 21.2 percent of Cuban youths, and 16.8 percent of other Hispanic youths used alcohol in the past 30 days preceding the survey (Figure 2).

Male and female Hispanic youths were similar in their past month alcohol use (16.3 and 16.6 percent, respectively) and binge alcohol use (10.7 and 9.2 percent). Approximately 17.1 percent of Hispanic youths born in the United States used alcohol in the past month compared with 14.1 percent of Hispanic youths not born in the United States (Figure 3).

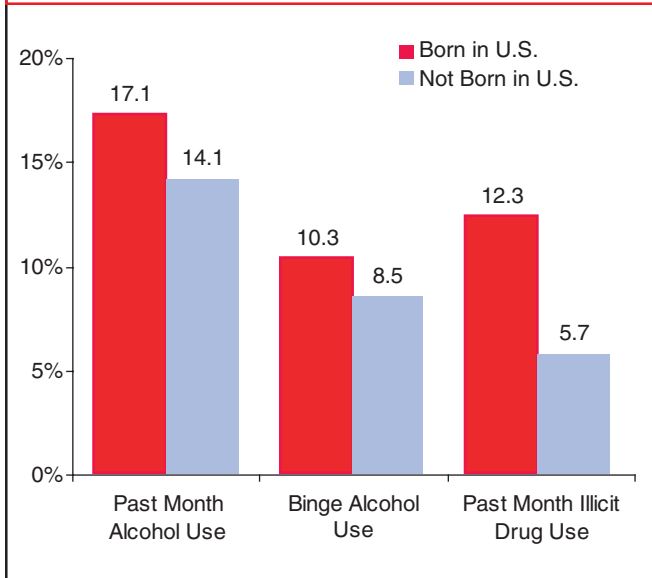
## Prevalence of Illicit Drug Use

In 2002 and 2003, 10.8 percent of Hispanic youths aged 12 to 17 used illicit drugs in the past

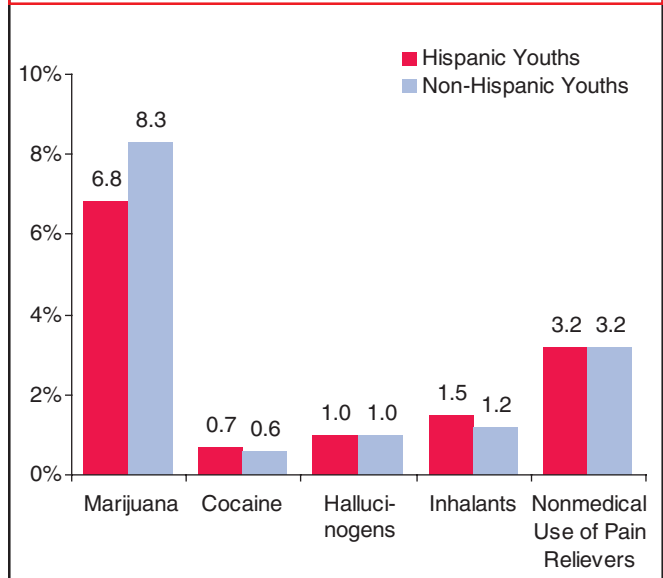
month compared with 11.6 percent of non-Hispanic youths. Hispanic youths were less likely to have used marijuana in the past month (6.8 percent) than non-Hispanic youths (8.3 percent) (Figure 4). Among Hispanic youths, 10.9 percent of Mexican youths, 13.7 percent of Puerto Rican youths, 7.2 percent of Central or South American youths, and 8.9 percent of other Hispanic youths used illicit drugs in the past month.<sup>6</sup>

The rate of past month illicit drug use was similar among Hispanic males (11.5 percent) and females (10.1 percent). Hispanic youths who were born in the United States (12.3 percent) were significantly more likely to have used illicit drugs in the past month than Hispanic youths not born in the United States (5.7 percent).

**Figure 3. Percentages of Past Month Alcohol, Binge Alcohol, and Illicit Drug Use among Hispanic Youths Aged 12 to 17, by Birth in the United States: 2002 and 2003**



**Figure 4. Percentages of Past Month Illicit Drug Use among Hispanic and Non-Hispanic Youths Aged 12 to 17, by Specific Illicit Drug: 2002 and 2003**



**End Notes**

- Wallace, J. M., Jr., Bachman, J. G., O'Malley, P. M., Johnston, L. D., Schulenberg, J. E., & Cooper, S. M. (2002). Tobacco, alcohol, and illicit drug use: Racial and ethnic differences among U.S. high school seniors, 1976-2000. *Public Health Reports*, 117(Supplement 1), S67-S75.
- National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2003, September). *Drug use among racial/ethnic minorities: Revised* (NIH Publication No. 03-3888). Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health. [Available as a PDF at <http://www.drugabuse.gov/pubs/minorities/>]
- NSDUH measures nonmedical use of prescription-type pain relievers, sedatives, stimulants, or tranquilizers. Nonmedical use is defined as use of prescription-type drugs not prescribed for the respondent by a physician or used only for the experience or feeling they

caused. Nonmedical use of any prescription-type pain reliever, sedative, stimulant, or tranquilizer does not include over-the-counter drugs.

- For this report, respondents identifying themselves as Hispanic were assigned to the Hispanic group regardless of their racial identification. Respondents identifying themselves as non-Hispanic were assigned to the non-Hispanic group.
- Respondents were asked if they were of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin or descent. If they indicated a positive response, they were asked, "Which of these Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish groups best describes you?" Response options were "Mexican/Mexican American/Mexicano/Chicano," "Puerto Rican," "Central or South American," "Cuban/Cuban American," or "Other (Specify)."
- Past month illicit drug use among Cuban youths could not be reported due to small sample size.

**Figure Notes**

- \* Respondents were asked if they were of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin or descent. If they indicated a positive response, they then were asked, "Which of these Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish groups best describes you?" Response options were "Mexican/Mexican American/Mexicano/Chicano," "Puerto Rican," "Central or South American," "Cuban/Cuban American," or "Other (Specify)."
  - \*\* Past month illicit drug use among Cuban youths could not be reported due to small sample size.
- Source: SAMHSA, 2002 and 2003 NSDUH.

The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) is an annual survey sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Prior to 2002, this survey was called the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHSDA). The 2002 data are based on information obtained from 68,126 persons aged 12 or older, including 23,645 youths aged 12 to 17; of those, 3,264 were Hispanic. The 2003 data are based on information obtained from 67,784 persons aged 12 or older, including 22,665 youths aged 12 to 17; of those, 3,233 were Hispanic. The survey collects data by administering questionnaires to

a representative sample of the population through face-to-face interviews at their place of residence.

*The NSDUH Report* is prepared by the Office of Applied Studies (OAS), SAMHSA, and by RTI International in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. (RTI International is a trade name of Research Triangle Institute.)

Information and data for this issue are based on the following publication and statistics:

Office of Applied Studies. (2004). *Results from the 2003 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National findings* (DHHS Publication No. SMA 04-3964, NSDUH Series H-25). Rockville, MD:

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Also available online:  
<http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/nsduh.htm>

Because of improvements and modifications to the 2002 NSDUH, estimates from the 2002 and 2003 surveys should not be compared with estimates from the 2001 or earlier versions of the survey to examine changes over time.

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