

# The NHSDA Report

November 8, 2002

## Youth Violence and Substance Use: 2001 Update

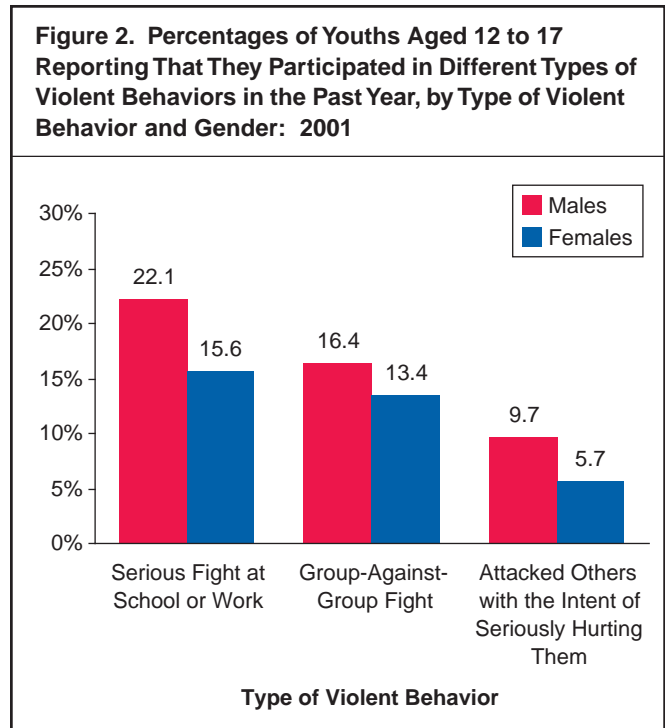
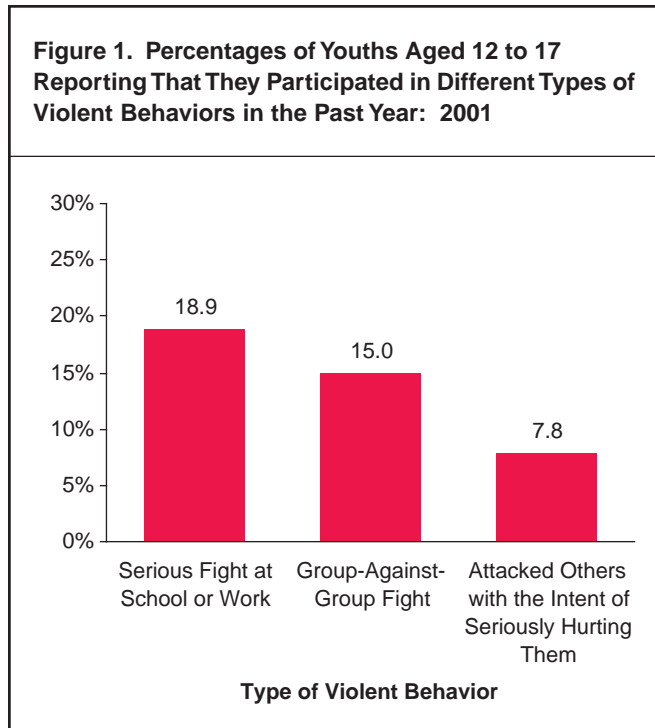
### In Brief

- Among youths aged 12 to 17, males were more likely than females to report violent behaviors during the past year
- Youths aged 14 or 15 reported higher rates of serious fighting at school or work and group-against-group fighting than youths aged 12 or 13 or those aged 16 or 17
- Youths aged 12 to 17 who reported violent behaviors in the past year reported higher rates of past year illicit drug or alcohol use compared with youths who did not report violent behaviors

The 2001 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHSDA) asked youths aged 12 to 17 to report on their involvement in violent behaviors during the year before the survey, including serious fighting at school or work, group-against-group fighting, or attacking others with the intent of seriously hurting them. Youths also were asked about their use of alcohol and illicit drugs during the prior 12 months. “Any illicit drug” refers to marijuana/hashish, cocaine (including crack), inhalants, hallucinogens, heroin, or prescription-type drugs used nonmedically.

### Prevalence of Youth Violence

In 2001, more than 4 million youths (19 percent) participated in a serious fight at school or work, over 3 million (15 percent) took part in a group-against-group fight, and almost 2 million (8 percent) attacked others with the intent of seriously hurting them during the past year (Figure 1). About 28 percent of youths engaged in at least one of these violent behaviors, including 11 percent that engaged in two or three of these behaviors.



### Demographic Differences

Among youths aged 12 to 17, rates for these violent behaviors during the past year were higher for males than females (Figure 2). For example, 22 percent of males reported getting into a serious fight at school or work during the past year compared with 16 percent of females.

Youths aged 14 or 15 were more likely to report that they had gotten into a serious fight at school or work in the past year, and were more likely to have taken part in a group-against-group fight in the past year, than youths in other age groups (Figure 3). For example, 21 percent of youths aged 14 or 15 reported getting into a serious fight at school or work in the past year compared with 19 percent of youths aged 12 or 13 or 17 percent of youths aged 16 or 17. The percentage of youths who had attacked others with the intent of seriously hurting them during the

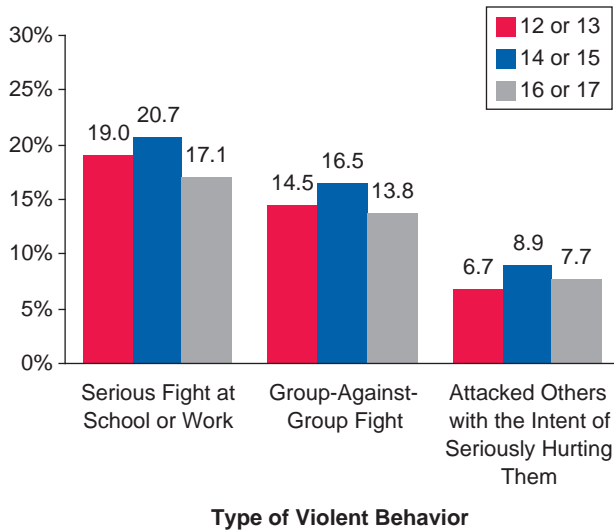
past year was higher for youths aged 14 or 15 (9 percent) or for youths aged 16 or 17 (8 percent) compared with youths aged 12 or 13 (7 percent).

The percentage of youths who had gotten into a serious fight at school or work during the past year was lower for Asians (12 percent) compared to whites (17 percent), Hispanics (22 percent), or blacks (25 percent) (Figure 4). The percentage of youths who had participated in a group-against-group fight during the past year was lower among whites (14 percent) and Asians (11 percent) compared with blacks or Hispanics (both at 18 percent). Asian youths (4 percent) were less likely to have attacked others with the intent of seriously hurting them in the past year compared with black youths (13 percent) and Hispanic or white youths (both at 7 percent).

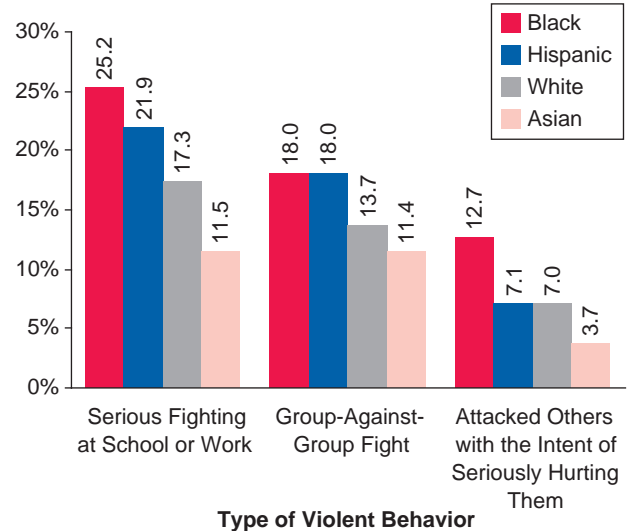
### Violent Behavior and Past Year Substance Use

Youths who participated in violent behaviors during the past year were more likely to use an illicit drug or alcohol during this same time period compared with youths who did not participate in violent behaviors. For example, among youths who took part in a group-against-group fight during the past year, 35 percent used an illicit drug in the past year compared with 18 percent of youths who did not report this type of violent behavior. In addition, youths who participated in two or more of these types of violent behaviors in the past year were more likely to have used an illicit drug or alcohol during that time period than youths who participated in only one of these types of violent behaviors (Figure 5).

**Figure 3. Percentages of Youths Aged 12 to 17 Reporting Participation in Violent Behaviors in the Past Year, by Type of Violent Behavior and Age: 2001**



**Figure 4. Percentages of Youths Aged 12 to 17 Reporting Participation in Violent Behaviors in the Past Year, by Type of Violent Behavior and Race/Ethnicity:\* 2001**



The National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHSDA) is an annual survey sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The 2001 data are based on information obtained from 69,000 persons aged 12 or older, including approximately 23,000 youths aged 12 to 17. 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 NHSDA Report is prepared by the Office of Applied Studies (OAS), SAMHSA, and by RTI in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina.

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

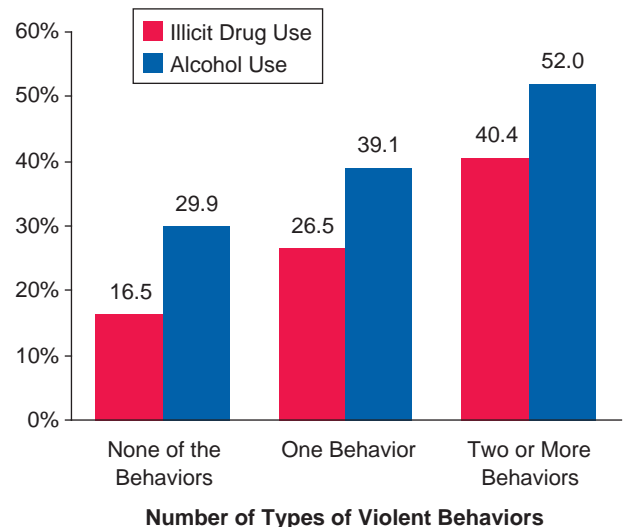
Office of Applied Studies. (2002). *Results from the 2001 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse: Volume I. Summary of national findings* (DHHS Publication No. SMA 02-3758, NHSDA Series H-17). Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Also available on-line: <http://www.DrugAbuseStatistics.samhsa.gov>.

Additional tables available upon request.



**Figure 5. Percentages of Youths Aged 12 to 17 Reporting Any Illicit Drug Use\*\* or Alcohol Use in the Past Year, by the Number of Types of Violent Behaviors:\*\*\* 2001**



**Figure Notes**

\* Small sample sizes prevented analyses of American Indians/Alaska Natives.

\*\* "Any illicit drug" refers to marijuana/hashish, cocaine (including crack), inhalants, hallucinogens, heroin, or prescription-type drugs used nonmedically.

\*\*\* "Violent behaviors" include serious fighting at school or work, group-against-group fighting, or attacking others with the intent of seriously hurting them.