

The NSDUH Report

February 27, 2004

Substance Use, Abuse, and Dependence among Youths Who Have Been in a Jail or a Detention Center

In Brief

- In 2002, almost 1.5 million youths aged 12 to 17 had been in a jail or a detention center at least once in their lifetime
- Youths who had been in a jail or a detention center were more likely than youths who had never been in a jail or a detention center to have used illicit drugs, alcohol, or cigarettes in the past year
- Past year substance abuse or dependence was almost 3 times higher among youths who had been in a jail or a detention center at least once in their lifetime than among youths who had never been in a jail or a detention center

The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), formerly the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHSDA), asks persons aged 12 or older to report their use of tobacco, alcohol, and illicit drugs during the year prior to the interview.¹ “Any illicit drug” refers to marijuana/hashish, cocaine (including crack), inhalants, hallucinogens, heroin, or prescription-type drugs used nonmedically. The survey also asks youths aged 12 to 17 if they have ever been in jail or in a detention center. Past research has shown that rates of substance use and dependence are substantial among youths with criminal justice experience.^{2,3,4}

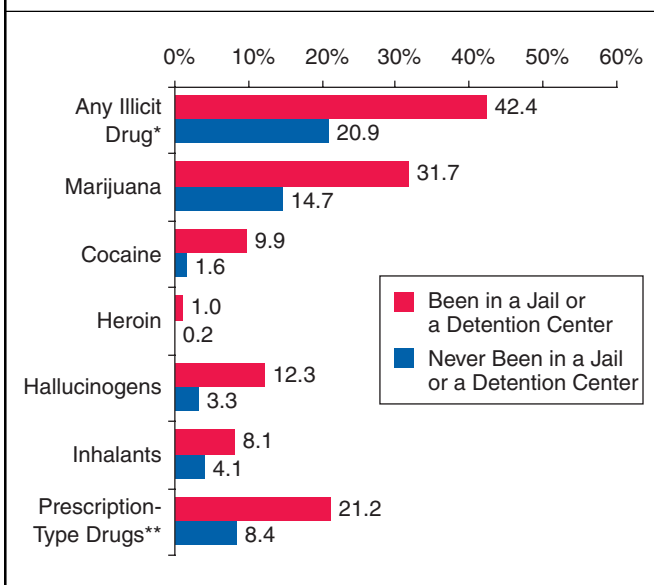
In NSDUH, abuse and dependence of alcohol and illicit drugs are defined using criteria specified in the American Psychiatric Association’s *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-IV).⁵

This report focuses on the substance use, abuse, and dependence rates among youths aged 12 to 17. Responses were analyzed by gender and race/ethnicity for comparative purposes.⁶

Table 1. Youths Aged 12 to 17 Reporting They Had Been in a Jail or a Detention Center at Least Once in Their Lifetime, by Demographic Characteristics: 2002

	Percent	Standard Error
Total	6.0	0.22
Gender		
Male	7.7	0.35
Female	4.2	0.25
Age Group		
12 or 13	5.4	0.34
14 or 15	5.6	0.35
16 or 17	7.0	0.40
Race/Ethnicity		
White	5.0	0.24
Black	8.0	0.66
Hispanic	7.9	0.67

Figure 1. Youths Aged 12 to 17 Reporting Past Year Illicit Drug Use, by Whether or Not They Had Been in a Jail or a Detention Center: 2002



According to the 2002 NSDUH, almost 1.5 million youths (6 percent) aged 12 to 17 had been in a jail or a detention center at least once in their lifetime. Male youths were more likely than female youths to have been in a jail or a detention center at least once in their lifetime (Table 1). Youths aged 16 or 17 were more likely than youths aged 12 to 15 to have ever been in a jail or a detention center. Black and Hispanic youths were more likely than white youths to have been in a jail or a detention center at least once in their lifetime.

Past Year Substance Use

Youths who had been in a jail or a detention center at least once in their lifetime were more likely to report past year use of all illicit drugs than youths who had not (Figure 1). This was true regardless of gender or race/ethnicity. For example, past year marijuana use was 32 percent among youths who

had ever been in a jail or a detention center compared with 15 percent among youths who had not. The rate of past year illicit drug use was 44 percent among females who had ever been in a jail or a detention center and 42 percent among males who had ever been in a jail or a detention center, but these differences were not statistically significant. Among youths who had ever been in a jail or a detention center, 45 percent of whites, 42 percent of Hispanics, and 37 percent of blacks had used illicit drugs in the past year, but these differences were not statistically significant.

Almost one half of youths who had been in a jail or a detention center at least once in their lifetime had used alcohol in the past year compared with 34 percent of all other youths (Figure 2). Among youths who had been in a jail or a detention center at least once in their lifetime, Hispanics (55 percent) and whites (52 percent) were more likely than blacks (35 percent) to have used alcohol at least once in

the past year. The rate of past year alcohol use was similar among male and female youths who had ever been in a jail or a detention center.

Youths who had been in a jail or a detention center at least once in their lifetime were over twice as likely to have smoked cigarettes in the past year as other youths. The rate of past year cigarette use was similar among male youths who had been in a jail or a detention center at least once in their lifetime (40 percent) and female youths who had been in a jail or a detention center at least once in their lifetime (43 percent). Among youths who had ever been in a jail or a detention center, whites (46 percent) and Hispanics (40 percent) were more likely than blacks (29 percent) to have smoked cigarettes in the past year.

Substance Abuse or Dependence

Youths who had been in a jail or a

Figure 2. Youths Aged 12 to 17 Reporting Past Year Alcohol and Cigarette Use, by Whether or Not They Had Been in a Jail or a Detention Center: 2002

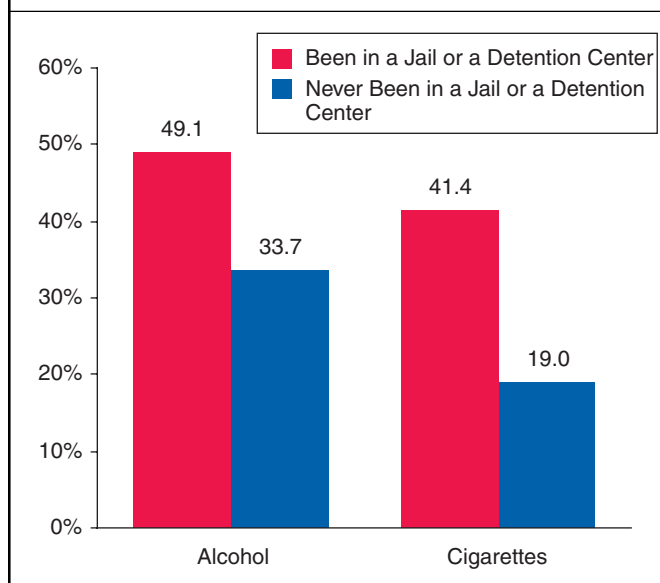
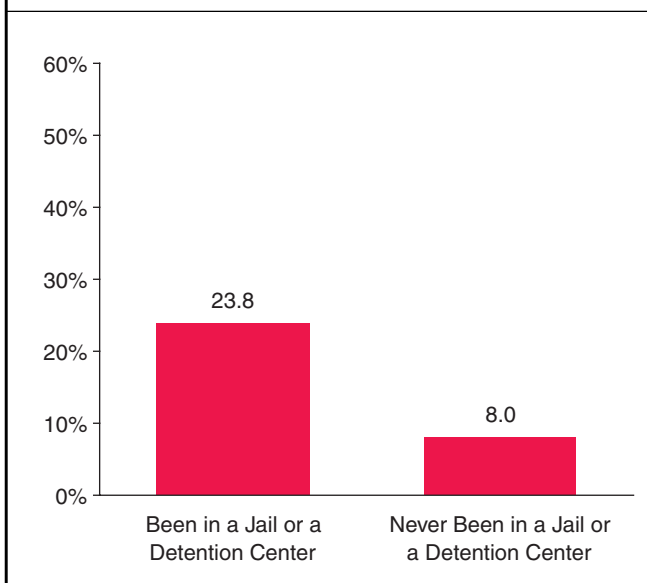


Figure 3. Youths Aged 12 to 17 Reporting Past Year Alcohol or Any Illicit Drug* Abuse or Dependence, by Whether or Not They Had Been in a Jail or a Detention Center: 2002



detention center at least once in their lifetime were more likely than all other youths to have past year alcohol or any illicit drug abuse or dependence (Figure 3).

End Notes

1. A "drink" is defined as a can or bottle of beer, a glass of wine or a wine cooler, a shot of liquor, or a mixed drink containing liquor.
2. Kim, J. Y. S., & Fendrich, M. (2002). Gender differences in juvenile arrestees' drug use, self-reported dependence, and perceived need for treatment. *Psychiatric Services, 53*, 70-75.
3. Teplin, L. A., Abram, K. M., McClelland, G. M., Dulcan, M. K., & Mericle, A. A. (2002). Psychiatric disorders in youth in juvenile detention. *Archives of General Psychiatry, 59*, 1133-1143.
4. Prinz, R. J., & Kerns, S. E. U. (2003). Early substance use by juvenile offenders. *Child Psychiatry and Human Development, 33*, 263-277.
5. American Psychiatric Association. (1994). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (4th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.
6. American Indian/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and Asian youths were excluded due to small sample sizes.

Table and Figure Notes

Source (table and all figures): SAMHSA 2002 NSDUH.

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

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

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. 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 in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina.

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

Office of Applied Studies. (2003). *Results from the 2002 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National findings* (DHHS Publication No. SMA 03-3836, NHSDA Series H-22). Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

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



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