

# The NSDUH Report

August 13, 2004

## Participation in Youth Activities and Substance Use among Youths

### In Brief

- During 2002, approximately 91 percent of youths aged 12 to 17 participated in one or more school-based, community-based, church- or faith-based, or other activities (e.g., karate lessons) during the past year
- During 2002, female youths aged 12 to 17 were more likely to participate in activities than their male counterparts, and youth participation in activities decreased with age
- Youths aged 12 to 17 who participated in activities during the past year were less likely to have used cigarettes, alcohol, or illicit drugs in the past month than youths who did not participate in these activities during the past year

The 2002 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) asks youths aged 12 to 17 how many different kinds of school-based, community-based, church- or faith-based, and “other” activities (e.g., karate lessons) that they participated in during the past 12 months.<sup>1</sup> Respondents also are asked about their past month use of cigarettes, alcohol, or illicit drugs. “Any illicit drug” refers to marijuana or hashish, cocaine (including crack), inhalants, hallucinogens, heroin, or prescription-type drugs used nonmedically. Prior research has linked participation in youth activities to a lower risk of substance use among youths.<sup>2,3</sup>

### Participation in Youth Activities

Approximately 91 percent of youths aged 12 to 17 participated in one or more activities during the past year. These youths were more likely to participate in school-based activities (81 percent) during the past year than community-based activities (69 percent), church- or faith-based activities (63 percent), or other activities (37 percent) (Figure 1).

## Participation in Youth Activities, by Gender and Age

Females aged 12 to 17 were more likely to participate in activities during the past year than their male counterparts. For example, 83 percent of females aged 12 to 17 participated in one or more school-based activities during the past year compared with 79 percent of males (data not shown).

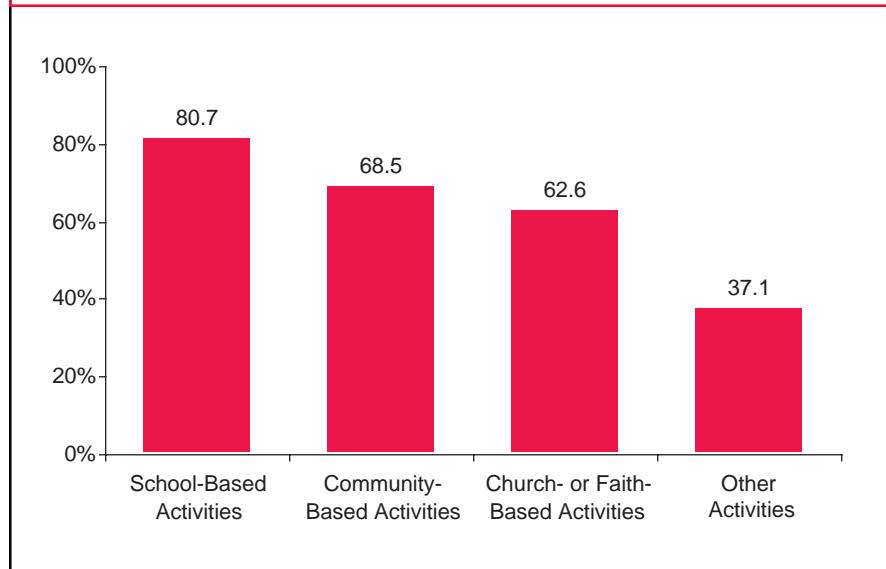
In addition, the proportion of youths who participated in activities during the past year decreased as age increased (Figure 2). For example, youths aged 12 or 13 were more likely to participate in any activities in the past year (94 percent) than youths aged 14 or 15 (92 percent) or youths aged 16 or 17 (88 percent).

## Past Month Cigarette and Alcohol Use among Youths Who Participated in Activities

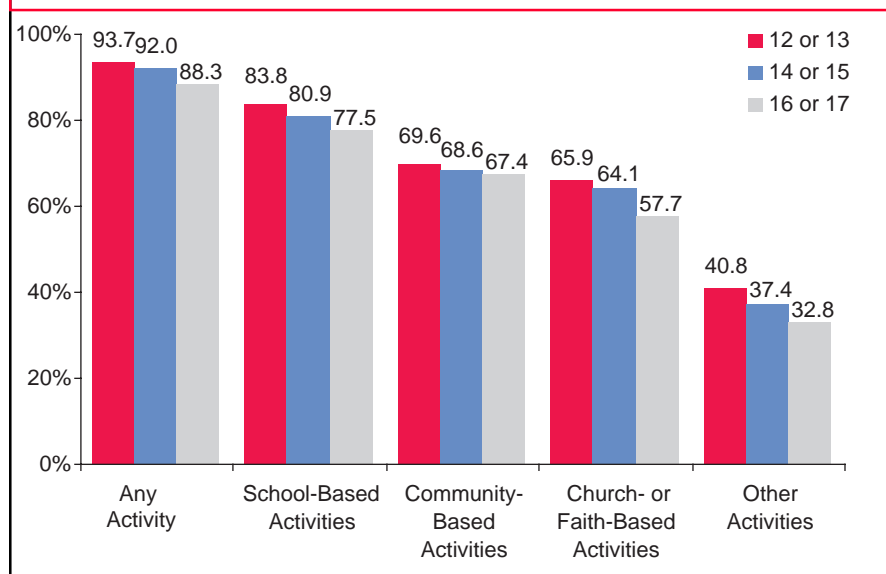
Youths aged 12 to 17 who participated in school-based, community-based, church- or faith-based, or other activities during the past year were less likely to have used cigarettes during the past month than youths who did not participate in activities (Figure 3). For example, approximately 11 percent of youths aged 12 to 17 who participated in a school-based activity in the past year reported past month cigarette use compared with almost 20 percent of youths who did not participate in one or more school-based activities.

Youths aged 12 to 17 who participated in church- or faith-based or other activities during the past year were less likely to have used alcohol in the past month than youths who did not participate in these activities (Figure 3). For example, approximately 15 percent of youths who participated in a church- or faith-based activity in the past year reported past month alcohol use compared with 22 percent of youths who did not participate in a church- or faith-based activity. There was no difference in past month

**Figure 1. Participation in Youth Activities in the Past Year among Youths Aged 12 to 17, by Type of Activity: 2002**



**Figure 2. Participation in Youth Activities in the Past Year among Youths Aged 12 to 17, by Type of Activity and Age: 2002**



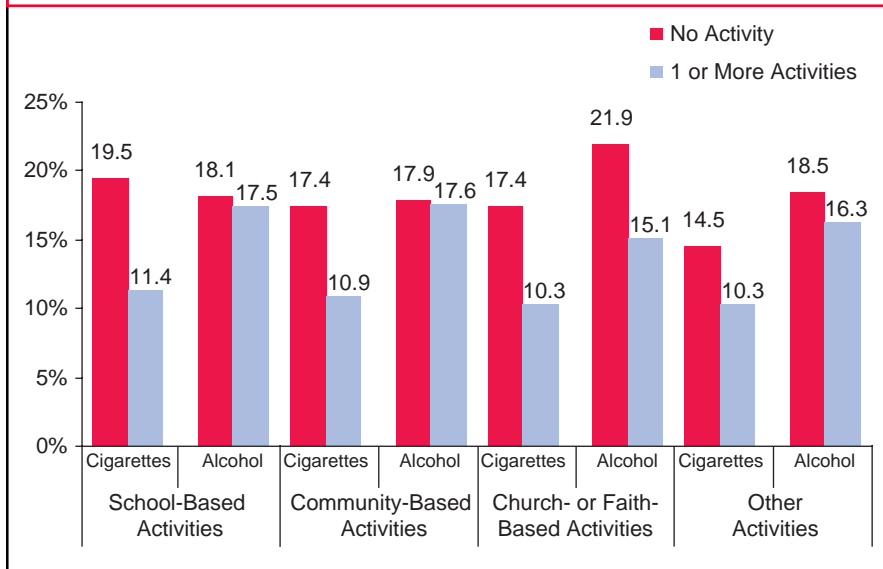
alcohol use among youths who participated in school- or community-based activities during the past year.

## Past Month Illicit Drug Use among Youths Who Participated in Activities

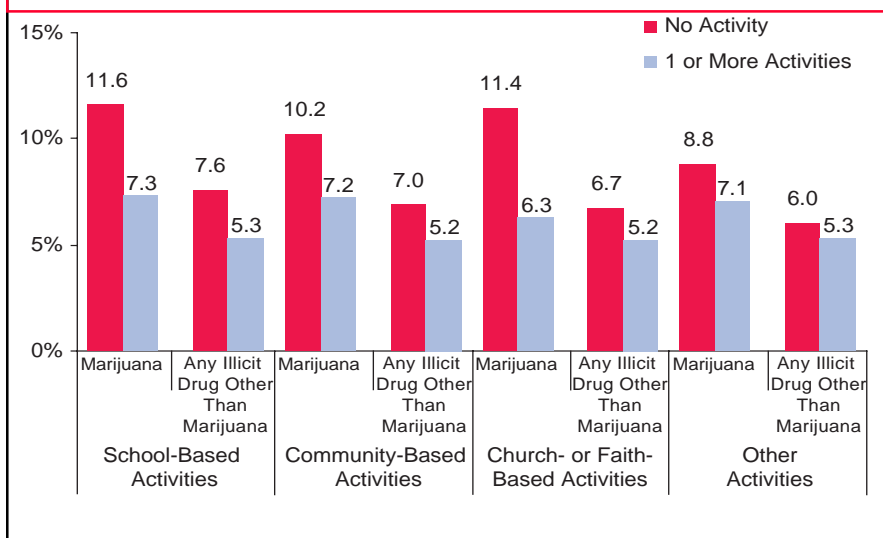
Among youths aged 12 to 17, those who participated in school-based, community-based, church- or faith-based, or

other activities during the past year were less likely to have used marijuana in the past month than youths who did not participate in these activities (Figure 4). For example, approximately 7 percent of youths who participated in a community-based activity during the past year reported marijuana use during the past month compared with 10 percent of youths who did not participate in at least one community-based activity.

**Figure 3. Past Month Cigarette and Alcohol Use among Youths Aged 12 to 17, by Participation Status in the Past Year and Type of Activity: 2002**



**Figure 4. Past Month Use of Marijuana and Any Illicit Drug Other Than Marijuana\* among Youths Aged 12 to 17, by Participation Status in the Past Year and Type of Activity: 2002**



Youths aged 12 to 17 who participated in school-based, community-based, or church- or faith-based activities during the past year were less likely to have used an illicit drug other than marijuana in the past month than youths who did not participate in these types of activities (Figure 4). For example, 5 percent of youths who participated in a school-based activity during the past year reported past month use of an illicit drug other than marijuana compared with almost 8 percent of youths who did not participate in one or more school-based activities. There was no difference in past month use of an illicit drug other than marijuana among youths by participation in other activities during the past year.

**End Notes**

1. In the survey questions, school-based activities include team sports, cheerleading, choir, band, student government, or clubs. Community-based activities include volunteer activities, sports, clubs, or groups. Church- or faith-based activities include clubs, youth groups, Saturday or Sunday school, prayer groups, youth trips, and service or volunteer activities. "Other" activities include dance, piano, karate, or horseback-riding lessons.
2. Office of Applied Studies. (2002, February 8). *The NHSDA Report: Team sports participation and substance use among youths*. Rockville, MD: Author. [Available as a PDF at [http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/2k2/athletes/athletes\\_DrugUse.pdf](http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/2k2/athletes/athletes_DrugUse.pdf)]
3. Ericson, N. (2001, May). *The YMCA's Teen Action Agenda*. (FS 200114, OJJDP Fact Sheet #14). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. [Available as a PDF at <http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/ojjdp/fs200114.pdf>]

**Figure Notes**

\* Any illicit drug other than marijuana includes cocaine (including crack), inhalants, hallucinogens, heroin, or prescription-type drugs used nonmedically, regardless of marijuana/hashish use; marijuana/hashish users who also have used any of the other drugs are included.

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

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

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

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES  
Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration  
Office of Applied Studies  
[www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)

