

The NSDUH Report

Issue 20

2006

How and Where Young Adults Obtain Marijuana

Marijuana is the most commonly used illicit drug among young adults in the United States, with 27.8 percent of persons aged 18 to 25 using marijuana at least once in the past year and 4.3 percent using marijuana on a daily basis in the past year.^{1,2} The National Survey on Drug Use and

Health (NSDUH) asks persons aged 12 or older about their use of marijuana or hashish in the past year, including their frequency of use. *Daily marijuana use* in the past year is defined as using marijuana on 300 or more days in the past 12 months.

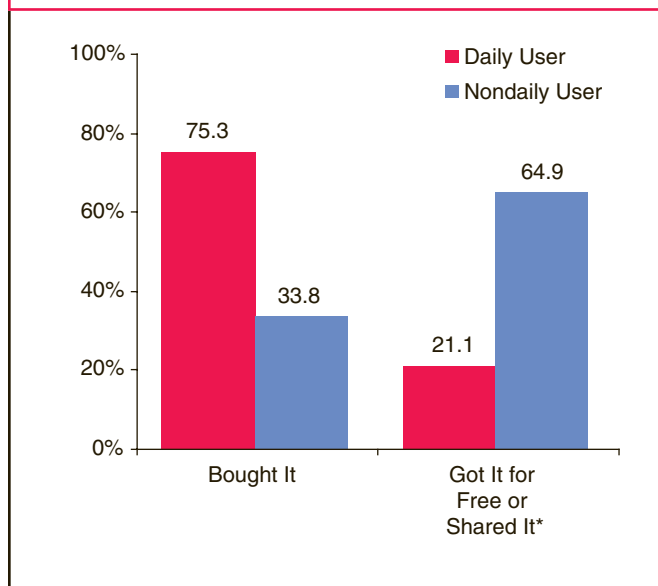
In addition, NSDUH asks past year marijuana users about how, from whom, and where they obtained marijuana. Specifically, individuals are asked how they obtained their marijuana the last time they used it. Response options are (1) bought it, (2) traded something else for it, (3) got it for free or shared someone else's, and (4) grew it yourself.³ Respondents who bought marijuana the last time they used it were asked from whom they obtained the marijuana that they bought⁴ and where they were when they obtained it.⁵ Respondents who got their most recently used marijuana for free or shared someone else's and had not bought or traded for marijuana in the past year were asked from whom they obtained the "free" marijuana and where they were when they obtained it.⁶

This report focuses on how and where past year marijuana users aged 18 to 25 obtained their most recently used marijuana. Findings include estimates from the combined 2002, 2003, and 2004 NSDUH data.

In Brief

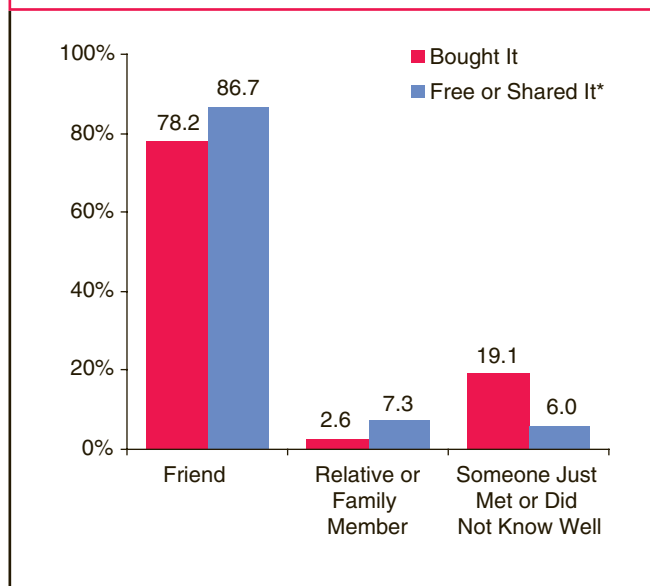
- In 2002 to 2004, a majority (58.3 percent) of past year marijuana users aged 18 to 25 obtained their most recently used marijuana for free or shared someone else's, while 40.0 percent in this age group bought their marijuana
- Three fourths (75.3 percent) of daily marijuana users aged 18 to 25 obtained marijuana the last time by buying it compared with one third (33.8 percent) of nondaily users
- More than three fourths (78.2 percent) of the past year marijuana users aged 18 to 25 who bought their most recently used marijuana bought it from a friend

Figure 1. Percentages of Past Year Marijuana Users Aged 18 to 25, by Method of Obtaining Most Recently Used Marijuana and Frequency of Use: 2002, 2003, and 2004



Source: SAMHSA, 2002, 2003, and 2004 NSDUHs.

Figure 2. Percentages of Past Year Marijuana Users Aged 18 to 25, by Source and Method of Obtaining Most Recently Used Marijuana: 2002, 2003, and 2004



Source: SAMHSA, 2002, 2003, and 2004 NSDUHs.

Method of Obtaining Marijuana

In 2002 to 2004, a majority (58.3 percent) of past year marijuana users aged 18 to 25 obtained their most recently used marijuana for free or shared someone else's, while 40.0 percent in this age group bought it.⁷ Three fourths (75.3 percent) of daily users obtained marijuana the last time by buying it compared with one third (33.8 percent) of nondaily users (Figure 1).

Past year marijuana users aged 18 to 22 who were in college were more likely than their counterparts who were not in college to have gotten their last marijuana for free (66.3 vs. 52.3 percent) and were less likely to have bought it (32.7 vs. 45.6

percent). Males aged 18 to 25 were more likely than their female counterparts to have bought their last marijuana (47.7 vs. 29.7 percent) and were less likely to have gotten it for free or traded for it (50.0 vs. 69.5 percent).

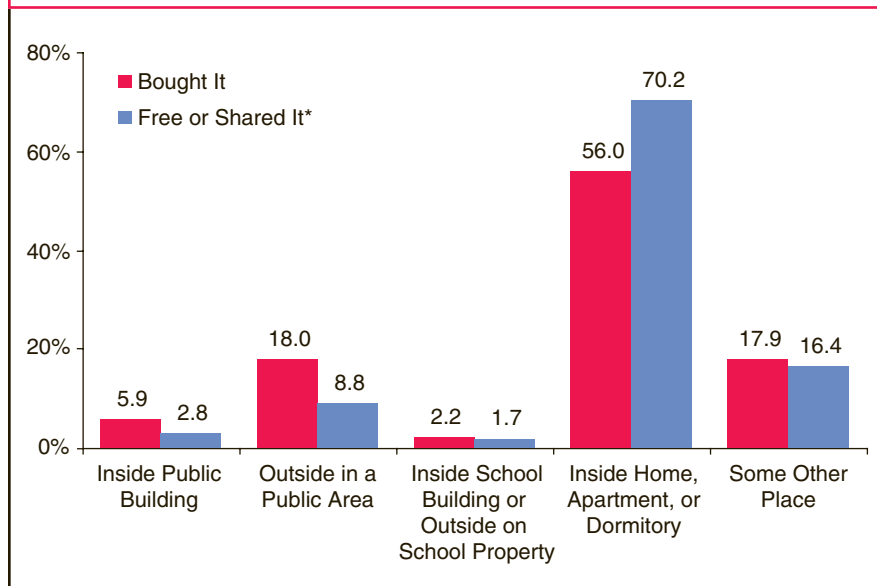
Obtaining Marijuana for Free

Among young adults aged 18 to 25 who were past year marijuana users, 86.7 percent obtained their most recently used marijuana from a friend either for free or by sharing it (Figure 2). Males and females who obtained their most recently used marijuana for free were equally likely to have gotten it from a friend; however, males were more likely than females

to have gotten it from someone they just met or did not know well (8.5 vs. 4.0 percent) and were less likely to have gotten it from a family member or relative (5.6 vs. 8.6 percent). Among past year users who obtained their most recently used marijuana for free or by sharing it, those who used marijuana on a daily basis were less likely than nondaily users to have gotten it from a friend (76.3 vs. 86.9 percent) and were more likely to have gotten it from someone they just met or did not know well (16.3 vs. 5.8 percent).

The majority of past year marijuana users aged 18 to 25 who received their most recently used marijuana for free or through sharing obtained it inside a home, apartment, or dormitory (Figure 3). Among

Figure 3. Percentages of Past Year Marijuana Users Aged 18 to 25, by Location and Method of Obtaining Most Recently Used Marijuana: 2002, 2003, and 2004



Source: SAMHSA, 2002, 2003, and 2004 NSDUHs.

past year users who got their most recently used marijuana for free or by sharing it, those who used marijuana on a daily basis were less likely than nondaily users to have gotten it inside a home, apartment, or dorm room (54.9 vs. 70.5 percent).

Obtaining Marijuana by Buying It

More than three fourths (78.2 percent) of the past year marijuana users who bought their most recently used marijuana bought it from a friend. Females who bought their most recently used marijuana were more likely than their male counterparts to have bought it from a friend (80.2 vs. 77.3 percent) and were less likely to have bought it from

someone they just met (16.1 vs. 20.6 percent). Among past year marijuana users aged 18 to 25 who bought their most recently used marijuana, daily users were more likely than nondaily users to have bought it from a friend (82.8 vs. 76.5 percent) and were less likely to have bought it from someone they just met or did not know well (14.4 vs. 21.0 percent).

The majority (56.0 percent) of past year marijuana users aged 18 to 25 who bought their most recently used marijuana obtained it inside a home, apartment, or dormitory. Among past year users aged 18 to 25 who bought their most recently used marijuana, daily users were more likely than nondaily users to have gotten their most recently used

marijuana inside a home, apartment, or dorm room (62.9 vs. 53.3 percent) and were less likely to have gotten it inside a public building (4.6 vs. 6.4 percent) or outside in a public area (15.2 vs. 19.1 percent).

End Notes

- Office of Applied Studies. (2005). *Results from the 2004 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National findings* (DHHS Publication No. SMA 05-4062, NSDUH Series H-28). Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.
- Past year marijuana use by young adults aged 18 to 25 decreased from 29.8 percent in 2002 to 27.8 percent in 2004. See end note 1.
- Past year marijuana users who did not specify one of the four response options were excluded from the analysis.
- Response options for source of marijuana were (1) a friend, (2) a relative or family member, and (3) someone I had just met or didn't know well. Individuals with missing data were excluded from the analysis of this question.
- Response options for where the most recently used marijuana was obtained were (1) inside a public building, such as a store, restaurant, sports arena, bar, or club; (2) inside a school building; (3) outside on school property; (4) inside a home, apartment, or dorm; (5) outside in a public area, such as a parking lot, street, or park; and (6) some other place. The categories for "inside a school building" and "outside on school property" were collapsed for this analysis. Respondents with missing data were excluded from the analysis of this question.
- Respondents who indicated that they got their most recently used marijuana for free or by sharing someone else's and indicated that they bought or traded for marijuana in the past year were only asked to report from whom and where they obtained marijuana the last time they bought or traded for it. They were not asked to report this information about the last time they got it for free. Therefore, this subgroup of respondents was excluded from the analysis because their responses were not associated with their most recent method of obtaining marijuana.
- An additional 1.7 percent traded for or grew their most recently used marijuana. Data on individuals who got their most recently used marijuana by trading for it or growing it themselves are not presented in this report because of the small number of individuals reporting these methods of obtaining marijuana.

Figure Note

- * Persons aged 18 to 25 who had not bought or traded for marijuana in the past year and who obtained their most recently used marijuana for free.

For change of address, corrections, or to be removed from this list, please e-mail: shortreports@samhsa.hhs.gov.

Research findings from the SAMHSA 2002, 2003, and 2004 National Surveys on Drug Use and Health (NSDUHs)

How and Where Young Adults Obtain Marijuana

- In 2002 to 2004, a majority (58.3 percent) of past year marijuana users aged 18 to 25 obtained their most recently used marijuana for free or shared someone else's, while 40.0 percent in this age group bought their marijuana
- Three fourths (75.3 percent) of daily marijuana users aged 18 to 25 obtained marijuana the last time by buying it compared with one third (33.8 percent) of nondaily users
- More than three fourths (78.2 percent) of the past year marijuana users aged 18 to 25 who bought their most recently used marijuana bought it from a friend

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 23,066 persons aged 18 to 25, the 2003 data on information obtained from 22,738 persons aged 18 to 25, and the 2004 data on information obtained from 22,829 persons aged 18 to 25. The combined 2002, 2003, and 2004 data are based on information obtained from 68,633 persons aged 18 to 25, of whom 20,086 used marijuana within the year prior to the interview date. 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 on NSDUH used in compiling data for this issue is available in the following publications:

Office of Applied Studies. (2005). *Results from the 2004 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National findings* (DHHS Publication No. SMA 05-4062, NSDUH Series H-28). Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

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.

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, 2003, and 2004 surveys 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