

DRUG WAR FACTS

Drug Use Estimates

1. An estimated 112,085,000 Americans aged 12 or over (46.1% of the US population aged 12 and over) report having used an illicit drug at least once in their lifetimes.

Source: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, US Department of Health and Human Services, 2005 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Tables (Rockville, MD: Office of Applied Studies, Sept. 2006), Tables 1.1A and 1.1B.

2. An estimated 35,041,000 Americans aged 12 or over (14.4% of the US population aged 12 and over) used an illicit drug during the previous year.

Source: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, US Department of Health and Human Services, 2005 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Tables (Rockville, MD: Office of Applied Studies, Sept. 2006), Tables 1.1A and 1.1B.

3. Below are the results of the National Survey on Drug Use and Health 2005, showing estimates of the US population aged 12 and over who admit to using substances. It is important to note that the Survey finds very slight use of 'hard drugs' like cocaine, heroin and crack.

Substance	Ever Used	Used in Past Year	Used in Past Month	Number of Frequent Users
Alcohol	201.67 million 82.9%	161.63 million 66.5%	126.03 million 51.8%	16.04 million (Heavy users) 6.6%
Tobacco	172.28 million 70.8%	84.96 million 34.9%	71.52 million 29.4%	N/A
Marijuana	97.55 million 40.1%	25.38 million 10.4%	14.63 million 6.0%	N/a
Cocaine	33.67 million 13.8%	5.52 million 2.3%	2.34 million 1.0%	N/A
Crack	7.93 million 3.3%	1.38 million 0.6%	0.68 million 0.3%	N/A
Heroin	3.53 million 1.5%	0.38 0.2%	0.14 0.1%	N/A

Source: Source: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, US Department of Health and Human Services, 2005 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Tables (Rockville, MD: Office of Applied Studies, Sept. 2006), Tables 1.1A, 1.1B, 2.1A, and 2.1B.

4. An estimated 971 thousand Americans used crack cocaine in 1998. Of those, 462 thousand were White, 324 thousand were Black, and 157 thousand were Hispanic.

Source: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, US Department of Health and Human Services, National Household Survey on Drug Abuse: Population Estimates 1998 (Washington DC: US Department of Health and Human Services, 1999), pp. 37-39.

5. "The total number of drug users in the world is now estimated at some 200 million people, equivalent to

about 5 per cent of the global population age 15-64. Cannabis remains by far the most widely used drug (some 162 million people), followed by amphetamine-type stimulants (some 35 million people), which include amphetamines (used by 25 million people) and ecstasy (almost 10 million people). The number of opiate abusers is estimated at some 16 million people, of which 11 million are heroin abusers. Some 13 million people are cocaine users."

Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), World Drug Report 2006 Vol. 1: Analysis (Vienna, Austria: UNODC, June 2006), p. 9.

6. "Of these 5 per cent of the population (age 15-64), who use illicit drugs at least once a year (annual prevalence), only about half of them (2.7 per cent of the population age 15-64) use drugs regularly, that is, at least once per month. The number of what are commonly understood to be drug addicts or problem drug users is some 25 million persons worldwide, equivalent to 0.6 per cent of the population age 15-64. This estimate does not seem to have changed much in recent years at the global level as increases in some countries were offset by declines in others."

Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), World Drug Report 2006 Vol. 1: Analysis (Vienna, Austria: UNODC, June 2006), p. 8.

7. "Tobacco, a particularly addictive substance, is a case in point. About 28 per cent of the world's adult population is estimated to use tobacco, which exceeds, by far, the number of people using illicit drugs (4 per cent for cannabis and 1 per cent for ATS, cocaine and opiates combined)."

Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), World Drug Report 2006 Vol. 1: Analysis (Vienna, Austria: UNODC, June 2006), p. 7.

8. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), "Unsurprisingly, the main problem drugs at the global level continue to be the opiates (notably heroin) followed by cocaine. For most of Europe and Asia, opiates continued to be the main problem drug, accounting for 62% of all treatment demand in 2003. In South-America, drug related treatment demand continued to be mainly linked to the abuse of cocaine (59% of all treatment demand). In Africa, the bulk of all treatment demand – as in the past – is linked to cannabis (64%).analysis of these responses suggests that overall drug consumption continues to spread at the global level."

Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), World Drug Report 2005 (Vienna, Austria: UNODC, June 2005), pp. 5-6.

9. "The paucity of the data on which the annual prevalence estimates are based does not allow for the identification of clear global trends in the short term. As an imperfect complement, UNODC relies on the perception of the trends in their countries by national experts. A global analysis of these perceptions suggest that the strongest increase over the last decade was for cannabis use and ATS, and at lower levels for opiates and cocaine. After some stabilization in 2003, ATS drug use was perceived as having increased again, reflecting the prevailing view in East and South-East Asia that methamphetamine use has started rising again.

"Opiate abuse trends flattened in recent years. However, by 2004, opiate abuse perceptions again went upwards, as many countries around Afghanistan experienced a renewed supply-push following Afghanistan's good opium harvests of 2003 and 2004. In other parts of the world, including North America and Western Europe, abuse levels remained constant for opiates. After years of increases, cocaine use is perceived as declining slightly, notably in the Americas. In Europe, by contrast, cocaine use continues to expand."

Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), World Drug Report 2006 Vol. 1: Analysis (Vienna, Austria: UNODC, June 2006), p. 9.

10. A survey of health-related behavior among military personnel by Research Triangle Institute, released in 2003, found that "As shown in Figure 3.1 and Table 3.1, any illicit drug use and cigarette use both declined significantly between 1980 and 2002, although the rate of decline varied for each of the substances and between each of the eight surveys. In contrast, the rates of heavy alcohol use did not show a significant decline between 1980 (20.8%) and 2002 (18.1%), although the 1998 survey showed a significant decline from the 1980 rate of use (i.e., from 20.8% to 15.4%). When we examine the trend in

heavy drinking over the eight surveys, we see that heavy alcohol use increased from 1980 to 1982, was relatively stable between 1982 and 1985, decreased significantly between 1985 and 1988, remained relatively stable with some up and down fluctuations between 1988 and 1998, and then showed a significant increase from 1998 to 2002. Overall, the heavy drinking rate for 2002 was very similar to the rate when the survey series began in 1980."

Source: Robert M. Bray, Hourani, Laurel L., Rae, Kristine L., Dever, Jill A., Brown, Janice M., Vincus, Amy A., Pemberton, Michael R., Marsden, Mary Ellen, Faulkner, Dorothy L., Vandermaas-Peeler, Russ, "2002 Department of Defense Survey of Health Related Behaviors Among Military Personnel," prepared for the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health Affairs) under Cooperative Agreement No. DAMD17-00-2-0057 (Research Triangle Park, NC: Research Triangle Institute, Oct. 2003), p. 3-2.

11. A survey of health-related behavior among military personnel by Research Triangle Institute, released in 2003, found that "The prevalence of any reported illicit drug use during the past 30 days declined sharply from 27.6% in 1980 to 3.4% in 2002. The decreases were statistically significant between each of the surveys from 1980 to 1992 and have remained relative stable around 3% for the decade from 1992 to 2002. Rates of illicit drug use during the past 12 months showed a parallel pattern to the 30-day use except at a higher level, as would be expected. Use declined from 36.7% in 1980 to 6.9% in 2002. Rates have been relatively constant since 1992 at around 6% to 7%."

Source: Robert M. Bray, Hourani, Laurel L., Rae, Kristine L., Dever, Jill A., Brown, Janice M., Vincus, Amy A., Pemberton, Michael R., Marsden, Mary Ellen, Faulkner, Dorothy L., Vandermaas-Peeler, Russ, "2002 Department of Defense Survey of Health Related Behaviors Among Military Personnel," prepared for the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health Affairs) under Cooperative Agreement No. DAMD17-00-2-0057 (Research Triangle Park, NC: Research Triangle Institute, Oct. 2003), p. 3-4.

12. A survey of health-related behavior among military personnel by Research Triangle Institute, released in 2003, found that "The significant increase from 1998 to 2002 in heavy alcohol use suggests that this is an area that may need greater emphasis by the Military. Indeed, the rate of heavy alcohol use had not changed significantly since 1988 and indicates that more than one out of six military personnel in 2002 was likely to be a heavy drinker. The finding of no significant change in illicit drug use between 1998 and 2002 and the relatively low rates of use for both surveys suggest that the Military's effort to curtail illicit drug use may have reached its lower limit. The trend line resembles an asymptotic curve that shows steep declines initially with successively smaller declines until it eventually flattens out. The 1992 through 2002 data suggest that the flattening point may have been reached and that it may not be realistic to expect drug use among military personnel to go much lower."

Source: Robert M. Bray, Hourani, Laurel L., Rae, Kristine L., Dever, Jill A., Brown, Janice M., Vincus, Amy A., Pemberton, Michael R., Marsden, Mary Ellen, Faulkner, Dorothy L., Vandermaas-Peeler, Russ, "2002 Department of Defense Survey of Health Related Behaviors Among Military Personnel," prepared for the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health Affairs) under Cooperative Agreement No. DAMD17-00-2-0057 (Research Triangle Park, NC: Research Triangle Institute, Oct. 2003), p. 3-5.

13. A survey of health-related behavior among military personnel by Research Triangle Institute, released in 2003, found that "The increase in the rates of cigarette smoking between 1998 and 2002 is of concern and unexpected given the strong emphasis from health planners and practitioners in the Military on smoking reduction and the wave of national attention directed toward the problems of smoking. The rate of cigarette smoking in 2002 remained the highest of the three substances, over one and three-fourths as high as heavy alcohol use and about 10 times as high as illicit drug use."

Source: Robert M. Bray, Hourani, Laurel L., Rae, Kristine L., Dever, Jill A., Brown, Janice M., Vincus, Amy A., Pemberton, Michael R., Marsden, Mary Ellen, Faulkner, Dorothy L., Vandermaas-Peeler, Russ, "2002 Department of Defense Survey of Health Related Behaviors Among Military Personnel," prepared for the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health Affairs) under Cooperative Agreement No. DAMD17-00-2-0057 (Research Triangle Park, NC: Research Triangle Institute, Oct. 2003), p. 3-5.

14. Below are results from a survey of drug use in The Netherlands published in 1999. Note the difference in drug use prevalence. For more information check out the Netherlands section of Drug War Facts.

Substance	Ever Used	Used in Past Year	Used in Past Month	Number of Frequent Users
Alcohol	90.2%	82.5%	73.3%	24.3% of past month users
Cigarettes	67.9%	38.1%	34.3%	* not tracked by survey
Marijuana	15.6%	4.5%	2.5%	25.6% of past month users
Cocaine	2.1%	0.6%	0.2%	1.8% of past month users
Crack	* not tracked separately			
Heroin	0.3%	0.1%	*too low to track	* too low to track

Source: University of Amsterdam, Centre for Drug Research, Licit and Illicit Drug Use in the Netherlands, 1997 (Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam, September 1999), pp. 45, 46, 47, 55.

For Further Research:

The newest NSDUH survey (formerly called the National Household Survey), issued in Sept. 2006, is available online at <http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/p0000016.htm#Standard> or through <http://www.drugabusestatistics.samhsa.gov/NSDUH/2k5NSDUH/2k5results.htm>.

An online version of the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse: Population Estimates 1998 is available at <http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/nhsda/Pe1998/TOC.htm>

Downloadable PDF versions of the Population Estimates, the Main Findings, and a Summary Report on the findings from the 1998 Survey as well as other surveys are available at <http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/p0000016.htm>, or to order a free copy of the Survey call the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information at 1-800-729-6686.

For a more complete perspective, also read related Drug War Facts sections on Adolescents, Alcohol, Comparative Dangers of Drugs, Crack, Gateway Theory, Marijuana, The Netherlands, Prison, and Race and Prison.

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