



Chapter 1



Drug Use: An Overview

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"The Drug Problem" Talking About Drug Use

To evaluate the extent of the drug problem and propose possible solutions, it helps to ask basic journalism questions:

- Who?
- What?
- When?
- Where?
- Why?
- How?
- How much?



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Talking About Drug Use

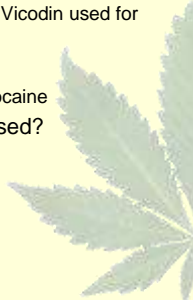
- Who is taking the drug?
- What drug are they taking?
- When and where is the drug being used?



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Talking About Drug Use

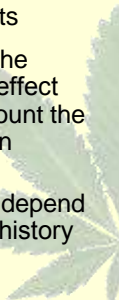
- **Why** is the drug being used?
 - Vicodin prescribed for pain relief vs. Vicodin used for pleasurable feelings
- **How** is the drug being taken?
 - Chewing coca leaves vs. snorting cocaine
- **How much** of the drug is being used?
 - Two beers vs. ten shots of tequila



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Four Principles of Psychoactive Drugs

- Drugs, per se, are not good or bad
- Every drug has multiple effects
- Both the size and the quality of a drug's effect depend on the amount the individual has taken
- The effects of any psychoactive drug depend on the individual's history and expectations



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Key Concepts and Definitions

- **Drug**
 - Any substance, natural or artificial, other than food, that by its chemical nature alters structure or function in a living organism
- **Psychoactive drug**
 - A drug that specifically affects thoughts, emotions, or behavior
- **Illicit drug**
 - A drug that is unlawful to possess or use



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Key Concepts and Definitions

- **Deviant drug use**
 - Drug use that is not common within a social group *and* is disapproved of by the majority
- **Drug misuse**
 - Use of drugs or chemicals in greater amounts than prescribed by a doctor, or for purposes other than, those intended by the manufacturer
- **Drug abuse**
 - Substance use in a manner, an amount, or in situations such that it causes social, occupational, psychological, or physical problems

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Key Concepts and Definitions

- **Drug dependence**
 - A more precise term than *addiction*
 - A state in which an individual uses a drug so frequently or consistently that it would be difficult for the person to stop
 - May be physiological and/or psychological

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As long as humans have been around, some have used, misused, or abused drugs



Clockwise from top left: peyote, coffee beans, opium poppies, Amanita mushrooms, coca leaf market

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Humans and Drugs Throughout History

- Enhancing spiritual experiences
- Major economic roles in societies past
- Development of legal pharmaceuticals
- Beginnings of the “war on drugs”
- Today’s economic impact of psychoactive drugs

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Extent of Drug Use

- Not easy to get accurate information on
 - Number of drug users
 - How much is imported and sold
 - Usage of even alcohol, tobacco, and prescription drugs

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How We Get Information

- Survey questionnaires
 - Easy to use— inexpensive, efficient
 - Drawbacks
 - Bias in student population (e.g., dropouts not counted)
 - Potential inaccuracy of self-reports (among both users and non-users)

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Trends in Drug Use

Monitoring the Future Project

- Prevalence of use
- Perceived risk and availability



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National Survey on Drug Use and Health

- Face-to-face, computer-assisted interviews
- 68,000 individuals; carefully sampled households across the United States
- Broken down into different age groups
- Results published annually

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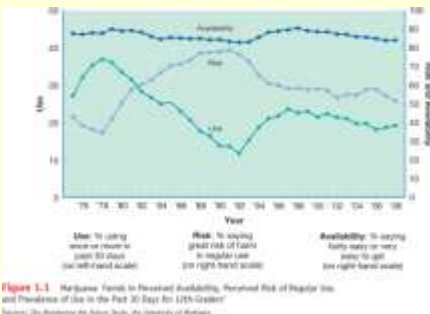
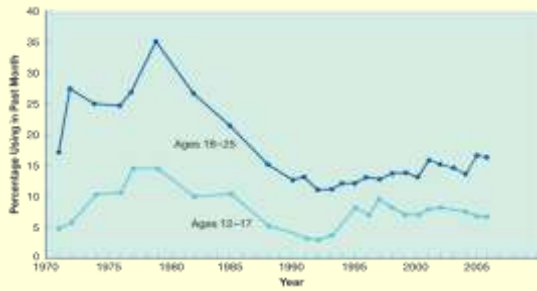


Figure 3.1 Marijuana Trends in Perceived Availability, Perceived Risk of Regular Use, and Prevalence of Use in the Past 30 Days for 12th Graders
Source: The Monitoring the Future Study, the University of Michigan

Marijuana: Trends in perceived availability, perceived risk of regular use, and prevalence of use in the past 30 days for 12th graders (Monitoring the Future Project)

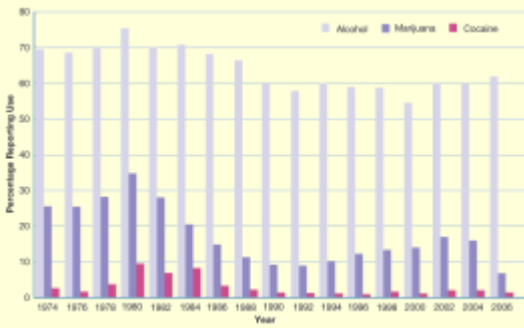
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Marijuana use among persons ages 12-25, by age group: 1971-2006 (National Survey on Drug Use and Health)

In 2008 the percentage use for the age groups of 18-25 and 12-17 remained the same as they were in 2005; 16.5% and 6.7% respectively.

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Trends in reported drug use within the past 30 days for young adults ages 18 to 25 (National Survey on Drug Use and Health)

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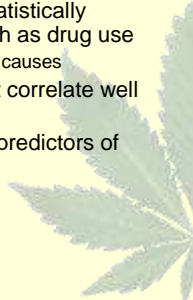
Finding similar patterns in two different studies, using different sampling techniques, is a stronger indication that these trends are real and reflect broad changes in American society over time



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Correlates of Drug Use

- Correlate = a variable that is statistically related to another variable, such as drug use
 - IMPORTANT: Correlates are **not** causes
- Socioeconomic status does not correlate well with drug use
- Personality problems are poor predictors of drug use



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Correlates of Drug Use

- Risk factors include:
 - Community, parental, and peer attitudes and behaviors
 - Antisocial/problem behaviors
 - Poor school performance
- Protective factors include:
 - Involvement in religious activities
 - Perceived risk of drug use



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Limitations of Correlation Studies

- Does smoking marijuana cause the user to get lower grades? Or is it the kids who are already getting low grades who are more likely to smoke marijuana?



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Antecedents of Drug Use

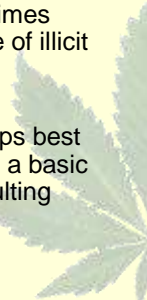
- Antecedent = a factor that occurs before an event such as the initiation of drug use
- Still not labeled “causes”
- Examples of antecedents
 - Aggressiveness
 - Conduct problems
 - Poor academic performance
 - Attachment to a drug-using peer group
 - Parental and community norms that support drug use



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Gateway Substances

- Alcohol and tobacco are sometimes considered gateways to the use of illicit drugs
- Gateway substances are perhaps best thought of as early indicators of a basic pattern of deviant behavior resulting from a variety of risk factors



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Motives for Drug Use

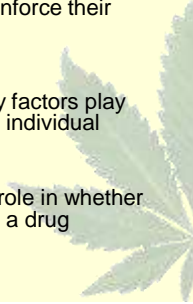


- We all do things that we know, logically, we should not do
 - Eating too much
 - Driving too fast
 - Drinking too much
- Identification with a deviant subculture is a key factor
- Fads and cultural trends influence what drugs are used

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Motives for Drug Use

- Characteristics of drugs can reinforce their use
 - Altered states of consciousness
- Societal, community, and family factors play an important role in whether an individual **tries** a drug
- Drug factors play an important role in whether an individual **continues to use** a drug



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Influences on Drug Use



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