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## Youth drug use in Indiana: Annual survey finds overall drop, slight marijuana use increase



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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Sept. 9, 2009**

BLOOMINGTON, Ind. -- Drug use by Indiana sixth through 12th graders continues to decline but findings from the 19th Annual Survey of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Use by Indiana Children and Adolescents, conducted by the Indiana Prevention Resource Center at Indiana University Bloomington and funded by the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration's Division of Mental Health and Addiction, also pointed to an increase in marijuana use.

The survey, which questioned 182,496 students in 557 public and private schools, found that the reported use of marijuana in the past year (past-year use) increased for students in grades 7, 8 and 10. Monthly use rates increased for youth in grades 8, 10 and 11. Increases ranged from 0.5 percent to 1.2 percent, with all other use rates holding steady.



"Marijuana use can affect the ability to learn and remember information. The more a student uses marijuana the more likely it can affect school performance," said Ruth Gassman, director of the IPRC, which is a center of the School of Health, Physical Education and Recreation. "Marijuana use rates are still far below the reported rates of the 1990's. Part of this success

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can be attributed to communities across Indiana making decreasing adolescent drug use a priority."



Ruth Gassman

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Among students in Grade 11, the past-month use of injecting drugs with a needle increased to 1.3 percent, an all-time high. Since the item was introduced in 2001, there has been a gradual upward trend in grades nine through 12, but this appears to have begun leveling off.

"This type of drug use remains a concern in part because injection drug use is strongly correlated with the transmission of secondary infections such as human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), hepatitis B and hepatitis C," Gassman said.

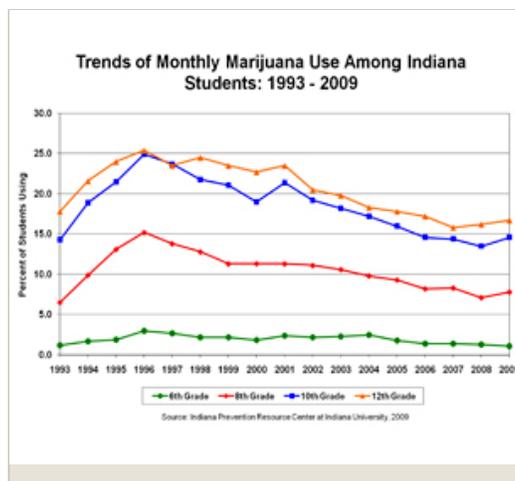
For the first time, the annual survey asked respondents to specifically identify the substances they injected using a needle or syringe. Students in grades seven through 12 reported heroin to be the most frequently injected drug. When asked about re-use of needles and syringes, the most frequently reported response for all grades was, "No, I do not re-use them."

"Unfortunately, among the 2,602 students who reported injection drug use, at least one out of five reported re-use of needles without cleaning them," Gassman said.

The IPRC makes the survey results available to local and state agencies to use in their planning with respect to the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs (ATOD), gambling behaviors, and risk and protective factors.

"This data allows communities to use epidemiological data to drive their drug prevention efforts and programs. Communities also use this information to evaluate programs. More and more federal and private grants are requiring data in order to fund community initiatives," Gassman said.

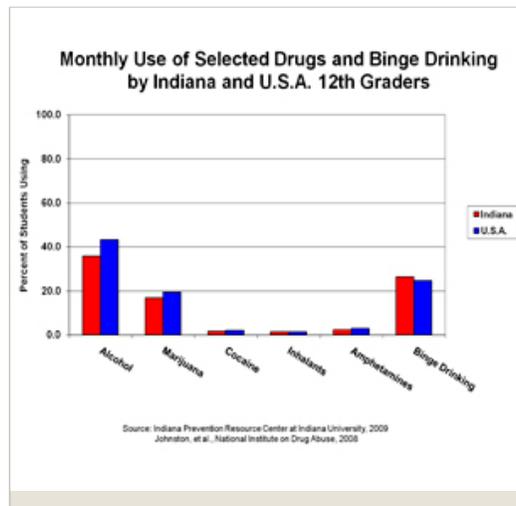
Gina Eckart, director of the Division of Mental Health and Addiction, said



DMHA has been working with schools and communities around Indiana to build safe and healthy communities by offering evidence-based programs that prevent the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs among our youth.

"DMHA is pleased to see the prevention efforts we support are making strides in Indiana," she said.

The full report is available online at



<http://www.drugs.indiana.edu>. For a PDF of the graphs in this release, visit <http://www.indiana.edu/~iunews/MarijuanaUse.pdf> and <http://www.indiana.edu/~iunews/BingeDrinking.pdf>. For a graph showing survey results related to smokeless tobacco, visit <http://www.indiana.edu/~iunews/SmokelessTobacco.pdf>. The following are major points from the survey results:

- **Decreased use.** The prevalence rates for several substances including psychedelic drugs, cocaine, crack, inhalants, and amphetamines decreased across multiple grade levels.
- **Held steady.** Lifetime, annual and monthly use of alcohol, as well as binge drinking, decreased or held steady for students in all grades. Compared with last year, the reported usage of methamphetamine either held steady or declined across all grade levels. These results are consistent with a trend in decreasing methamphetamine use seen since the item was introduced to the survey in 2005. With a few exceptions, the rates of Ritalin or Adderall use held steady or was lower this year compared with last year.
- **Race and ethnicity.** In most categories, Indiana monthly use rates were lower than the national average. However, the researchers did find that black students in Indiana had higher rates of smokeless tobacco, binge drinking and cocaine use relative to their national counterparts. Indiana's Hispanic students had a higher rate of cigarette and smokeless tobacco use.
- **Gender breakdown.** Males were the majority of users of most drugs in almost every grade. Six drugs had a female majority of users in grades 6 through 9. These drugs were mostly prescription and over-the-counter

medications.

- **Going through the gateway later?** The average age of first use of traditional "gateway" drugs (tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana) held steady for alcohol and marijuana and increased for tobacco. This is a favorable finding, because research has shown that delaying onset of drug use prevents an array of related negative consequences. According to the survey, the average age of first use was 13.1 for alcohol, 12.8 for cigarettes and 13.8 for marijuana.
- **Positive peer pressure?** Researchers found that respondents with stronger perceptions of peer disapproval or parental disapproval of drug use were likely to report lower levels of drug use. Respondents who participated more frequently in after-school activities were likely to report lower frequency of gateway drug use. "These findings support the value of after school programming as a strategy to prevent or reduce substance use among adolescent populations," said Gassman.
- **Family matters.** Younger adolescents tend to access alcohol from their homes and families, while older adolescents tend to get alcohol from friends and commercial sources. Family members were the primary source of alcohol for grades 6-9. Respondents in higher grades were more likely to have reported either having had someone buy alcohol for them or having received it from a person 21 or older.

For more information, contact Ruth Gassman at 812-855-1237 or [rgassman@indiana.edu](mailto:rgassman@indiana.edu).

### About the IPRC

The IPRC is operated by the School of HPER and its Department of Applied Health Science. It also is affiliated with the Department of Applied Health Science's Institute for Drug Abuse Prevention. The IPRC is funded, in part, by the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration, Division of Mental Health and Addiction, and financially supported through the HHS/Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant.