

A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

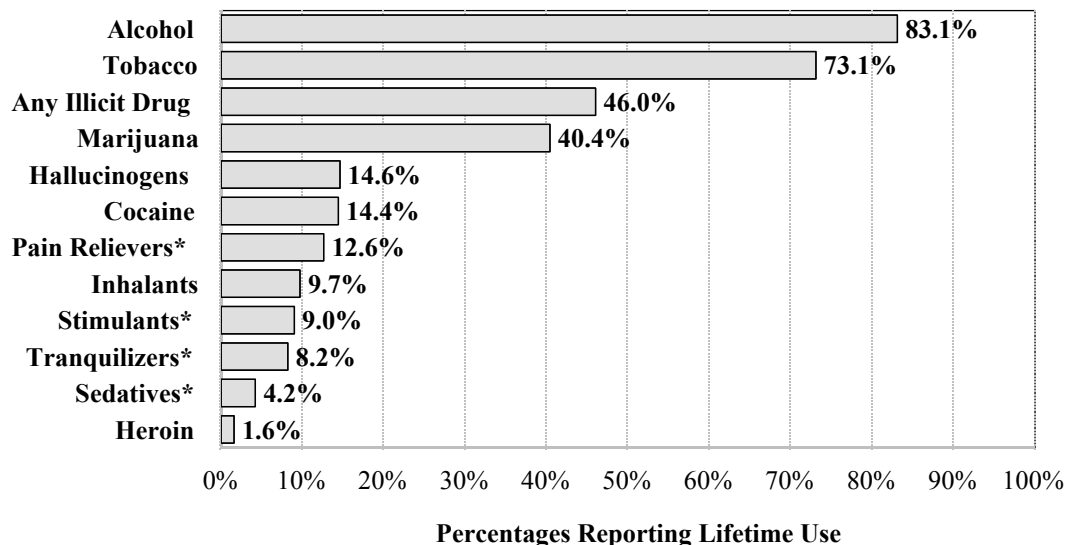
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More Than 70% of U.S. Residents Have Used Alcohol or Tobacco at Least Once in Their Life; Nearly One-Half Have Used an Illicit Drug

More than three-quarters (83%) of U.S. residents age 12 or older have used alcohol at least once in their lifetime and 73% have used tobacco, according to recently released data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (formerly the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse[†]). In addition, 46%—an estimated 108.2 million people—have used an illicit drug, primarily marijuana. Other drugs used for nonmedical reasons by 5% or more of the population were hallucinogens, cocaine, pain relievers, inhalants, stimulants, and tranquilizers.

Editor's Note: These estimates are slightly higher than those found in the 2001 survey. For example, the 2001 survey estimated that 94.1 million residents had used any illicit drug in their life, while the 2002 survey estimate was 108.2 million. According to the researchers, the increases seen in 2002 are a result of changes in the survey methodology (e.g. providing monetary incentives, improved data collection quality control) rather than actual increases in lifetime use of these drugs. For this reason, the researchers recommend that estimates from the 2002 survey not be compared with survey estimates from previous years to examine changes over time.

Percentage of U.S. Residents (Age 12 or Older) Reporting Lifetime Use of Alcohol, Tobacco and Illicit Drugs, 2002



[†] Prior to 2002 the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) was called the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHSDA). The name was changed to make it more representative of the topic and content of the survey.

*Nonmedical use only; does not include over-the-counter drugs.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Overview of Findings from the 2002 National Survey on Drug Use and Health*, 2003. Available online (www.drugabusestatistics.samhsa.gov).

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