

A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

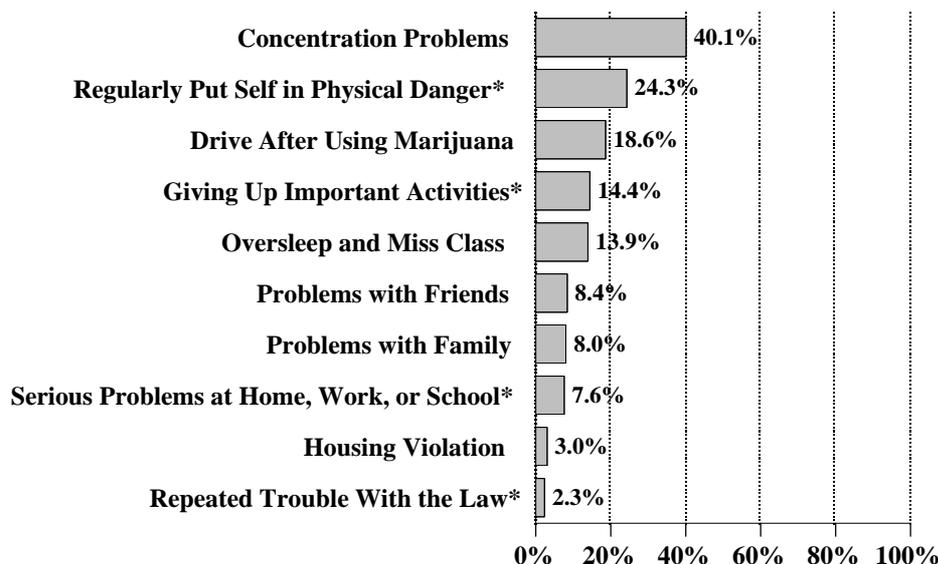
University of Maryland, College Park

Nearly One in Ten First-Year College Students at One University Have a Cannabis Use Disorder; At-Risk Users Report “Potentially Serious Cannabis-Related Problems”

Nearly one in ten first-year college students at a mid-Atlantic university have a cannabis use disorder (CUD), according to a NIDA-funded study of drug use conducted by CESAR investigators. First-year students attending new student orientation were randomly selected to participate in a multiyear follow-up study. Overall, 9.4% of first-year students met the clinical definition for cannabis abuse (5.4%) and/or dependence (4.0%). Nearly one-fourth (24.6%) of past-year cannabis users and more than one-third (38.4%) of “at-risk” users (those who had used cannabis five or more times in the past year) met the criteria for a CUD. However, “even in the absence of a disorder, users appear to be at risk for potentially serious cannabis-related problems” (p. 397). Students who had used cannabis five or more times in the past year—regardless of whether they met the criteria for a CUD—reported problems related to their cannabis use, such as concentration problems (40.1%), regularly putting themselves in physical danger (24.3%), and driving after using marijuana (18.6%; see figure below). Forthcoming research from this study will examine the relationship between cannabis use and GPA over time.

Percentage of At-Risk Cannabis Users Who Reported Cannabis-Related Problems, 2004-2005

(n=474 first-year college students who used cannabis five or more times in the past year)



*Problem is one of the DSM-IV diagnostic criteria for cannabis use disorders.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Caldeira, K.M., Arria, A.M., O’Grady, K.E., Vincent, K.B., and Wish, E.D. The Occurrence of Cannabis Use Disorders and Other Cannabis-Related Problems Among First-Year College Students, *Addictive Behaviors* 33(3):397-411, Forthcoming, March 2008. Available online at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.addbeh.2007.10.001>. This study was funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (R01DA14845-03). For more information, contact Dr. Amelia Arria at aarria@cesar.umd.edu.

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