

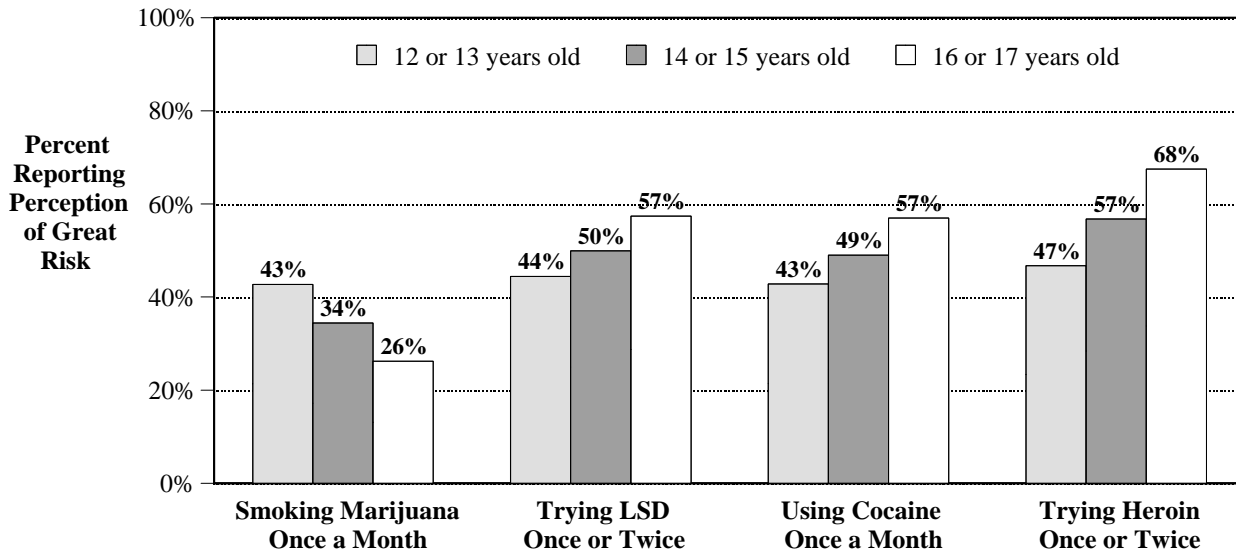
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

Perception of Risk Associated with Marijuana Use Decreases with Age While Perceived Risk from Using LSD, Cocaine, or Heroin Increases with Age

Older youth perceive less risk in marijuana use, according to an analysis of combined data from the 2007 and 2008 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH). Forty-three percent of 12- or 13-year-olds reported that they perceived a great risk in smoking marijuana once a month, compared to 34% of 14- or 15-year olds and 26% of 16- or 17-year-olds. The opposite was true of LSD, cocaine, or heroin use, with perceived risk increasing with age (see figure below). The authors suggest that “understanding the different patterns of risk perceptions that emerge during adolescent development may help to better target health communication messages and increase the effectiveness of prevention and intervention programs” (p. 1).

Perception of Great Risk of Using Selected Substances, by Age
(2007 and 2008 data combined; n=44,979)



SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), “Perceptions of Risk from Substance Use Among Adolescents,” *The NSDUH Report*, November 26, 2009. Available online at <http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/2k9/158/158RiskPerceptions.cfm>.

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