

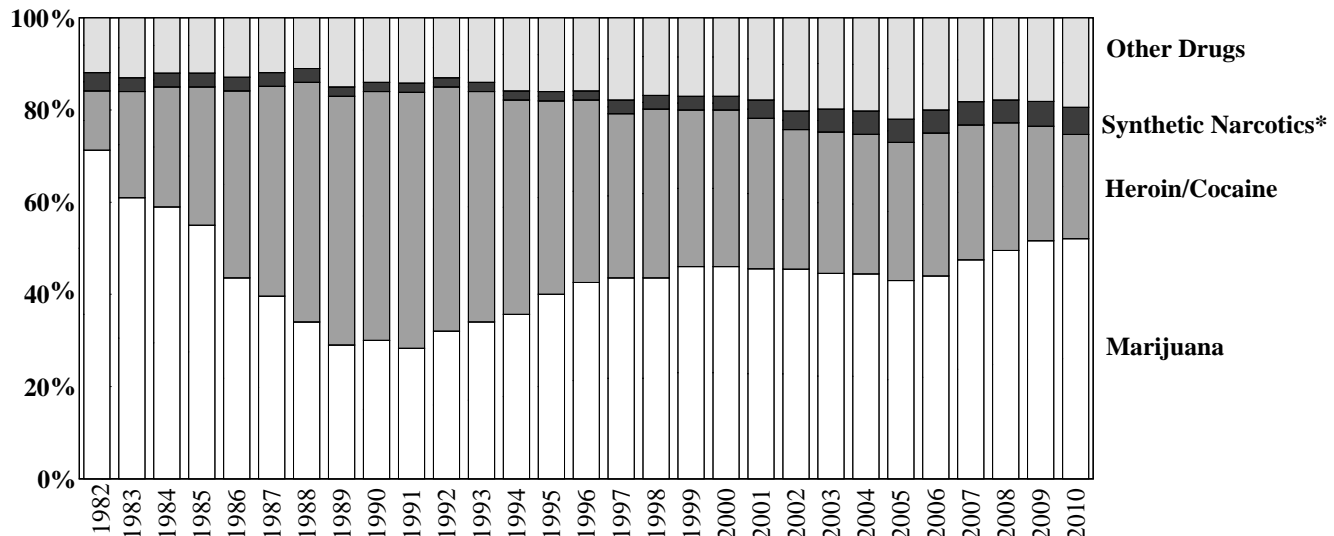
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

Marijuana Arrests Accounted for 52% of All U.S. Drug Abuse Violation Arrests in 2010 While Heroin and Cocaine Arrests Decline

In 1982, nearly three-quarters of arrests for drug abuse violations in the United States were for the sale, manufacturing, or possession of marijuana, compared to 13% for heroin or cocaine violations, according to data from the national Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program. However, by 1990 marijuana comprised slightly less than one-third of all drug abuse arrests, while heroin/cocaine accounted for more than one-half of such arrests. Since then, the proportion of arrests for marijuana and heroin/cocaine violations had once again shifted. In 2010, 52% of all drug abuse arrests were for marijuana (the highest rate since 1985) while 23% were for heroin/cocaine violations (the lowest rate since 1983). These trends likely reflect both changes in prevalence and subsequent enforcement practices. For example, marijuana use peaked in the U.S. during the late 70s and early 80s, reached record lows in the early 90s, and has been increasing again in recent years (see *CESAR FAX*, Volume 20, Issue 36 and Volume 20, Issue 3).

Percent Distribution of Arrests for U.S. Drug Abuse Violations, by Type of Drug, 1982-2010



*The percentage of drug abuse violation arrests for synthetic narcotics was 6% in 2010, and has ranged from 2% (from 1989 to 1996) to 5% (from 2003 to 2009) in previous years.

NOTES: The category “heroin/cocaine” includes opium or cocaine and their derivatives (i.e., morphine, heroin, codeine). The category “synthetic narcotics” includes manufactured narcotics that can cause addiction (i.e., Demerol®, methadone, buprenorphine). The category “other drugs” includes all other drugs that do not fall within the other three categories.

SOURCES: Adapted by CESAR from U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, “Arrests for Drug Abuse Violations,” *Crime in the United States, 2010, 2011* (available online at <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s./2010/crime-in-the-u.s.-2010/persons-arrested>); and U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, “Percent Distribution of Arrests for Drug Abuse Violations,” *Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics Online*, (available online at <http://www.albany.edu/sourcebook/pdf/t4292009.pdf>), accessed 11/03/2011.