

A Publication from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

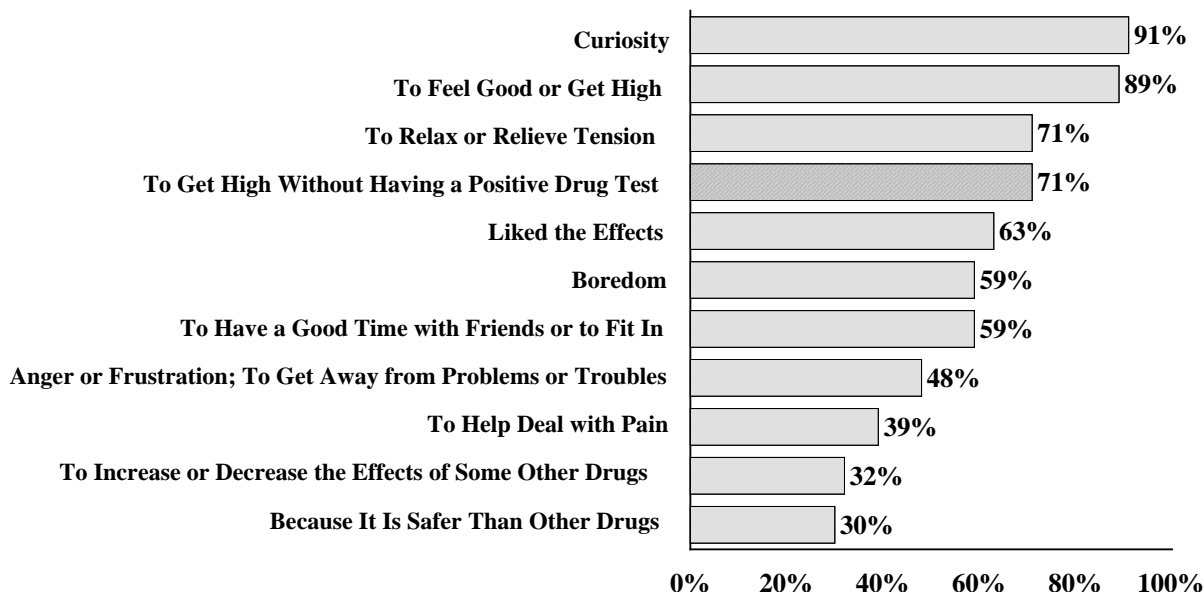
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## *Study of Patients in a Midwestern Residential Treatment Program Finds 71% of Those Reporting Synthetic Cannabinoid Use Report Using to Avoid Positive Drug Test*

More than one-third (38%) of adult patients in a Midwestern substance use disorder residential treatment program reported ever using synthetic cannabinoids. Nearly all of these patients reported multiple reasons for use, with the most common being “curiosity” (91%) and “to feel good or get high” (89%). A substantial number also reported that they used synthetic cannabinoids “to relax or relieve tension” (71%) or “to get high without having a positive drug test” (71%; see figure below). Prior studies have also found that synthetic cannabinoids are used to avoid positive drug tests (see *CESAR FAX*, Volume 22, Issue 27). According to the authors, “consuming synthetic cannabinoids can complicate the treatment process, especially when urine tests do not identify all synthetic cannabinoids” (p. 2). The authors note that a limitation of their study is that it “lacked toxicology screening to verify recent substance uses or whether the substances patients reported were synthetic cannabinoids were actually synthetic cannabinoids and not another substance” (p. 3).

### Self-Reported Reasons for Using Synthetic Cannabinoids

(N=150 Adult Residential Substance Use Disorder Treatment Patients Reporting Lifetime Synthetic Cannabinoid Use)



NOTE: Reasons were assessed with a checklist of 13 items developed by combining motives from Monitoring the Future’s marijuana motives questions and prior research on synthetic cannabinoid use.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Bonar, E.E., Ashrafioun, L., and Ilgen, M.A., “Synthetic Cannabinoid Use Among Patients in Residential Substance Use Disorder Treatment: Prevalence, Motives, and Correlates,” *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, In Press, 2014. For more information, contact Erin Bonar at erinbona@med.umich.edu.