Marijuana and Perception of Harm

PERCEPTION OF HARM

Youth who perceive marijuana use to be risky are less likely to use drugs than youth who perceive marijuana as non-risky. According to Dr. Nora Volkow, Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), “The number of teens that perceive the use of marijuana as dangerous, whether it is occasional or regular, is going down. We have seen a pretty significant change over the past 5 years that less and less kids are viewing the use of marijuana as harmful.” As perceived harm of marijuana drops, use goes up.

2013 MONITORING THE FUTURE SURVEY RESULTS

60% of American high school seniors did not view regular marijuana use as harmful. This is nearly double from 20 years ago. 36.4% of high school seniors have used marijuana in the past year (36.4% equates to about 11 students in an average class).

2014 MONITORING THE FUTURE SURVEY RESULTS

The perceived risk of harm of regularly smoking marijuana has continued to decline among American 12th graders. The majority of high school seniors do not think regular marijuana smoking is harmful; this is evidenced
by a 5-year decline in the perceived harm of regularly smoking marijuana from 52.4% in 2009 to 36.1% in 2014. Marijuana use continues to exceed cigarette use in all three grade levels.4

TREND DATA

Five-year trends in the Monitoring the Future Survey are showing significant increases in past-year and past-month (current) marijuana use across all three grades as well as increases in lifetime and daily marijuana use among 10th graders. From 2008 to 2013 past-month use increased from:

- 5.8% to 7.0% among 8th graders
- 13.8% to 18.0% among 10th graders
- 19.4% to 22.7% among 12th graders

These increases continue to parallel softening attitudes about the perceived risk of harm and disapproval associated with marijuana use.3 In 2014, past month use of marijuana remained steady among 8th graders at 6.5%, 10th graders at 16.6% and 12th graders at 21.2%. Close to 6% of 12th graders reported daily use of marijuana.4

GEORGIA STUDENT HEALTH SURVEY II (GSHS II)

The 2013-2014 statewide report issued by the Georgia Department of Education shows past month use of marijuana is:

- 5.8% among 8th graders
- 13.44% among 10th graders
- 18.18% among 12th graders5

WHAT GEORGIANS SHOULD KNOW:

1) Youth who perceive high risk of harm are less likely to use drugs than youths who perceive low risk of harm.

2) As perceived harm of marijuana drops, use goes up.

3) Changing attitudes toward substance abuse often precede changes in reported use. This could indicate that use of these drugs could begin to rise again in future years.4

TO LEARN MORE VISIT:

http://clearga.org/marijuana-and-perception-of-harm
SOURCES


2 Monitoring the Future Survey 2014 Results, National Institute on Drug Abuse, Interview with Dr. Nora Volcow, NIDA Director https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GnraNucCHH8

