



**Current Alcohol & Drug Trends  
Among Young Adults**

## **Current Alcohol trends among Americans**

- Nearly 17.6 million adult Americans abuse alcohol or are alcoholic.
- 53 percent of men and women in the United States report that one or more of their close relatives have a drinking problem. \*1

## **Current Drug trends among Americans**

- More than 5.9 million persons a used cocaine in the past year
- 22.5 million Americans are classified with substance dependence or abuse.
- 70.3 million Americans are current users of a tobacco product \*2

## **Drug and alcohol abuse statistics among youth are alarming**

- 1.5 million youth met criteria for admission to alcohol treatment.  
(of these, only 120,000 received treatment)
- Each year about 1900 persons under 21 die in motor vehicle crashes that involve underage drinking.  
(About another 500 persons over age 21 also die in these crashes)
- Almost 20% of 8th-graders, and 42% of 10th-graders have been drunk at least once.
- Approximately 19% of 8th-graders, 35% of 10th-graders, and 48% of 12th-graders report having consumed alcohol during the past month.\*3
- Young adults aged 18 to 25 reported the highest rate of current use of any tobacco products (44.8 %). \*4

## **Researchers draw similar alarming conclusions about the broad use of drugs. They find that by the time seniors graduate from high school**

- 51% have used an illicit drug
- 46% have used Marijuana
- 10% have used inhalants
- 8% have used Cocaine
- 76% have tried alcohol
- 53% have used cigarettes\*4

### **SOURCES:**

1. National Institute of Alcohol abuse and Alcoholism. Revised 2001. NIH Publication. Bethesda, MD. [http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/GettheFacts\\_HTML/facts.htm](http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/GettheFacts_HTML/facts.htm)
2. National Survey on Drug Abuse and Health. 12 Aug. 2005. <http://oas.samhsa.gov/25k/cocaine/cocaine.htm>
3. Initiative on Underage Drinking. November 2005 Bethesda, MD. <http://niaaa.hih.gov/Templates/CommonPage.aspx>
4. Trends in Use. Revised December 2004. National Institute of Health. Rockville, MD. <http://nida.nih.gov/infofacts/HSYouthtrends.html>

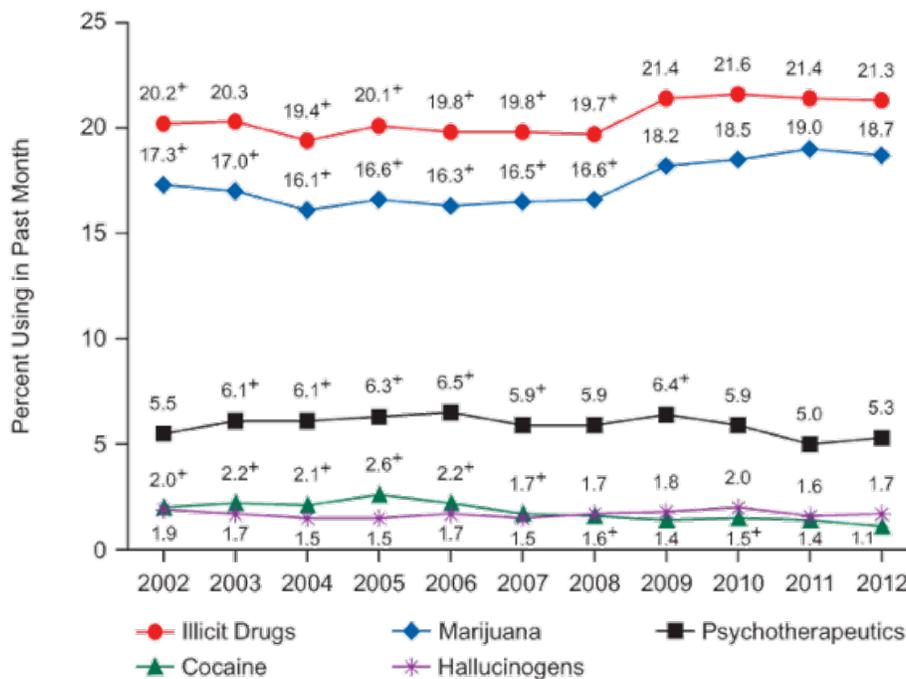
## YOUNG ADULTS 18 TO 25

- In 2012, the rate of current illicit drug use was higher among young adults aged 18 to 25 (21.3 %) than among youths aged 12 to 17 (9.5 %) and adults aged 26 or older (7.0 percent) (**Figure 2.6**). Among young adults aged 18 to 25, the 2012 rate was similar to the rates in 2009 to 2011 (ranging from 21.4 to 21.6 %), but it was higher than the rates in 2004 to 2008 (ranging from 19.4 to 20.1 %) and in 2002 (20.2 %) (**Figure 2.9**).

**Figure 2.9** Past Month Use of Selected Illicit Drugs among Young Adults ages 18 to 25: 2002-2012

- Among young adults aged 18 to 25, the 2012 rate of current marijuana use (18.7 %) was similar to rates in 2009 to 2011 (ranging from 18.2 to 19.0 %), but it was higher than the rates in 2002 to 2008 (ranging from 16.1 to 17.3 %) (**Figure 2.9**).
- In 2012, the rate of current nonmedical use of psychotherapeutic drugs among young adults aged 18 to 25 was 5.3 percent, which was similar to the rates in 2010 and 2011, but it was lower than the rates in 2003 to 2007 (**Figure 2.9**). The rate of current nonmedical use of pain relievers among young adults in 2012 (3.8 %) was similar to the 2011 rate (3.6 %), but it was lower than the rates between 2003 (4.7 %) and 2010 (4.4 %).

In 2012, the rate of current cocaine use among young adults aged 18 to 25 was 1.1 percent, which was similar to the rates in 2009 and 2011, but it was lower than the rates from 2002 through 2008 and 2010 (**Figure 2.9**).

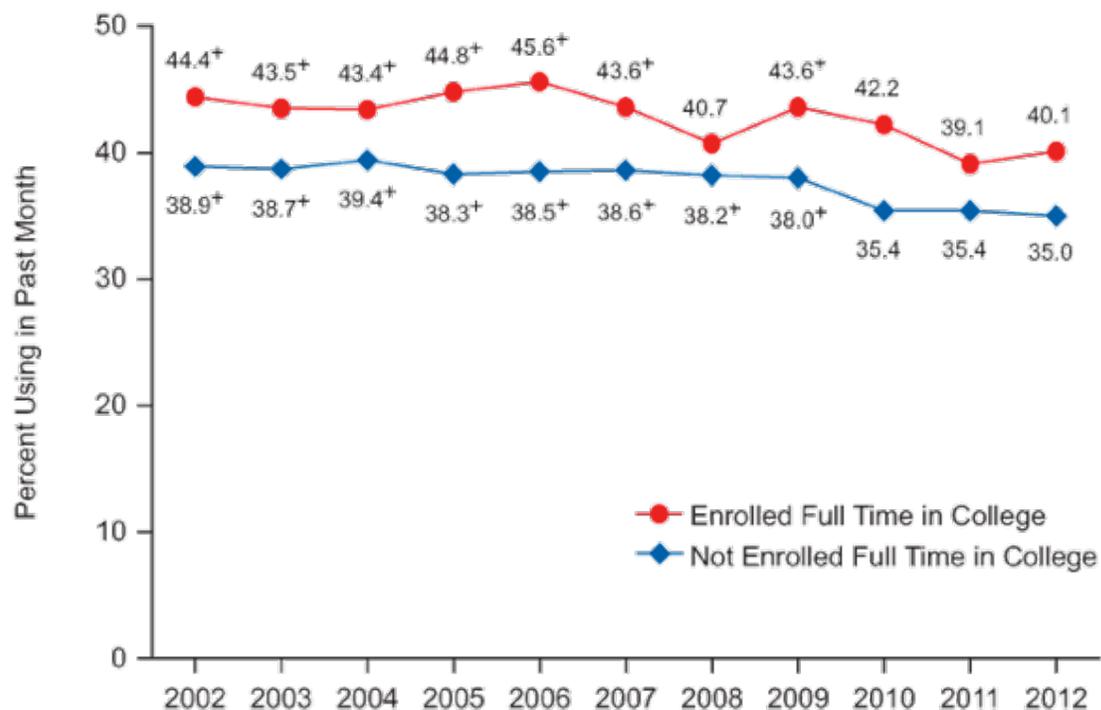


## COLLEGE STUDENTS

- Young adults aged 18 to 22 who were enrolled full time in college were more likely than their peers who were not enrolled full time (i.e., part-time college students and persons not currently enrolled in college) to report current, binge, or heavy drinking. Among full-time college students in 2012, 60.3 percent were current drinkers, 40.1 percent were binge drinkers, and 14.4 percent were heavy drinkers. Among those not enrolled full time in college, these rates were 51.9, 35.0, and 10.7 percent, respectively.
- The pattern of higher rates of current alcohol use, binge alcohol use, and heavy alcohol use among full-time college students compared with rates for others aged 18 to 22 has remained consistent since 2002 (Figure 3.4).

**Figure 3.4** Binge Alcohol Use Among Adults ages 18 to 22, by College Enrollment: 2002-2012

**BINGE USE** - Five or more drinks on the same occasion (i.e., at the same time or within a couple of hours of each other) on at least 1 day in the past 30 days.



- Difference between this estimate and the 2012 estimate is statistically significant at the .05 level.
- Among young adults aged 18 to 22, the rate of binge drinking declined somewhat since 2002. In 2002, the binge drinking rate within this age group was 41.0 percent compared with 37.1 percent in 2012. Among full-time college students, the rate decreased over this period from 44.4 to 40.1 percent (Figure 3.4). Among part-time college students and others not in college, the rate decreased from 38.9 to 35.0 percent during the same time period.

In 2012, male full-time college students aged 18 to 22 were more likely than their female counterparts to be binge drinkers (45.5 vs. 35.3 %). The rate of binge drinking among male full-time college students in 2012 was lower than in 2002 to 2007. Among female full-time college students, the rate of binge drinking in 2012 was lower than the rates only in 2002 and 2006.