



2008 National Drug Use Survey

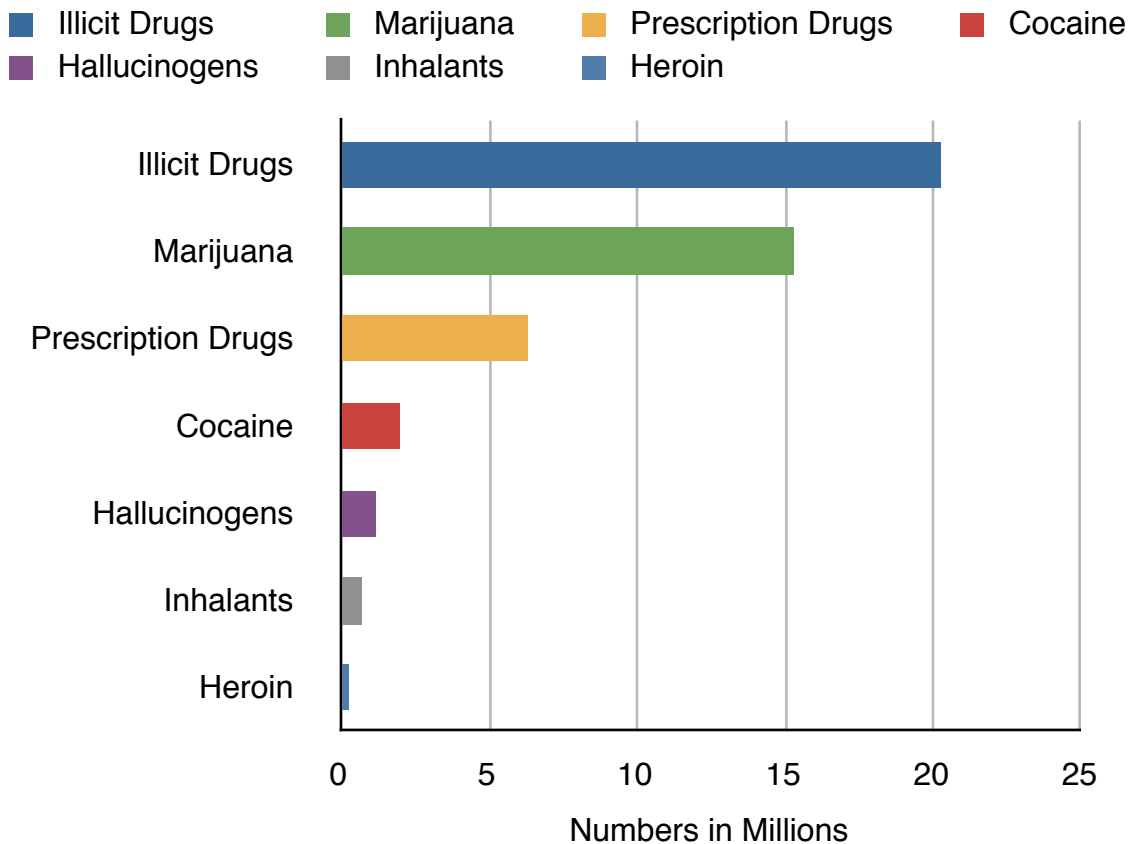
In 2008, an estimated 20.1 million Americans aged 12 or older (8.0% of the population) were current illicit drug users, meaning they had used an illicit drug during the month prior to the survey interview. The overall rate of current illicit drug use was identical to the rate in 2007 (8.0%) and has remained stable since 2002 (8.3%).

The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) is an annual survey of the US population aged 12 years old or older. NSDUH is the primary source of statistical information on the use of illegal drugs by the U.S. population. Conducted by the Federal Government since 1971, the survey collects data by administering questionnaires to a representative sample of the population through face-to-face interviews at the respondent's place of residence. The survey is sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Measures related to mental health problems also are presented in the survey, including data on depression and on the co-occurrence of substance use and mental health problems. What follows is a summary of the data reported for illicit drug use and alcohol use. Copies of the full survey can be obtained at: [SAMHSA's Latest National Survey on Drug Use & Health](#). It contains specific chapters of data on illicit drug use, alcohol use, tobacco use, first-time drug use, drug and alcohol treatment, prevalence and treatment of mental health problems and other information.

Illicit Drug Use

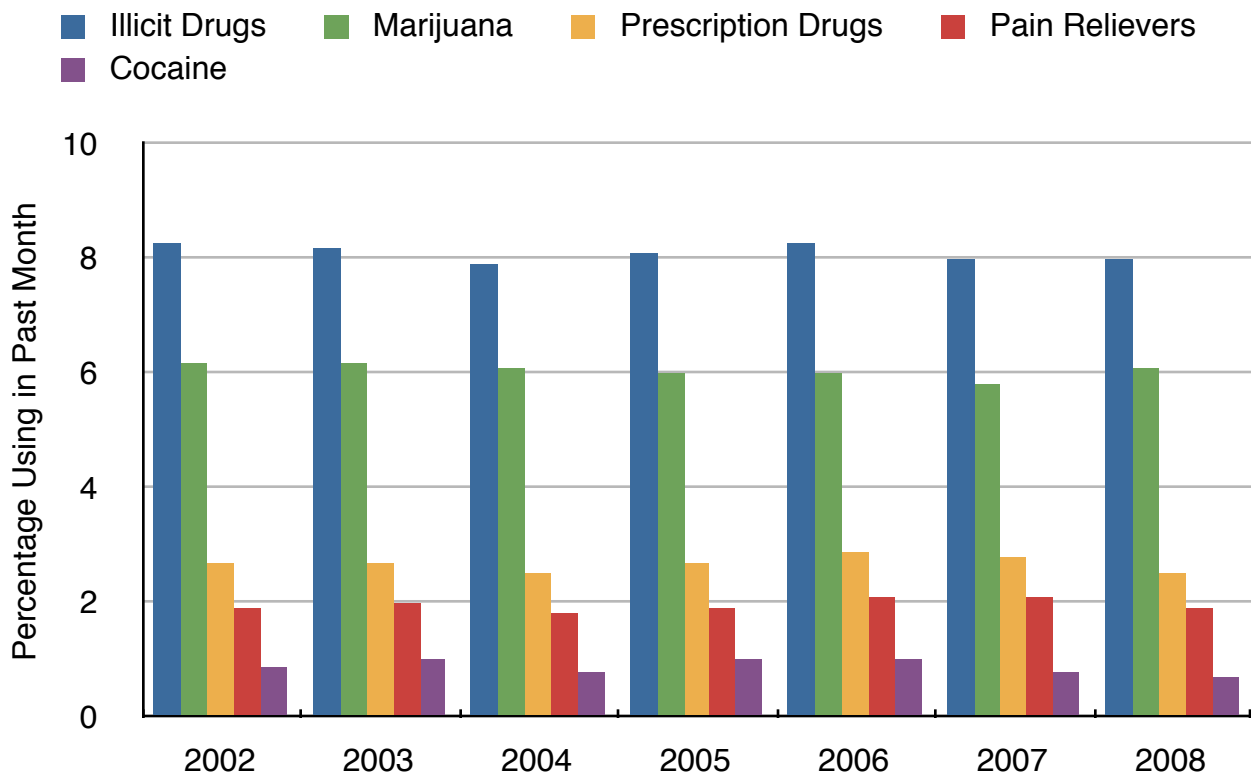
The number of persons (12 and older) reporting illicit drug use in the past month was 20.1 million, representing 8% of the population over 12 years of age. Marijuana was the most commonly used illicit drug, with 15.2 million users in the past month (6.1% of the population). The number of prescription drug users (nonmedical) in the last month were 6.2 million, (2.5% of the population); cocaine users were similar to those in 2007, 1.9 million (.7% of the population); and hallucinogen users were 1.1 million (.4% of the population), including 555,000 (0.2 %) who used Ecstasy. Inhalant users were .6 million; and heroin users were .2 million. See the following chart (Figure 1) for comparisons. So a fairly large segment of the U.S. population uses illicit drugs in any given month. Marijuana is the most commonly used drug and heroin is least used drug.

Figure 1
Past Month Illicit Drug Use among Persons 12 or Older



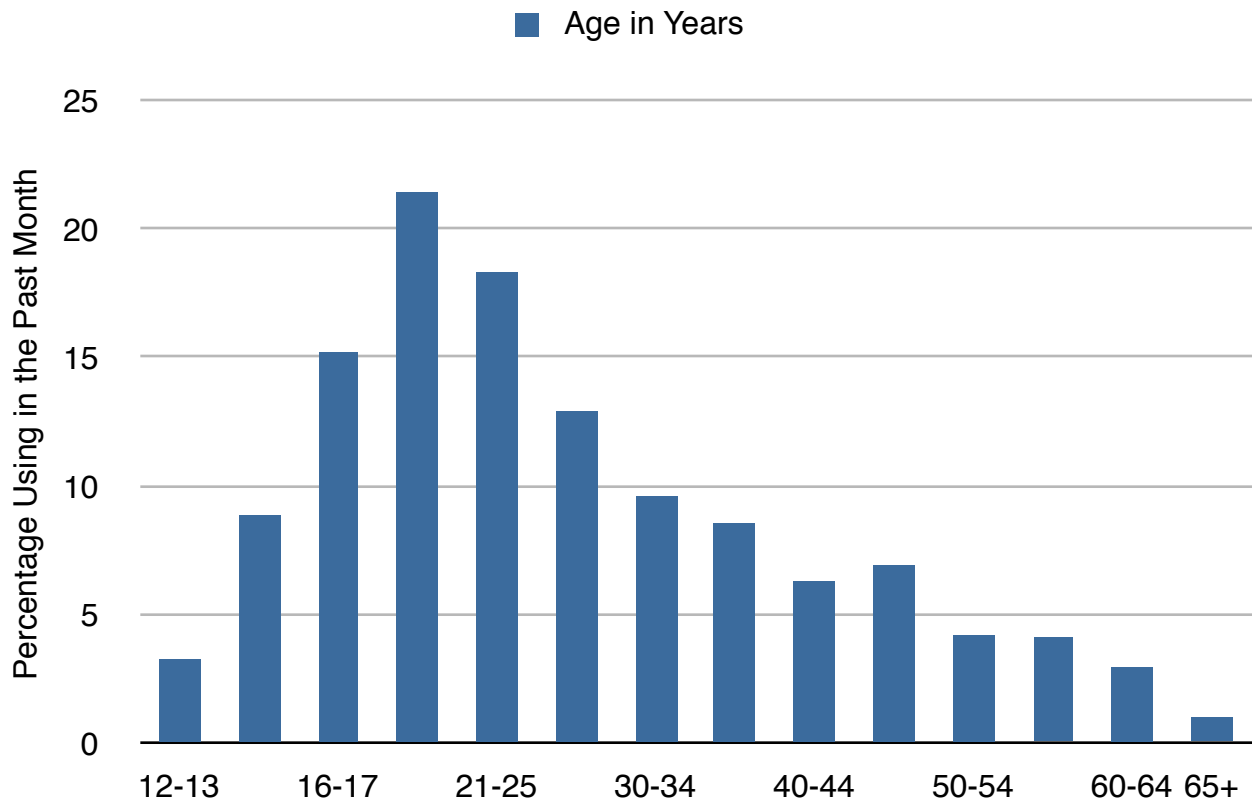
The use of several categories of illicit drugs in the past month has remained relatively stable since 2002. See Figure 2 for comparisons. Overall illicit drug use varied between 8.3% in 2002 and 8.0% in 2008. Marijuana use had a slight increase from 5.8% in 2007 to 6.1% in 2008. Cocaine use varied between .9% in 2002 and .7% in 2008. Prescription drugs (used nonmedically) varied between 2.7% in 2002 and 2.5% in 2008. Pain Relievers (used nonmedically) varied between 1.9% in 2002 and 2.1 percent in 2007; falling again to 1.9% in 2008.

Figure 2
Illicit Drug Use Among Persons Aged 12 and Over: 2002 to 2008



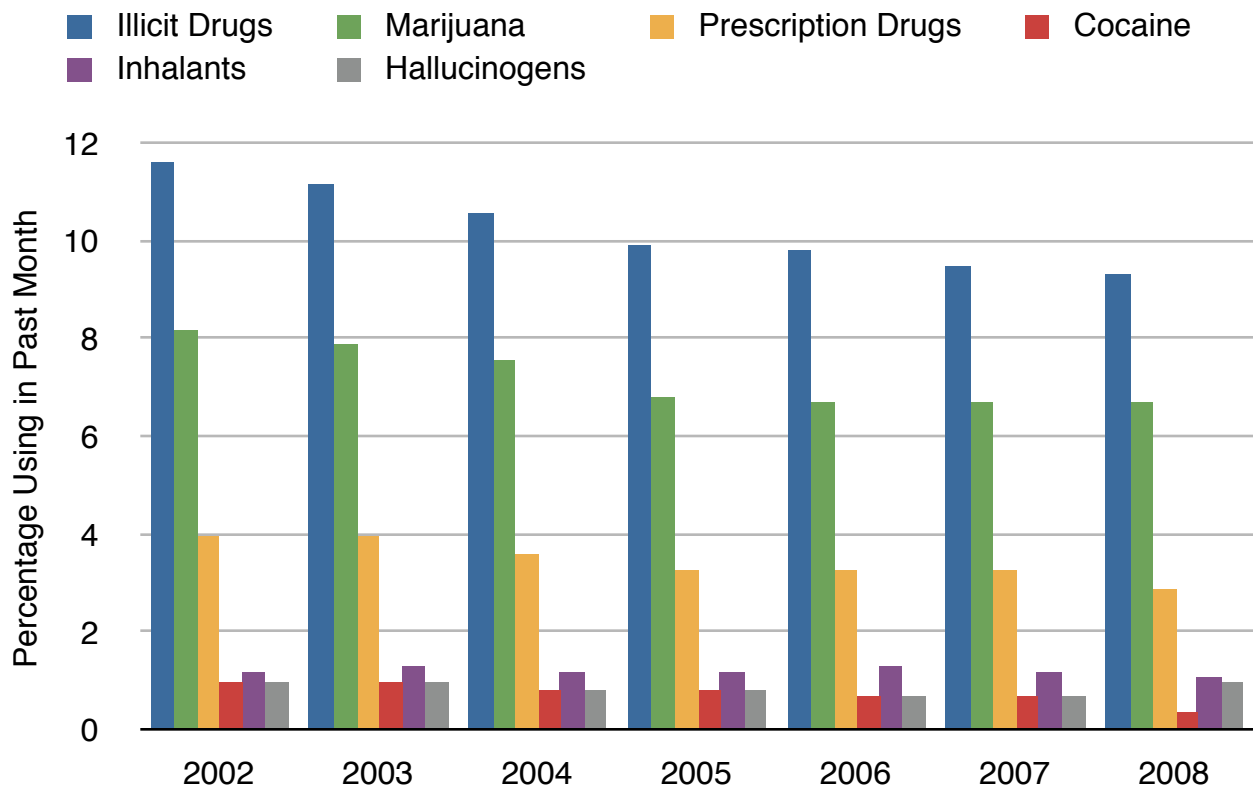
As expected, the rate of illicit drug use in the past month varied with age. With no surprises, the highest percentages of illicit drug use occurred between the ages of 16-17 (15.2%) and 26-29 (13.0%). The highest rate of illicit drug use was 21.5% of 18 to 20 year olds, followed by 18.4% of 21 to 25 year olds. A rather steady rate of illicit drug use occurred between the ages of 30-34 and 45-49 (9.6% to 7.0%), but then it began to drop steadily to a rate of only 1% of 65 and over. The coming of age for drug experimentation seemed to be 14, where the percentage of illicit drug users jumped from 3.3% among 12 to 13 year olds to 8.6% among 14 to 15 year olds. See Figure 3 for comparisons.

Figure 3
Illicit Drug Use by Age



In 2008, 9.3 percent of youths between the ages of 12 and 17 used illicit drugs in the past month; 6.7% used marijuana; 2.9% used prescription drugs; 1.1% used inhalants; 1% used hallucinogens; and .4% used cocaine. Rates of current use remained stable from 2007 to 2008, but showed an increase for hallucinogens (from .7% to 1.0%) and a decrease with prescription drugs (from 3.3% to 2.9%). See Figure 4 for comparisons.

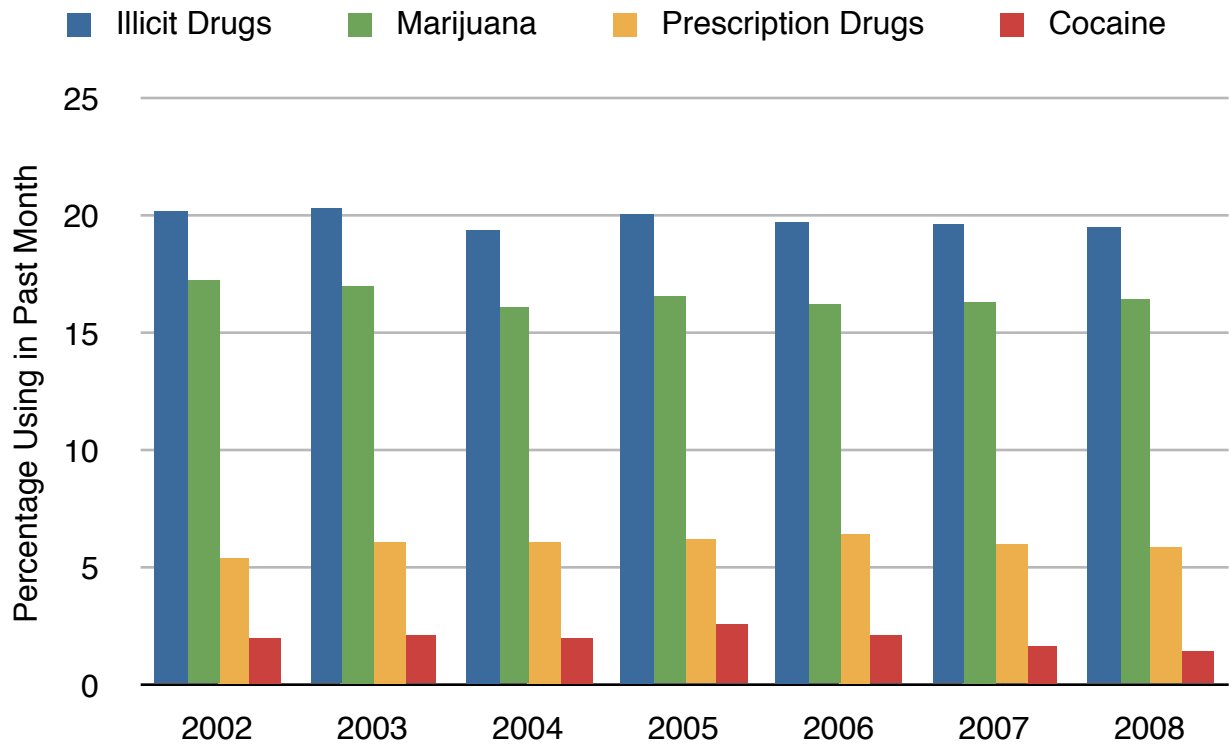
Figure 4
Illicit Drugs among Youths Aged 12 to 17



In 2008, rates of illicit drug use in the past month were over twice as high for 18 to 25 year olds than those for 12 to 17 year olds: 19.6 percent of youths between the ages of 18 and 25 used illicit drugs in the past month; 16.5% used marijuana (almost 2.5 times the rate of 12 to 17 year olds); 5.9% used prescription drugs; 1.5 used cocaine; and 1.7% used hallucinogens. Rates of current use overall remained stable from 2007 to 2008, but showed declines from 2002 to 2008 for cocaine, inhalants and the

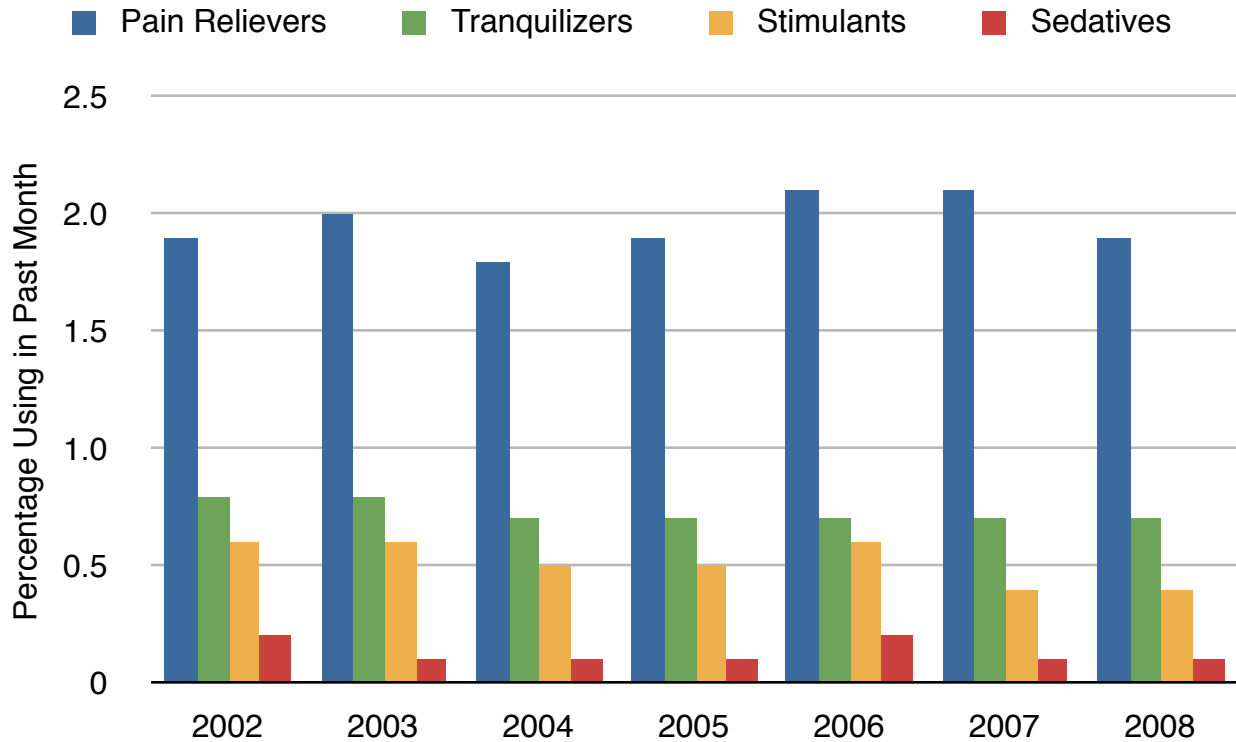
nonmedical use of stimulants. There were increases over that same time period for pain relievers and LSD. See Figure 5 for comparisons.

Figure 5
Illicit Drugs among Young Adults Aged 18 to 25



The nonmedical use of pain relievers decreased slightly since 2007, from 2.1% to 1.9%, but the difference was not statistically significant. Tranquilizer use remained steady, at .7%, as did stimulant use at .4%, and sedative use at .1%. See Figure 6 for comparisons. Note that the nonmedical use of pain relievers was more than twice as likely to occur than its nearest rival, tranquilizers.

Figure 6
Nonmedical Use of Prescription Drugs Among Persons Aged 12 and Over:
2002 to 2008



Nonmedical users of prescription drugs were asked how they obtained the drugs. In both 2007 and 2008, over half of the nonmedical users of prescription-type pain relievers, tranquilizers, stimulants, and sedatives aged 12 or older said they got the drugs they used most recently “from a friend or relative for free.” In a follow-up question, the majority of these respondents indicated that their friend or relative had obtained the drugs from one doctor.

Among persons aged 12 or older who used pain relievers nonmedically in 2008, 55.9% said they got the pain relievers they most recently used from a friend or relative for free. Another 8.9% bought them from a friend or relative, while 5.4 percent reported stealing them from a friend or relative. Nearly one fifth (18%) indicated that they got the drugs from one doctor; 4.3% got pain relievers from a drug dealer or other stranger; and 0.4% said they bought them on the Internet. Friends or relatives were the ultimate source of nonmedically used pain killers for 70.6% of those reporting the source for their pain killers.

A final and interesting finding was on the influence of religious beliefs on drug use. In 2008, 31.7% of youths aged 12 to 17 reported that they had attended religious services 25 or more times in the past year, which was similar to the rate in 2007 (31.4%) and the rate in 2002 (33%). In addition, 75% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that religious beliefs are a very important part of their lives, which was similar to the 76.1% reported in 2007, but was lower than the 78.2% reported in 2002. Also, 33.8% agreed with the statement that it is important for their friends to share their religious beliefs, which was lower than the rate in 2007 (35.1%) and the rate in 2002 (35.8 percent). Rates of past month use of illicit drugs, cigarettes, and alcohol (including binge alcohol) were lower among youths aged 12 to 17 who agreed with these statements than among those who disagreed. In 2008, past month illicit drug use was reported by 6.8% of those who agreed that religious beliefs are a very important part of life compared with 16.2% of those who disagreed with that statement.

Alcohol Use

In the following data, a “drink” is defined as a can or bottle of beer, a glass of wine or a wine cooler, a shot of liquor, or a mixed drink with liquor in it. Times when the respondent only had a sip or two from a drink are not considered to be consumption. Estimates for the prevalence of alcohol use are reported primarily at three levels defined for both males and females and for all ages as follows:

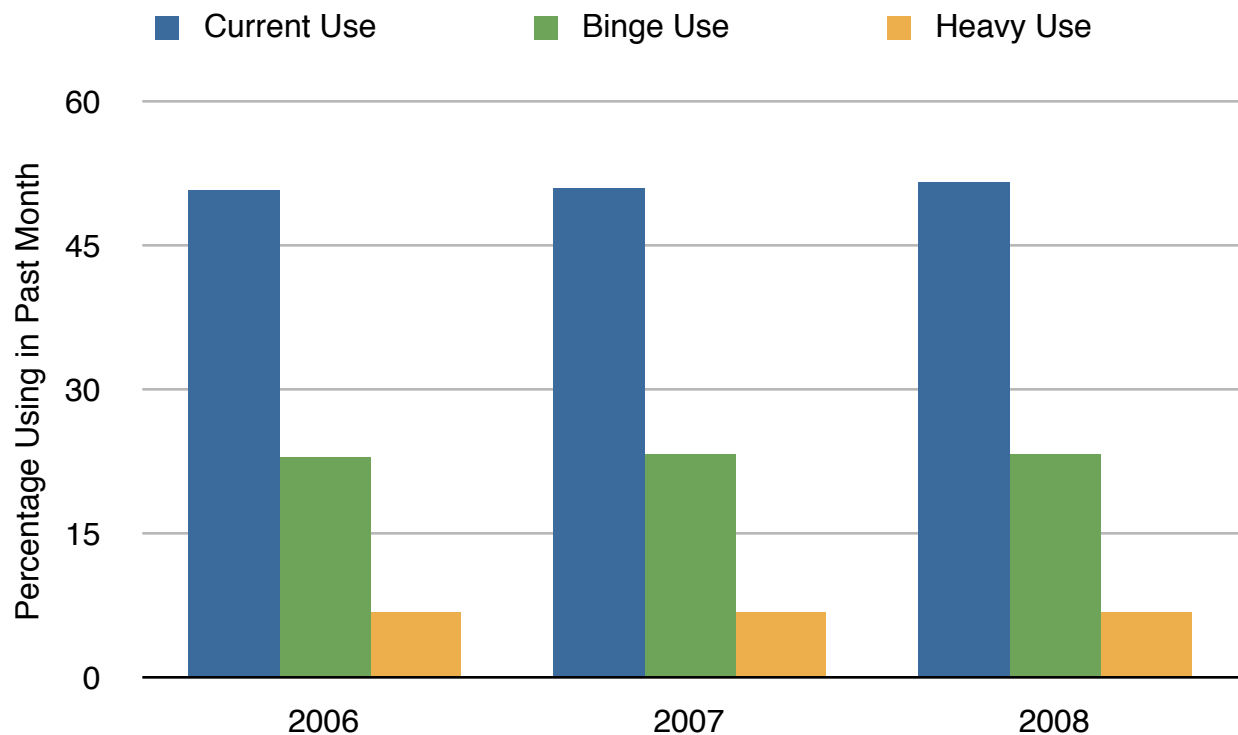
- **Current (past month) use** - At least one drink in the past 30 days.
- **Binge use** - Five or more drinks on the same occasion (i.e., at the same time or within a couple of hours of each other) on at least 1 day in the past 30 days.
- **Heavy use** - Five or more drinks on the same occasion on each of 5 or more days in the past 30 days.

Alcohol Use Among Persons Aged 12 or Older

Slightly **more than half of Americans** over the age of 12 aged reported being current drinkers of alcohol in the 2008 survey (51.6%). This translates to an estimated 129.0 million people, which is similar to the 2007 estimate of 126.8 million people (51.1%). More than one fifth (23.3%) of persons aged 12 or older participated in binge drinking at least once in the 30 days prior to the survey in 2007. This translates to

about 58.1 million people. The rate in 2008 is the same as the rate in 2007 (23.3%). Heavy drinking was reported by 6.9 percent of the population aged 12 or older, or 17.3 million people. This percentage is the same as the rate of heavy drinking in 2007 (6.9%). See Figure 7 for comparisons.

Figure 7
Alcohol Use among Persons Aged 12 or Older

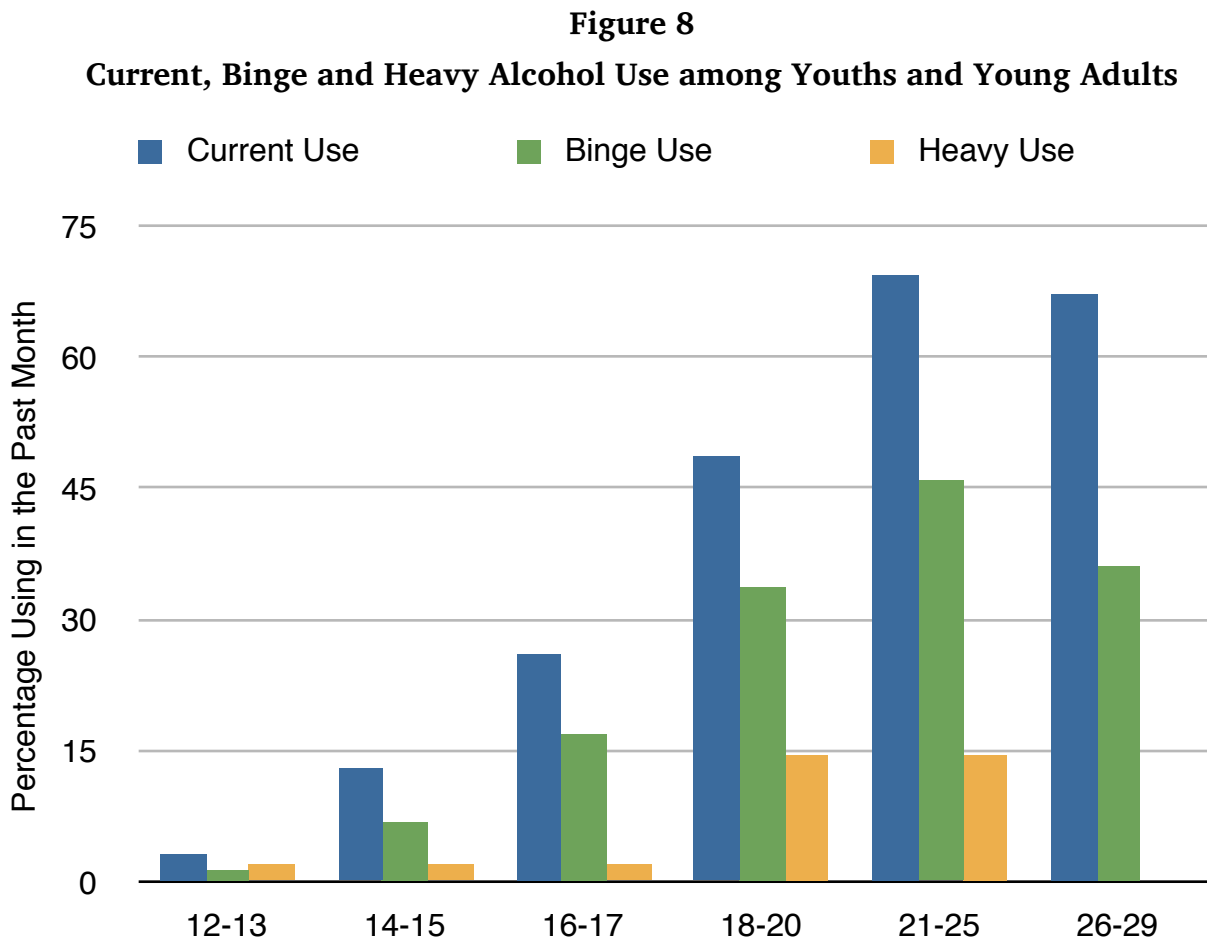


In 2007, rates of current alcohol use were 3.4 percent among persons aged 12 or 13, 13.1% of persons aged 14 or 15, 26.2% of 16 or 17 year olds, 48.7% of those aged 18 to 20, and 69.5% of 21 to 25 year olds. Among older age groups, the prevalence of current alcohol use decreased with increasing age, from 67.2% among 26 to 29 year olds to 50.3% among 60 to 64 year olds and 39.7% among people aged 65 or older.

Rates of binge alcohol use in 2008 were 1.5% among 12 or 13 year olds, 6.9% among 14 or 15 year olds, 17.2% among 16 or 17 year olds, 33.7% among persons aged 18 to 20, and peaked among those aged 21 to 25 at 46.0%. The rate decreased beyond young adulthood from 36.4% of 26 to 34 year olds to 18.8% of persons aged 35 or older.

The rate of binge drinking was 41.0% for young adults aged 18 to 25. Heavy alcohol use was reported by 14.5% of persons aged 18 to 25. These rates are similar to the rates in 2007 (41.8 and 14.7%, respectively).

The rate of current alcohol use among youths aged 12 to 17 was 14.6% in 2008. Youth binge and heavy drinking rates were 8.8 and 2.0%, respectively. The 2008 rate for youth binge drinking is lower than the 2007, which was 9.7%. See Figure 8 for the comparisons.

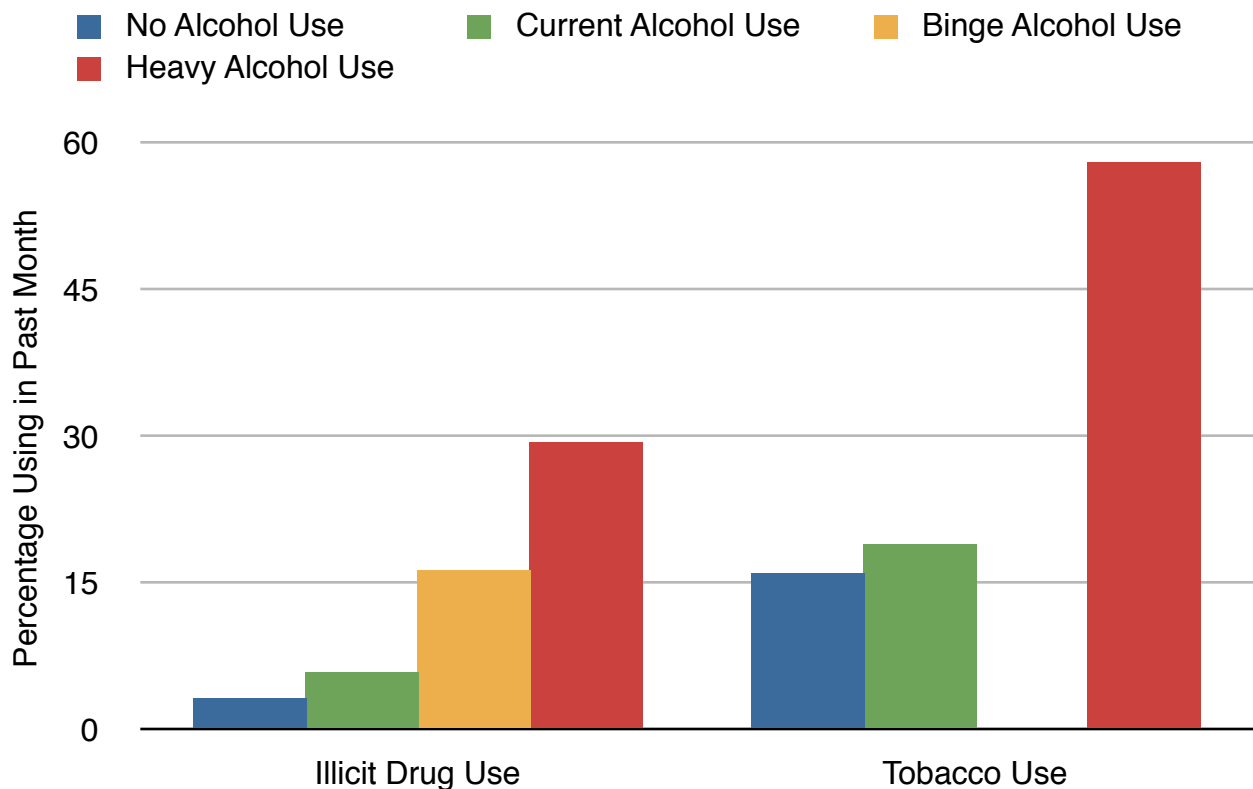


The level of alcohol use was associated with illicit drug use. Among the 17.3 million heavy drinkers aged 12 or older, 29.4% were current illicit drug users. Persons who were not current alcohol users were less likely to have used illicit drugs in the past month (3.3%) than those who reported (a) current use of alcohol but did not meet the

criteria for binge or heavy use (6.1%), (b) binge use but did not meet the criteria for heavy use (16.4%), or (c) heavy use of alcohol (29.4%).

Alcohol consumption levels also were associated with tobacco use. Among heavy alcohol users aged 12 or older, 58.0% smoked cigarettes in the past month, while only 19.2% of non-binge current drinkers and 16.1% of persons who did not drink alcohol in the past month were current smokers. Smokeless tobacco use and cigar use also were more prevalent among heavy drinkers (12.5 and 17.8%, respectively) than among non-binge drinkers (2.2 and 4.6%) and nondrinkers (2.1 and 2.0%). See Figure 9 for comparisons.

Figure 9
Alcohol Use with Illicit Drug and Tobacco Use

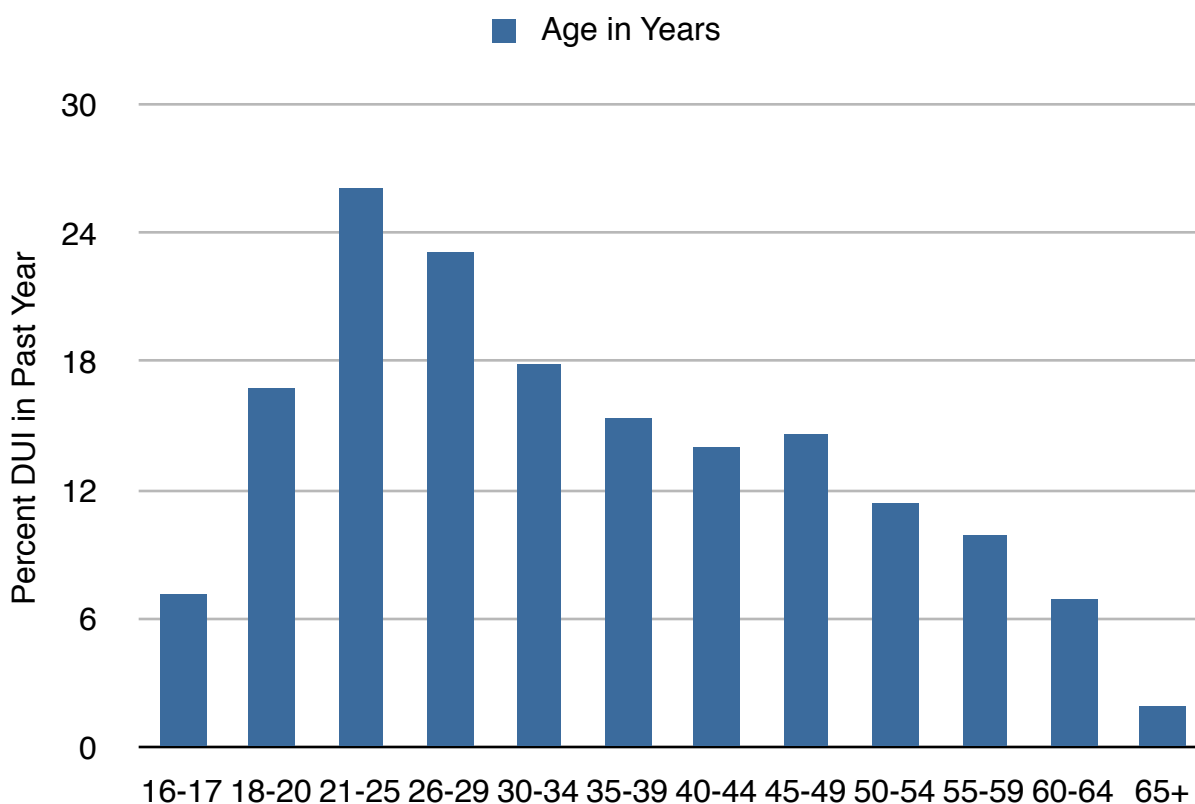


Driving Under the Influence

In 2008, 10.0 million persons aged 12 or older reported driving under the influence of illicit drugs during the past year. This corresponds to 4.0 percent of the population in that age group, the same rate as in 2007, but lower than the rate in 2002 (4.7%). In 2008, the rate was highest among young adults aged 18 to 25 (12.3%).

In 2007, an estimated 12.4% of persons aged 12 or older drove under the influence of alcohol at least once in the past year. This percentage has dropped since 2002, when it was 14.2%. The 2008 estimate corresponds to 30.9 million persons.

Figure 10
Driving Under the Influence of Alcohol in the Past Year by Age



Driving under the influence of alcohol was associated with age in 2008. An estimated 7.2% of 16 or 17 year olds, 16.7% of 18 to 20 year olds, and 26.1% of 21 to 25 year olds reported driving under the influence of alcohol in the past year. Beyond age 25, these rates showed a general decline with increasing age. Among persons aged

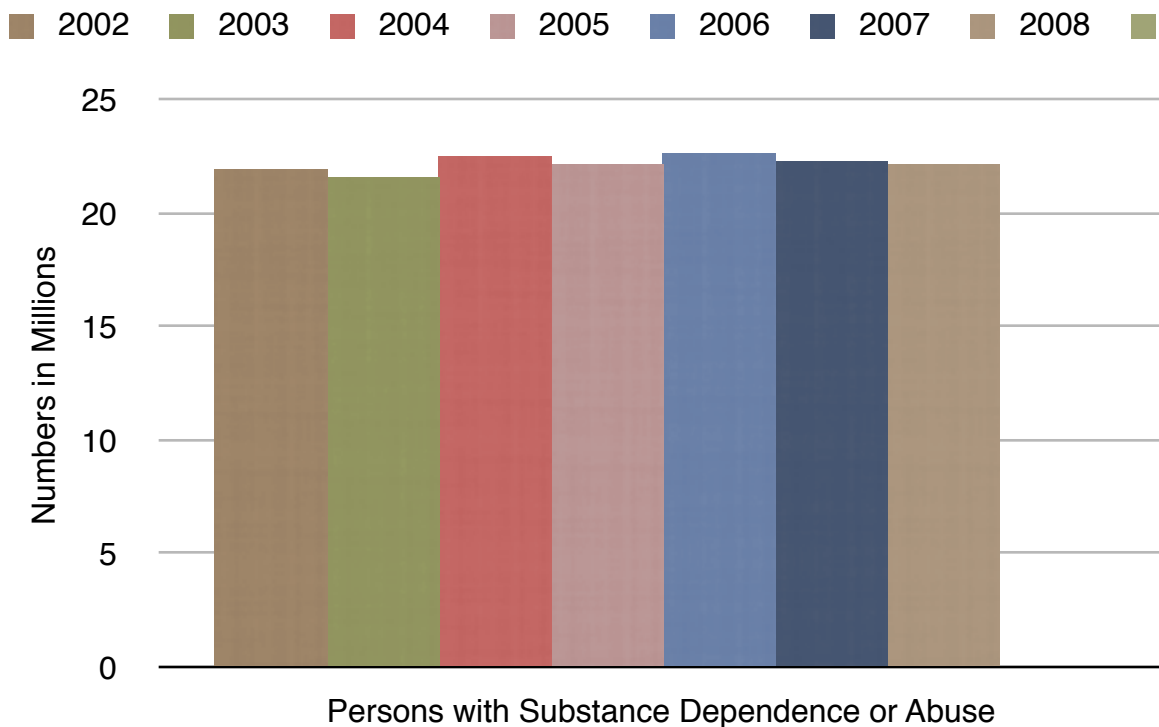
12 or older, males were nearly twice as likely as females (16.0 vs. 9.0%) to drive under the influence of alcohol in the past year. See Figure 10 above for the comparison.

Substance Abuse, Dependence and Treatment

In 2008, an estimated 22.2 million individuals aged 12 or older were classified with substance dependence or abuse in the past year (8.9% of the population aged 12 or older). Of these, 3.1 million were classified with dependence or abuse of both alcohol and illicit drugs; 3.9 million were dependent on or abused illicit drugs, but not alcohol; and 15.2 million were dependent on or abused alcohol but not illicit drugs.

The number of persons with substance dependence or abuse was stable between 2002 and 2008 (22.0 million in 2002, 21.6 million in 2003, 22.5 million in 2004, 22.2 million in 2005, 22.6 million in 2006, 22.3 million in 2007, and 22.2 million in 2008). See Figure 11 below.

Figure 11
Persons with Substance Dependence or Abuse



Marijuana was the illicit drug with the highest rate of dependence or abuse in 2008, followed by pain relievers and cocaine. Of the 7.0 million persons aged 12 or older classified with dependence on or abuse of illicit drugs in 2008, 4.2 million were dependent on or abused marijuana or hashish (representing 1.7 percent of the total population aged 12 or older, and 60.1% of all those classified with illicit drug dependence or abuse), 1.7 million persons were classified with dependence on or abuse of pain relievers, and 1.4 million persons were classified with dependence on or abuse of cocaine. Tranquilizers, 451 thousand; stimulants, 351 thousand; hallucinogens, 358 thousand; heroin, 282 thousand; inhalants, 175 thousand; and sedatives, 126 thousand. See Figure 11 for the comparison.

Figure 11
Dependence or Abuse of Specific Drugs in the Past Year

