Use of Marijuana and Blunts among Adolescents: 2005

In Brief

- In 2005, 6.8 percent of youths aged 12 to 17 used marijuana in the past month, and 3.5 percent had used cigars with marijuana in them (“blunts”) in the past month.

- Among youths, past month use of both marijuana and blunts increased with age and was more likely among males than females (marijuana: 7.5 vs. 6.2 percent; blunts: 4.2 vs. 2.9 percent).

- Among past month marijuana users aged 12 to 17, those in the Northeast were more likely to have used blunts in the past month than those in the Midwest and West (62.5 vs. 48.3 and 43.1 percent), and those in the South were more likely to have used blunts than those in the West (54.4 vs. 43.1 percent).

Marijuana is the most commonly used illicit drug among adolescents. The replacement of tobacco in cigars with marijuana (also referred to by the slang term “blunts”) provides a delivery mechanism for marijuana; moreover, the use of blunts among adolescents has been associated with male gender, living in a metropolitan area, lower grade point average, and truancy. The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) includes questions on the use of marijuana and blunts. Respondents who reported lifetime use of marijuana or blunts were asked to report when they last used these substances, including whether they used them in the 30 days prior to being interviewed (i.e., in the past month). Blunt use is defined as smoking part or all of a cigar with marijuana in it.

NSDUH also includes questions about academic characteristics of youths aged 12 to 17 enrolled in school. Youths aged 12 to 17 who reported being enrolled in school during the past year were asked about their average grades during the last semester or grading period. In addition, youths who were enrolled full time in the past 30 days were asked whether they skipped school in the past month.
This report focuses on past month marijuana and blunt use among youths aged 12 to 17. Data are presented by demographic and academic characteristics. All findings are based on data from the 2005 NSDUH.

**Past Month Marijuana Use**

In 2005, 6.8 percent of youths aged 12 to 17 (1.7 million persons) used marijuana in the past month. Marijuana use increased with age (Figure 1) and was more likely among males than females in this age group (7.5 vs. 6.2 percent). American Indian or Alaska Native youths were more likely to have used marijuana in the past month than youths in other racial categories, and Asian youths were less likely to have used marijuana than those in other racial categories (Table 1). Rates of past month marijuana use were similar for different regions and county types.

Past month use of marijuana was related to academic characteristics. Among youths aged 12 to 17 who were enrolled in school in the past year, those with higher grade averages were less likely to have used marijuana in the past month than those with lower grade averages (Figure 2). For example, 17.9 percent of students with a past semester grade average of D or lower used marijuana in the past month compared with 3.1 percent of students with an A average. Among youths aged 12 to 17 who were full-time students during the month before the survey, those who skipped school were almost 4 times as likely as those who did not skip school to have used marijuana in the past month (17.6 vs. 4.7 percent).

**Past Month Blunt Use**

In 2005, among all youths aged 12 to 17, 3.5 percent (891,000 persons) had used blunts in the past month. As with marijuana use, past month blunt use was more likely among males than females (4.2 vs. 2.9 percent) and increased with age (Figure 1). Asian youths were less likely to have used blunts in the past month than youths in other racial categories (Table 1). Youths in the Northeast (5.0 percent) were more likely to have used blunts in the past month than those in the South (3.4 percent), Midwest (3.3 percent), and the West (2.9 percent). Youths in non-metropolitan areas were less likely to have used blunts in the past month than those in large and small metropolitan areas (2.4 percent vs. 3.9 and 3.5 percent, respectively).

Past month blunt use also was related to academic characteristics. Among youths aged 12 to 17 who were enrolled in school in the past year, those with higher grade averages were less likely to have used blunts in the past month than those with lower grade averages (Figure 2). Students with a past semester grade average of D or lower were 8 times as likely as students with an A average to have used blunts in the past month (10.9 vs. 1.4 percent). Among youths aged 12 to 17 who were full-time students during the month before the survey, those...
who skipped school were over 4 times as likely as those who did not skip school to have used blunts in the past month (9.8 vs. 2.3 percent).

**Past Month Blunt Use among Past Month Marijuana Users**

In 2005, approximately half (52.0 percent) of past month marijuana users aged 12 to 17 also used blunts in the past month. Males aged 12 to 17 who used marijuana in the past month were more likely than their female counterparts to have used blunts in the past month (55.6 vs. 47.5 percent). Among past month marijuana users aged 12 to 17, those in the Northeast were more likely to have used blunts in the past month than those in the Midwest and West (62.5 vs. 48.3 and 43.1 percent), and those in the South were more likely to have used blunts than those in the West (54.4 vs. 43.1 percent) (Figure 3). Although rates of past month marijuana use among youths were similar by county type, adolescent marijuana users in non-metropolitan areas were less likely to use blunts than those in small and large metropolitan areas (37.7 percent vs. 51.0 and 56.7 percent, respectively). Among past month marijuana users, rates of past month blunt use were similar across academic characteristics.

**End Notes**

2. This is not to be interpreted to mean that cigar brands with “blunts” in their names contain marijuana.
5. Youths who did not attend school in the past 12 months, students with unknown or missing data on the grade average measure, and students who indicated that they attended schools that did not give letter grades were excluded from this analysis.
6. Youths who currently (i.e., in the past 30 days) were not full-time students and students with unknown or missing data on whether they skipped school were excluded from this analysis.
7. This analysis excludes respondents for whom information on blunt use or recency of use was unknown. In addition, respondents were excluded from this analysis if they reported blunt use but not marijuana use.

**Figure and Table Notes**

* Race/ethnicity categories are determined by combining the responses from two separate questions. For this report, respondents identifying themselves as Hispanic were assigned to the Hispanic group regardless of their racial identification. Respondents identifying themselves as non-Hispanic were grouped according to their racial identification. Thus, “white” refers to those identifying themselves as non-Hispanic and white. Data on Native Hawaiians or Other Pacific Islanders were excluded because of low precision.
** SE = Standard Error.
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