

# THE FACTS

About Drug Abuse

December 2012

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## New Study Confirms: Teen Marijuana Use Linked to Declines in IQ

Published August 27, 2012 - Associated Press

Teens who routinely smoke marijuana risk a long-term drop in their IQ, a new study suggests. The researchers didn't find the same IQ dip for people who became frequent users of pot after 18.

"Parents should understand that their adolescents are particularly vulnerable," said lead researcher Madeline Meier of Duke University.

Study participants from New Zealand were tested for IQ at age 13, likely before any significant marijuana use, and again at age 38. The mental decline between those two ages was seen only in those who started regularly smoking pot before age 18.

Pot is the most popular illegal drug in the world. Within the United States, 23 percent of high school students said they'd recently smoked marijuana, making it more popular than cigarettes, the federal

government reported in June.

"I think this is the cleanest study I've ever read" that looks for long-term harm from marijuana use, said Dr. Nora Volkow, director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, which helped fund the research.

Meier and colleagues reported their work in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. It was funded with governmental grants from the United States and Britain, and a foundation in Zurich.

The study drew on survey data from more than 1,000 people in New Zealand. In addition to IQ tests, they were interviewed five times between ages 18 and 38, including questions related to their marijuana use.

At age 18, 52 participants indicated they had become dependent on marijuana. Ninety-two others reported dependence starting at a later age.



Researchers compared their IQ scores at age 13 to the score at age 38 and found a drop only in those who had become dependent by 18. Those deemed dependent in three or more surveys had a drop averaging 8 points.

Among participants who'd been dependent at 18 and in at least one later survey, quitting didn't remove the problem. IQ declines showed up even if they'd largely or entirely quit using pot at age 38, analysis showed.

Article: <http://tinyurl.com/czulrnq>

**Link to Study:** <http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2012/08/22/1206820109.abstract>

### Notes from Dr. George B. Elder

Dear Colleagues,

I encourage you to read carefully the articles in this newsletter. Recent research has brought attention to two alarming facts that everyone should be aware of:

1) A new study has confirmed that teen marijuana use is harmful to the developing brain and linked to permanent declines in IQ scores; 2) In addition, prescription drug abuse is now considered the gateway drug to heroin addiction for suburban teens. These new studies give us a stern wake up call.

I am thrilled to announce that an additional 30 schools, colleges and fraternities have recently joined the ever-expanding network of Psychemedics partners in protecting their students from the destructive and often deadly menace of drug abuse. Public, private, parochial and independent schools are choosing the amazing power of real accountability (Psychemedics hair testing) when it comes to arming their students as they make the right decision. More futures will be protected, additional lives will be saved and fortunate families spared the heartbreak of addiction.

We are also already testing and talking with others schools in Colorado and Washington, where recreational use of marijuana for individuals 21 and older has just been legalized. We expect many more schools in these states to join us as the availability of marijuana escalates dramatically. If you had any question before about using real accountability, made possible by the most powerful, accurate and reliable science in the world to protect your students, I can't imagine there are any questions left. Educating our kids about drugs is important, but it's not enough. Call us. We can help.



Dr. George Elder,  
 Vice President, Schools & Colleges

### DRUG STATISTICS

In 2011, 7.2% of 8th graders, 17.6% of 10th graders, and 22.6% of 12th graders used marijuana in the past month.

In 2011, 15.2% of high-school seniors used a prescription drug nonmedically in the past year.

- 2011 Monitoring the Future Survey

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## Experts Say Teen Prescription Drug Abuse Gateway To Heroin Addiction

Death from prescription drugs tripled between 2000 and 2008, according to national data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In fact, national data from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration shows that the number of teens dying from heroin abuse has skyrocketed. In 1999, 198 people between the ages of 15 and 24 died of a heroin overdose, compared to 510 deaths in 2009, the latest year data was taken.



The underlying problem, say experts, is the ease of accessing prescription pills such as Percocet, Oxycodone, and Vicodin from emergency rooms, dentist offices, and especially unfinished prescriptions in household medicine cabinets.

“There has been a huge increase in legal prescriptions. It goes to our American problem of not taking care of yourself: not exercising and eating right, and just taking a pill to make it go away,” said Frank Greenagel, recovery counselor and chairman of the task force.



According to NBC News, these prescription painkillers are the link or gateway drug between suburban teens and heroin.

**Teens already hooked to pills like Oxycodone will find the same high in heroin, which is about one-tenth the cost, more intense, and easier to buy. Some dealers even give the drugs away for free in the suburbs, then sell to the kids once they become hooked, according to the New York Daily News.**

Mexico has seen a huge increase in heroin production to meet the demand - from 7 metric tons in 2002, to 50 metric tons in 2012, according to the National Drug Intelligence Center. In March of 2010, ABC reported the efforts by drug traffickers in Mexico and Columbia to market heroin to suburban teens, by splashing popular logos, like Prada or Chevrolet, on the small drug packets.

<http://www.newjerseynewsroom.com/healthquest/heroin-use-among-new-jersey-teens-snowballing-prescription-pills-are-new-gateway-drug>



### ASTOUNDING FACTS

Crystal meth has become the most dangerous drug problem of small town America. Kids between **12 and 14** who live in smaller towns are **104% more likely to use meth** than those who live in larger cities.

<http://www.dosomething.org/actnow/tipsandtools/11-shocking-facts-about-teens-and-drug-use>

## Schools Are Blunt About New Pot Law: Not On Our Campus

*Colleges in the land of legalized pot say they still won't allow students to smoke marijuana*

Although voters in Colorado and Washington approved the legalization of marijuana, officials aren't expecting cannabis-welcoming changes in campus policy.

The federal government still considers marijuana illegal, and universities don't want to risk their federal funding for research or student financial aid.

"If someone thinks they are going to walk around campus smoking a joint, it's not going to happen," says University of Washington spokesman Norman Arkans.

"We don't see that it will change our policies very much," Arkans says. "We get caught in the vise between the state law and our obligations under the federal government. While it may be legal two blocks off campus, it will be illegal under

federal law, so it will be illegal on campus."

The Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act puts the university at risk for all of its federal funding if they knowingly and willingly allow illegal substance use on campus.

University of Denver spokeswoman Kim DeVigil said it's too soon to know how the school will handle the passage of the amendment. "We are a smoke-free campus, so regardless you can't smoke in dorms, buildings or any grounds," she says. "We will comply with state, local and federal laws."

Under the Colorado and Washington laws, personal possession of up to an ounce of marijuana would be legal for anyone 21 and older. Cannabis would be sold and taxed at state-licensed stores.



Hirokawa, 22, of Parker, Colo., added that he doesn't think the new law will change the culture at the University of Denver or lead to an influx of drug users enrolling in the school.

"They would have to wait three years to be able to smoke," he said, referring to the fact that people must be 21 to buy pot.

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2012/11/10/marijuana-university-colorado-washington/1692827/>

**The 17th annual back-to-school survey just released by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse focused this year on use at school.**



[www.casacolumbia.org](http://www.casacolumbia.org)

### MORE TEENS USING DRUGS AT SCHOOL - SURVEY FINDS

60% of high school students and 32% of middle school students say students keep, use or sell drugs on their school grounds.

36% say it's easy or fairly easy for students to use drugs or smoke without getting caught.

Teens estimate that 17% of classmates use drugs, drink or smoke during the school day.

Almost half of high school students know a student who sells drugs at their school.

More than half of high school students say there's a place on school grounds or near the school where students go to drink, use drugs or smoke during the school day.

### Did You Know ??

*Psychemedics now using a newly developed and FDA-cleared EIA drug screening process*



The FDA granted the company 510(K) clearances for five new additional assays to test for the detection of drugs of abuse using enzyme immunoassay (EIA) analysis of head and body hair. By combining our new FDA-cleared custom designed immunoassays (which are equivalent in effectiveness and sensitivity to radioimmunoassay) with our new patented method of releasing the drugs from the hair, we continue to offer our clients the greatest sensitivity and effectiveness in testing, thereby identifying the greatest number of drug abusers.

*Superior Detection  
of Drug Abuse*

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**About Psychemedics:**

*Psychemedics was established in 1987 to provide testing for drugs of abuse using hair analysis, and has been successfully operating for over 25 years. Psychemedics is the world's leading and largest drug testing company using hair. Our patented hair analysis technology is trusted by Fortune 500 companies, police forces, courts, schools and parents all over the world. Psychemedics is headquartered in Boston and has offices in Dallas, Chicago, Los Angeles and Las Vegas. Our Laboratory is located in Culver City, CA. Psychemedics is a publicly-held corporation listed on NASDAQ under the ticker symbol PMD.*