

Trends in Adolescent Drug Use

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Introduction

How has youth tobacco use trended recently?

- A philosophical question: How would we know?
- Do we need to survey all ~12 million U.S. adolescents in order to get accurate national estimates?
- Fortunately, there is another way.
 - (in fact, surveying all ~12 million adolescents would be a misuse of resources)

Assessing National Trends

We can draw a sample of all U.S. adolescents.

- Start with a list of all middle schools and high schools in the U.S., and draw a random sample from it.

Results from the sample are what we would find if we surveyed all 12 million U.S. 8th, 10th, and 12th graders U.S, + or - a percentage point or two.

Other statistics that come from random samples include the Unemployment Rate, Consumer Confidence Index, etc.



The Survey

Sample drawn from a list of all public and private schools in the U.S. (under guidance of a professional sampling statistician).

Every year a total of approximately 40,000 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students in about 410 public and private secondary schools are surveyed.

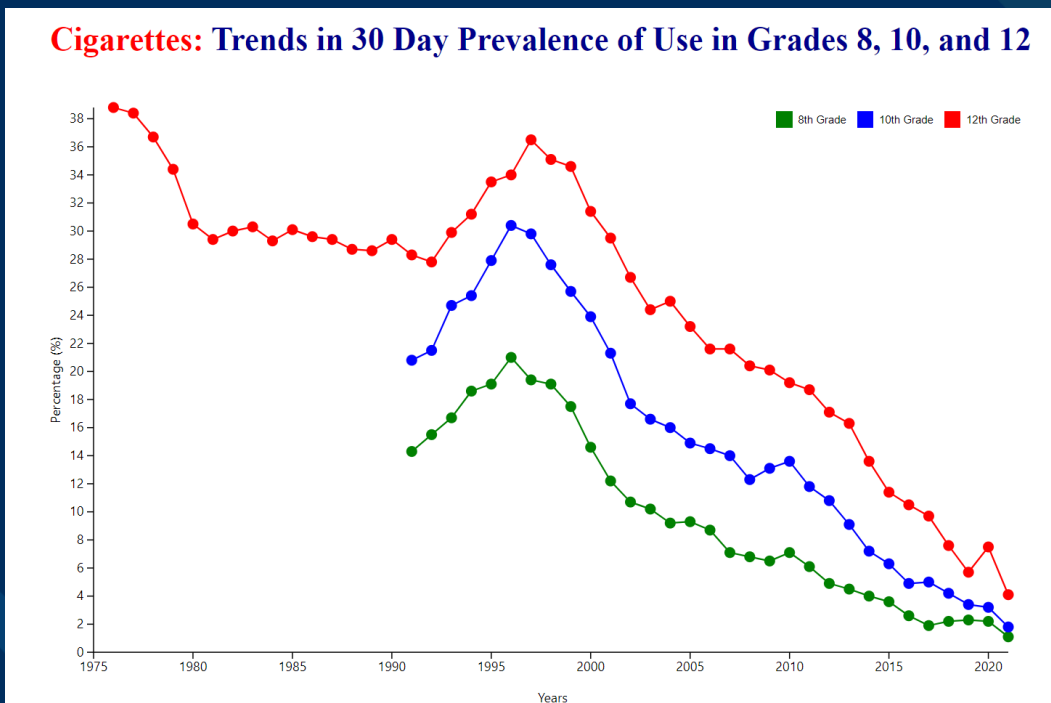
We check the data thoroughly and annually throw out about 3% of respondents who do not take the survey seriously. In some years, up to 80% of students report use of an illegal drug – they are not shy!

As of 2024, more than 1.5 million completed surveys.

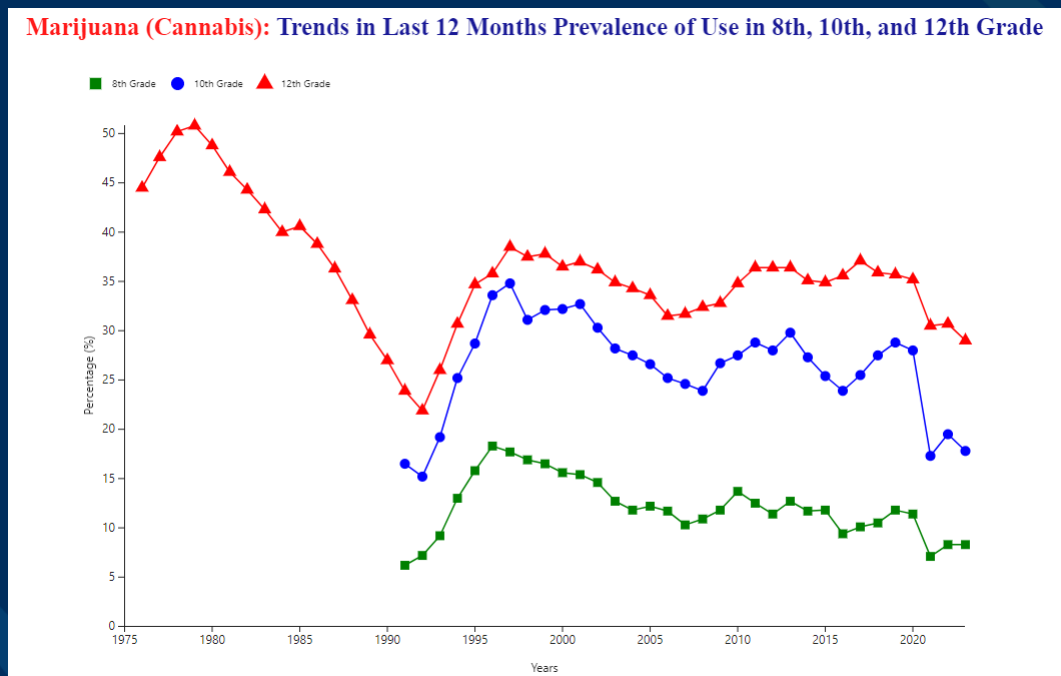
That being said, it is the representativeness of the data and not the large sample size that is the key characteristic

Monitoring the Future is one of only two studies FDA considers of sufficient quality to inform its policy decisions on youth drug use.

Trends in Adolescent Cigarette Smoking



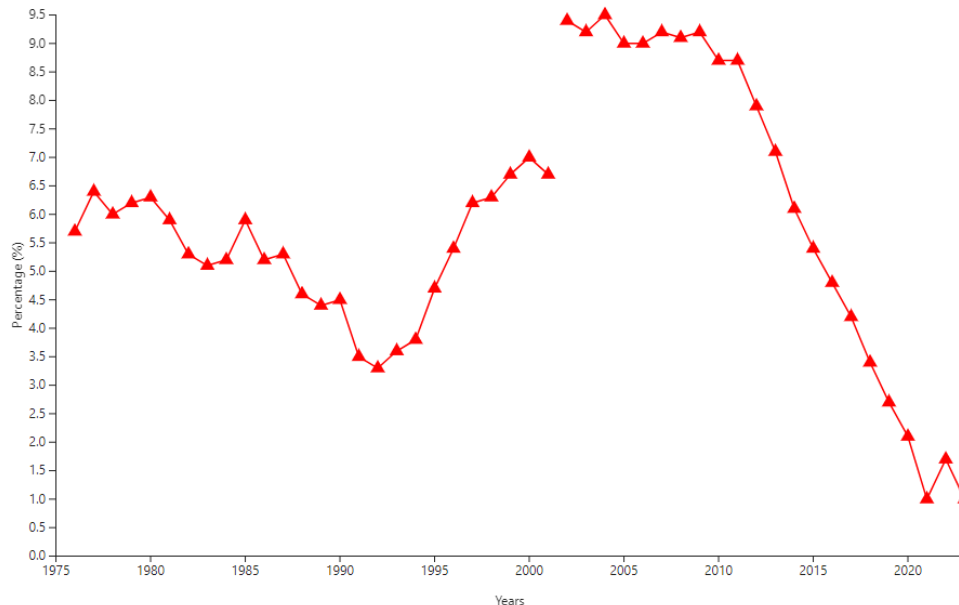
Trends in Adolescent Marijuana (Cannabis) Use



Trends in Adolescent Use of Prescription Opioids

Prescription Opioids: Trends in Last 12 Months Prevalence of Use in 12th Grade

▲ 12th Grade



Graphs of Trends in Adolescent Drug Use

All of these figures are updated annually and publicly available at www.monitoringthefuture.org

Monitoring the Future relies on the voluntary participation of principals, parents, and students

If your school is selected for the 40 minute survey, please encourage school to participate!