

SUBSTANCE USE AMONG VIRGINIA MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

RESULTS FROM THE VIRGINIA YOUTH SURVEY – 2015

INTRODUCTION

Drug abuse most often begins in adolescence and young adulthood, when youth begin trying alcohol, tobacco, and illegal and prescription drugs.¹

Adolescents most frequently abuse alcohol, followed by marijuana and tobacco.² Repeated substance use can result in school failure, poor mental health, impaired memory, problems with family relationships and friendships, and increased overall risky behavior.¹

RESPONDENTS

A total of 2246 Virginia middle school students took the survey, most of whom (90%) were between the ages of 11 and 13 years old. Males (51%) and females (49%), as well as student grade levels were evenly distributed.

SUMMARY

For e-cigarettes and tobacco, students reported their use during the past 30 days (current use). For alcohol, marijuana, heroin, and prescription drugs students reported use over their entire lives.

E-cigarette & Tobacco Use

- Six percent of students currently use e-cigarettes.
- Two percent of students currently use cigarettes and 2% currently use smokeless tobacco.

Other Substance Use

Of the substances used over students' entire lives, alcohol was the most commonly used and heroin was the least commonly used (**fig. 1**).

- Almost 2 in 10 students (16%) had consumed alcohol.
- Less than 1 in 10 students (6%) had used marijuana.
- One percent of students had used heroin.
- Less than 1 in 10 students (7%) had taken a prescription drug without a doctor's prescription.

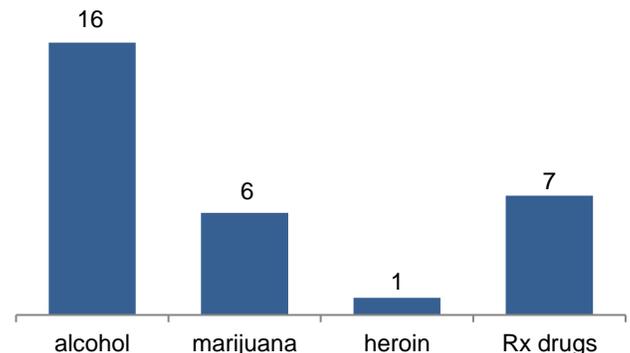


Figure 1: Percentage of students ever having used a substance.

Grades & Substance Use

Students were more likely to receive As and Bs in school if they had never consumed alcohol, used marijuana, used prescription drugs without a doctor’s prescription, or used heroin (fig. 2).

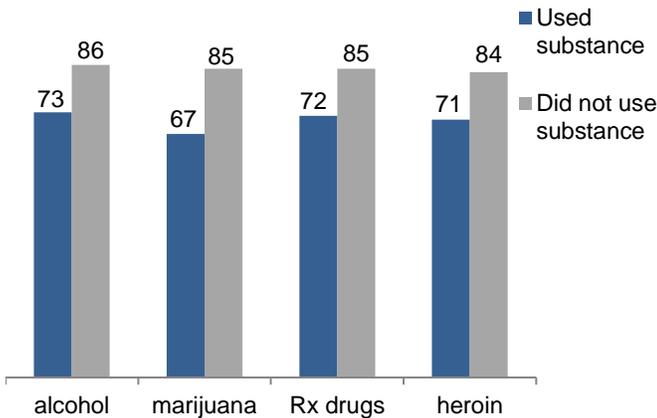


Figure 2: Percentage of students receiving mostly As and Bs by substance use.

Sad, Hopeless, or Anxious & Substance Use

Students were more likely to have ever felt sad, hopeless, or anxious if they had ever consumed alcohol (1.4 times as likely). Students were nearly equally as likely to have ever felt sad, hopeless, or anxious if they had ever used marijuana, used prescription drugs without a doctor’s prescription, or used heroin (fig. 3).

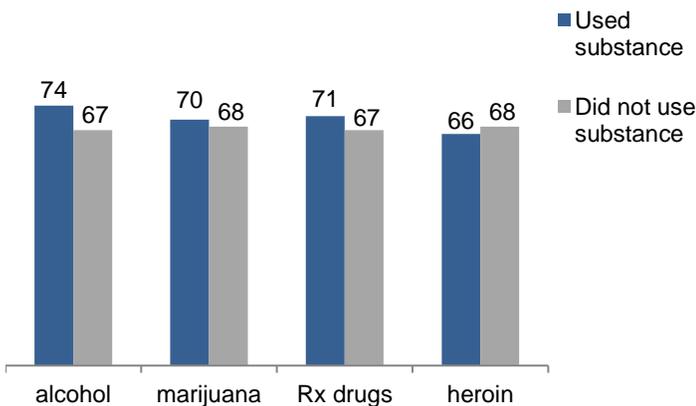


Figure 3: Percentage of students having ever felt sad, hopeless, or anxious by substance use.

Skipping School & Substance Use

Students were more likely to skip school if they had ever consumed alcohol (4 times as likely), used marijuana (6.5 times as likely), used prescription drugs without a doctor’s prescription (4.5 times as likely), or used heroin (6 times as likely) (fig. 4).

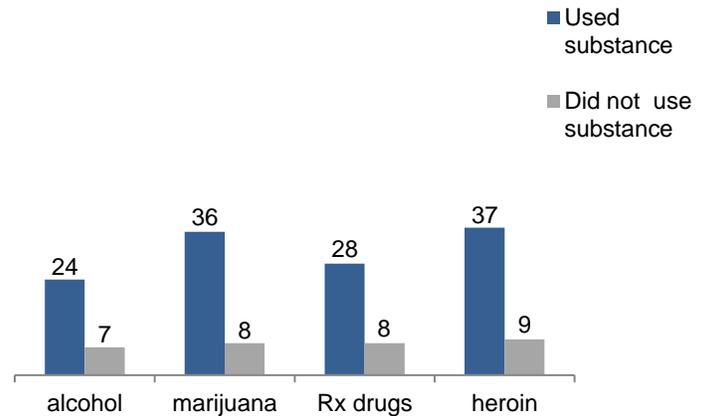


Figure 4: Percentage of students skipping school by substance use.

MORE INFORMATION

1. Principles of Adolescent Substance Use Disorder Treatment: A Research-Based Guide. (2014, January). Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/principles-adolescent-substance-use-disorder-treatment-research-based-guide/introduction>
2. Substance Abuse. (2016, September 23). Retrieved from <http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/adolescent-health-topics/substance-abuse/home.html#>

For more information, please visit <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/virginia-youth-survey/> or contact VYSrequest@vdh.virginia.gov