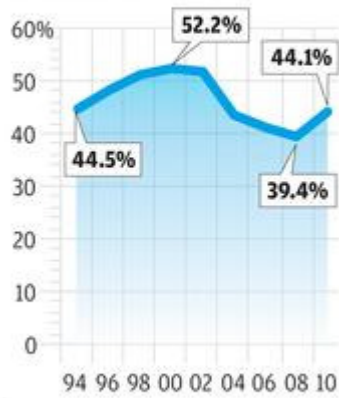


Drug abuse rising, teens tell survey

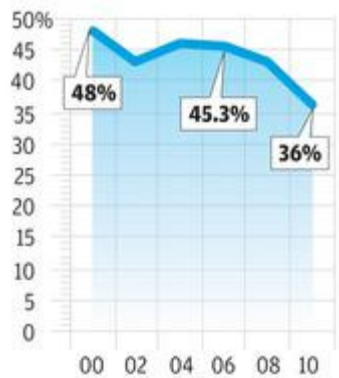
Dayton area 12th grade marijuana abuse (1994-2010)



Source: WSU Boonshoft School of Medicine STAFF

[ENLARGE PHOTO](#)

12th-graders who say marijuana does 'a lot' of harm (2000-2010)



Source: WSU Boonshoft School of Medicine STAFF

By [Ben Sutherly](#), Staff Writer Updated 10:39 AM Friday, September 10, 2010

DAYTON — Substance abuse among local high school students is rising, reversing a decline during much of the previous decade, according to a newly released Wright State University study.

The percentage of 12th graders who reported using marijuana at least once rose to 44.1 percent in 2010, up from 39.4 percent in 2008. That's the highest percentage since 2002, when 51.6 percent of 12th graders reported using the illegal drug at least once.

The drug survey's results mirrored those of several recent national studies. It's conducted every two years by the university's Center for Interventions, Treatment and Addictions Research in conjunction with area school districts. This spring, 16,307 students from 15 school districts in Montgomery, Greene and Warren counties volunteered for the anonymous survey. The respondents skewed white (82 percent) and suburban. Sixteen school districts declined to take part.

"There are schools that don't participate because of blowback in the community," said Russel Falck, CITAR associate director. Though drug usage typically occurs outside of school, schools often "wind up in a defensive posture," he said.

Among other findings

- 41.6 percent of high school seniors reported some level of cigarette use, up from 39.8 percent in 2008. Ohio ranks 45th among states in funding tobacco prevention efforts, down from 13th in 2007.

"Like it or not, money matters" when it comes to discouraging tobacco use, Falck said. Tobacco, like alcohol, is a gateway drug that can lead to other drug usage, he said.

- The percentage of seniors who reported ever being drunk on alcohol rose to 55.2 percent in 2010 from 54.3 percent in 2008.
- 17.5 percent of seniors did or do use substances in a manner that suggests drug dependence.
- About 1 in 5 students have never used alcohol, tobacco or other drugs by the time they leave high school, Falck said.

Use of prescription drugs, over-the-counter cough and cold preparations also was up. But reported use of crack cocaine, steroids, over-the-counter diet and stay-awake pills declined. Ecstasy and methamphetamine use among high school seniors was unchanged.

Students also perceive marijuana as less dangerous than in the past, perhaps in part because of its legalization for medical uses in other states, Falck said. When asked how much they felt people hurt themselves by using marijuana, the percentage of 12th graders responding "a lot" slipped from 48 percent in 2000 to 36 percent in 2010.