

# **Esperienze internazionali: Monitoring the future**

Indagine su abitudini e stili di vita degli studenti  
USA

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# The survey

- Monitoring the future (MTF) define itself as “*a continuing study of american youth*”
- Is conducted by the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research and is funding from the National Institute on Drug Abuse
- Is a comprehensive research project in several respects
- Surveys are conducted annually on an ongoing basis
- Samples are large and nationally representative and the subject matter is broad, encompassing some 1400 variables per year

# The survey

- Is designed to explore changes in many important values, behaviors, and lifestyle orientations of contemporary American youth
- The basic research design involves annual data collections from high school from 1975
- Each data collection takes place in approximately 130 public and private high schools

# The survey

- It excludes from target population those who drop out of high school before graduation (between 15% and 20% of each age cohort)
- This is not an unimportant segment: illicit drug use and delinquency tend to be higher than average in this group
- The omission of dropouts represents a problem only if different cohorts have considerably different proportions who drop out

# The sample

- About :
  - 46.000 students (8th, 10th, 12th grade)
  - 386 schools (20% private, 80% public)
  - 48 states
- The response rate is more than 80% (completed questionnaires are obtained from three-fourths to four-fifths of all students sampled)

# The questionnaire

- Drug use and related attitudes receive the most extensive coverage
- The questionnaires also deal with a wide range of other subject areas (education, work and leisure, sex roles and family, religion, politic, race relation ecc.)

# Recent trends

- Gradual decline in their use of certain drugs (amphetamines, methamphetamine, crystal methamphetamine, cocaine, and crack)
- The use of methamphetamine is now down by about two thirds among teens since 1999, when its use was first measured

# Recent trends

- In the last year, there were very poor changes
- Other drugs monitored did not show evidence of further decline in 2008, but several of them have shown declines in the recent past (2005-2007)



# Declining drugs

- Amphetamine annual prevalence has fallen by about one half from its mid-1990's peak
- Methamphetamine has been in decline from 1999 (now 1.2-1.5%)
- Crystal methamphetamine had an annual prevalence of 1.1 % in 2008. This is down by about two thirds from the 2002 level of 3%

# Declining drugs

- Cocaine has declined after his peak (late 90's) and then held steady. Today's annual prevalence rates:
  - 1.8% (8th grade)
  - 3% (10th grade)
  - 4.4% (12th grade)
- The same for crack. Today's annual prevalence rates are from 1.1% and 1.6%

# Drugs holding steady

- Any illicit drug, any illicit drug other than marijuana, inhalants, hallucinogens, PCP, ecstasy (MDMA), sedatives, heroin, other narcotics

# Increasing drugs

- Marijuana use has been in decline since 1996 in the case of 8<sup>th</sup> graders, and since about 2001 in the upper grades
- In 2008 this decline seems be ending. The 8th and 12th grades showed modest increases of 0.6 and 0.7 percentage points, respectively
- Global illicit drug use index rose for the high incidence of marijuana

# Implications

- The divergence in historical trajectories illustrates that the determinants of use are often specific to each drug
- Supposed “benefits” of using a drug usually spreads much faster than information about the adverse consequences
- A new drug has a considerable grace period during which its benefits are alleged and its consequences are not yet known
- Prevention must occur drug by drug (people not generalize the adverse consequences of one drug to the use of others)

# Gender

- Males have higher rates of illicit drug use than females
- Usage rates for the various substances tend to move in parallel across time for both genders
- In 2002 girls overtook the boys in heavy drinking rates and have had higher rates since then (30-day prevalence of alcohol use at 8th grade)

# Population density

- There have not been very large or consistent differences associated with population density
- Crack and heroin use generally have not been concentrated in urban areas, as is commonly believed
- Drug is ubiquitous

# Socioeconomic level

- For many drugs the differences in use by socioeconomic class are very small
- Only for cocaine the use was positively associated with socioeconomic level in the early 1980s
- With the advent of crack, cheaper than cocaine, that association nearly disappeared by 1986



# Race (Whites, African Americans and Hispanics)

- African-American have lower rates of use of most drugs than do Whites
- Hispanic tend to fall between the other two groups in 12<sup>th</sup> (closer to the Whites)
- Hispanics do have the highest reported rates of use for some drugs in 12th grade (crack, heroin taken with a needle, and crystal meth-amphetamine)

# Hispanics

- In 8th grade, they tend to come out highest of the three racial/ethnic groups on nearly all drugs
- A possible explanation for this change between 8th and 12th may lie in the considerably higher school dropout rates of Hispanic youth.

# When (if ever) did you **FIRST** try marijuana or hashish?

<i>Grade</i>	<i>%</i>
6	1.9
7	3.2
8	6.1
9	8.7
10	7.9
11	6.1
12	4.1
NEVER	50.8
Missing	11.2

# On how many occasion have you used:

