

A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

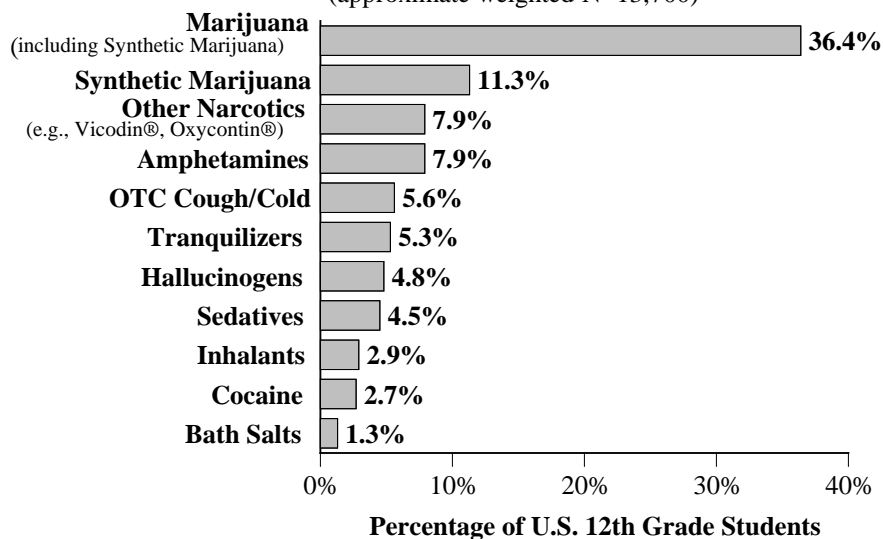
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## *One in Nine U.S. High School Seniors Report Using Synthetic Marijuana in the Past Year*

Marijuana and synthetic marijuana are the most prevalent illicit drugs used by 12<sup>th</sup> graders, according to data from the most recent national Monitoring the Future (MTF) survey. Slightly more than one-third (36.4%) of high school seniors reported using marijuana in the past year, including 11.3% who reported using synthetic marijuana, compared with less than 8% for all other illicit drugs (see figure below). These estimates of synthetic marijuana use among U.S. high school students are nearly identical to those found by another 2012 survey of high school students (see *CESAR FAX*, Volume 22, Issue 17). The MTF survey also found that approximately one-fourth (24%) of 12<sup>th</sup> graders perceive a great risk for harm in trying synthetic marijuana once or twice, and one-third (33%) think there is a great risk for harm in using the drug occasionally, compared to 15% and 21%, respectively, for marijuana. Previous research on high school students has shown that students' perceived risk is related to their likelihood of using a drug (see *CESAR FAX*, Volume 20, Issue 3).

### Percentage of U.S. 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Students Reporting Past Year Use of Drugs\* Other Than Alcohol and Tobacco, 2012

(approximate weighted N=13,700)



\*Amphetamines include Adderall® (7.6%), Ritalin® (2.6%), methamphetamine (1.1%), and crystal methamphetamine (0.8%). Hallucinogens include salvia (4.4%), ecstasy (3.8%), LSD (2.4%), and PCP (0.9%). Other narcotic drugs used nonmedically include Vicodin® (7.5%) and Oxycontin® (4.3%). Drugs with less than 2% prevalence were ketamine (1.5%), GHB (1.4%), Rohypnol® (1.5%), steroids (1.3%), and heroin (0.8%). Amphetamines, sedatives, tranquilizers, and other narcotics include only use “. . . on your own—that is, without a doctor telling you to take them.” OTC Cough/Cold refers to use for the explicit purpose of getting high.

NOTE: Youth who report using synthetic marijuana likely have no idea what specific synthetic cannabinoid they are using or what the effects will be, especially since the types and amounts of synthetic cannabinoids can vary greatly between products, lots, and even within the same package.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from National Institute of Drug Abuse, *Monitoring the Future: National Results on Adolescent Drug Use, 1975-2012, Volume I: Secondary School Students*, 2013. Available online at [http://www.monitoringthefuture.org/pubs/monographs/mtf-vol1\\_2012.pdf](http://www.monitoringthefuture.org/pubs/monographs/mtf-vol1_2012.pdf).

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