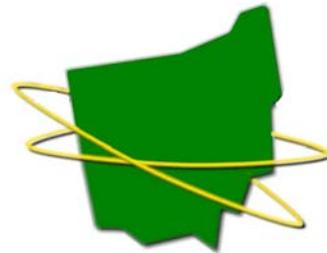




# OSAM-O-GRAM



DATE: May 2003

DATELINE: Ohio

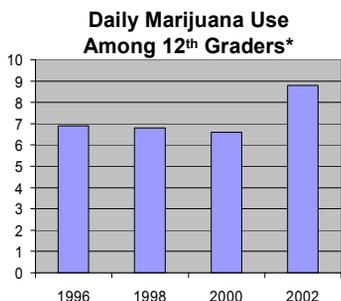
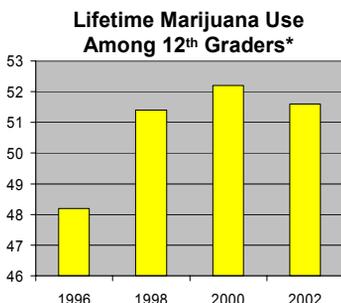
Wright State University  
The University of Akron

## Continued Increases in Juvenile Marijuana Use

The OSAM Network continues to report significant increases in marijuana use among adolescents across the state, and marijuana remains the leading cause of drug treatment admissions for juveniles. Young people continue to perceive smoking marijuana as safe and socially acceptable, creating a challenge for treatment providers and juvenile probation officers. According to one treatment provider from the Akron-Canton area:

*Marijuana is so much a part of the social fabric [today], that its use is not seen as a deviant behavior. [Smokers believe], 'Everyone is using it....' They have a hard time connecting marijuana use with addiction. They are not aware that they even could be addicted.*

Marijuana using juveniles feel superior to those who additionally abuse other drugs such as crack cocaine—not even perceiving marijuana as a drug. They deny their use is problematic, and they are typically resistant to substance abuse treatment. As recent as one year ago, Dayton juvenile probation officers reported that their young clients would abstain from marijuana use while on probation in order to comply with the court. However, during this reporting period, Dayton probation officers stated that some of their young clients no longer stop smoking marijuana while on probation—some testing positive for marijuana on a regular basis.



\*Dayton Area Drug Survey (DADS).

Reports from users and front-line professionals are corroborated by the *Dayton Area Drug Survey (DADS)*, a biennial study of self-reported drug use conducted mostly among suburban schools in the Dayton area. According to the survey, in 2002 slightly more than 50% of 2,406 12<sup>th</sup> graders reported using marijuana at least once in their lifetimes. In comparison, 47.8% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders participating in the national Monitoring the Future study reported lifetime use of marijuana.

Even though the rate of lifetime marijuana users has stayed relatively consistent for the last four years, the DADS survey indicates that the prevalence of *daily* marijuana smokers may be increasing among these same 12<sup>th</sup> graders. After remaining stable between 6.6% and 6.9% since 1996, the percentage of 12<sup>th</sup> graders reporting daily marijuana use increased to 8.8% and is more common than reported daily alcohol use (4.0%).

Increasing rates of heavy marijuana use among adolescents, coupled with reported higher potency of marijuana available today and a general belief that marijuana use is safe and socially acceptable, signals a disturbing trend that warrants continued monitoring. Enhanced drug prevention programs that can address the widespread acceptance of this potentially risky behavior need to be developed and evaluated.

OSAM-O-GRAMS report key findings of the Ohio Substance Abuse Monitoring (OSAM) Network. Informants located throughout the state use qualitative and quantitative data to provide semiannual monitoring of substance abuse trends. The OSAM Network is funded by the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services by contract to Wright State University and by subcontract to the University of Akron. This OSAM-O-GRAM is based on the January 2003 OSAM Network meeting.

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