

MISSOURI COLLEGE STUDENTS & ILLEGAL DRUG USE

The following data is taken from the Missouri College Health Behavior Survey (MCHBS), an annual survey implemented at 21 college and universities in Missouri. The MCHBS covers a variety of topics, including asking students about frequency of illegal substance use. The table below provides reported use rates of the most commonly used illegal drugs by Missouri's college students.

Reported Past Year Use of Illicit and Illegal Substances

SUBSTANCE	Did not use	1-6 times per year	1-2 times per month	1-2 times per week	3 or more times per week
Bath Salts*	99.0%	0.6%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%
K2**	96.8%	2.5%	0.4%	0.2%	0.2%
Cocaine	97.6%	2.0%	0.3%	0.1%	0.1%
Methamphetamine	99.2%	0.5%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Inhalants	99.8%	0.8%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%
Club Drugs***	97.2%	2.3%	0.3%	0.1%	0.2%

Bath Salts** is the "street name" for a family of designer drugs which have effects similar to amphetamines. Their white crystals resemble legal bath salts, but are chemically different from actual bath salts. *K2** is the informal name for synthetic cannabis, a psychoactive designer drug derived from natural herbs sprayed with synthetic chemicals that, when consumed, allegedly mimic the effects of marijuana. ***Students were asked if they used any "**Club drugs**" within the past year. Specific examples provided included ecstasy and MDMA.

DISCUSSION

In an attempt to keep the survey to a reasonable length, students were asked about using different illegal substances in different years. In 2011 cocaine, methamphetamines and inhalants were assessed. K2 and Bath Salts were addressed in the 2012 survey.

Students were asked: "In the past year, how often have you used the following drugs?" The data indicates that a small percentage of students use illegal substances. Based on the survey, 96% of students report not using any of these substances. The most frequently used illicit drugs were K2, club drugs and cocaine. None of these substances were reported to be used by more than 3% of the students in the past year.

Negative Consequences and Illegal Substance Use

Negative consequences as a result of alcohol use were compared among students who did and did not report illegal drug use. These consequences included experiencing hangovers, committing policy violations, being hurt or injured, needing medical attention, drinking and driving, sexual assault, poor academic performance, missing class or blacking out. When comparing students who report any illegal drug use to those who do not, illegal drug users were more likely to experience negative consequences.

CONSEQUENCE	No Illegal Substance Use	Reported Illegal Substance Use
Drove under Influence (of alcohol)	3%	17%
Rode with Someone under the Influence (of alcohol)	3%	17%
Blackout	3%	22%
Risky Sexual Behavior	3%	30%
Reported any negative consequences due to alcohol use	4%	14%

SUMMARY

The majority of students are making healthy and safe choices; however, concern is still warranted. A small percentage of students use potentially dangerous and illegal substances. This use is associated with much higher levels of negative consequences. Future implementations of the Missouri College Health Behavior Survey will continue to monitor these trends.

Report prepared by Dan Reilly, Partners in Prevention Research and Evaluation Staff

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