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Last modified: Wednesday, September 8, 2010

Youth drug use in Indiana: Annual survey finds increasing use of marijuana, tobacco in pipes



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sept. 8, 2010

BLOOMINGTON, Ind. -- Cigarette use by Indiana sixth through 12th graders continued to decline, but findings from the 20th Annual Survey of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Use also pointed to increases in marijuana use and in tobacco use in pipes.

The survey, conducted by the Indiana Prevention Resource Center at Indiana University Bloomington and funded by the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration's Division of Mental Health and Addiction, questioned 169,059 students in 523 public and private schools. Researchers found that the reported use of marijuana is on the rise among grades seven through 12.

"We are seeing a trend in increased marijuana use. The numbers have been increasing since 2008. This may be signaling a lack of concern about the use of this drug, which is illegal in the state of Indiana," said Ruth Gassman, director of the IPRC, which is part of IU's School of Health, Physical Education and Recreation. "Marijuana has been shown to impair a person's ability to learn and concentrate, and it reduces short-term memory. Marijuana use also increases heart rate and affects your ability to drive."



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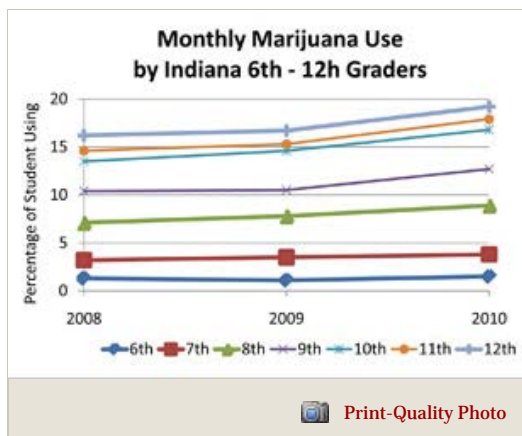
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Tobacco: Lifetime use of cigarettes drops, lifetime use in pipes increases

The survey showed that lifetime use of cigarettes by sixth through 12th graders has decreased since 2009. The largest decrease was found among 12th graders, who

registered a drop of 3.2 percentage points from last year.

"This is good news for Indiana as it shows that tobacco prevention efforts in our state including those by the Indiana Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Agency (ITPC) and the Tobacco Retailer Inspection Program (TRIP) are working," Gassman said.

An upward trend in monthly and lifetime use of tobacco in pipes was found among youth in grades six through 12. Notable increases include an increase from 2.5 percent in 2006 to 5.2 percent in 2010 for monthly use and an increase from 6.0 percent in 2006 to 11.1 percent in 2010 for lifetime use.

"It's important that states monitor various forms of tobacco intake because pipe use likely is not just a trend in Indiana," Gassman said. "It should be monitored due to the risk of serious health consequences such as the potential to develop heart and gum disease as well as lung cancer."

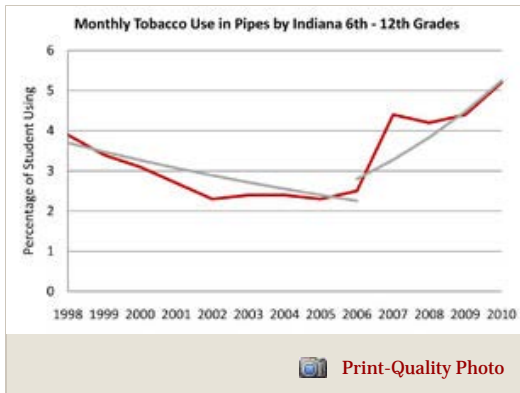
	2009	2010	Change
6th	8.9	8.1	-0.8
7th	16.1	13.9	-2.2
8th	25.0	22.4	-2.6
9th	31.1	28.6	-2.5
10th	37.6	34.8	-2.8
11th	42.0	39.8	-2.2
12th	46.9	43.7	-3.2

Tobacco companies continually market and develop new products, which should be carefully monitored in order to detect trends among adolescents. Gassman said this information can be used to inform prevention programs.

Access to gateway drugs matters

Another important finding from the survey shows that youth perceptions of easy access to alcohol, cigarettes and marijuana -- also known as gateway

drugs or drugs of first use -- are associated with an increase in their monthly use rates.



"Adults and family members can do a lot to prevent youth from accessing these drugs," Gassman said. "If alcohol and cigarettes are present in the home, these need to be kept away from youth. The number one way that parents or adults in a household can prevent

alcohol, tobacco and marijuana use by children and adolescents is to not use it themselves."

The IPRC makes the survey results available to local and state agencies for use in planning prevention initiatives with respect to alcohol, tobacco and other drugs (ATOD) and gambling behaviors.

"Our survey data provides communities with valuable prevention program planning tools. Annual survey results are vital for funding community prevention initiatives due to private and federal grant data requirements" Gassman said.

The full report is available online at:

http://www.drugs.indiana.edu/publications/survey/indianaSurvey_2010.pdf.

Gassman can be reached at 812-855-1237 or rgassman@indiana.edu.

About the IPRC

The IPRC is operated by the School of HPER and its Department of Applied Health Science. It also is affiliated with the Department of Applied Health Sciences Institute for Drug Abuse Prevention. The IPRC is funded, in part, by the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration, Division of Mental Health and Addiction, and financially supported through the HHS /Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant.

