

# The OAS Report

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## A Day in the Life of American Adolescents: Substance Use Facts

In the United States in 2006, one third of adolescents aged 12 to 17 drank alcohol in the past year, one fifth used an illicit drug, and one sixth smoked

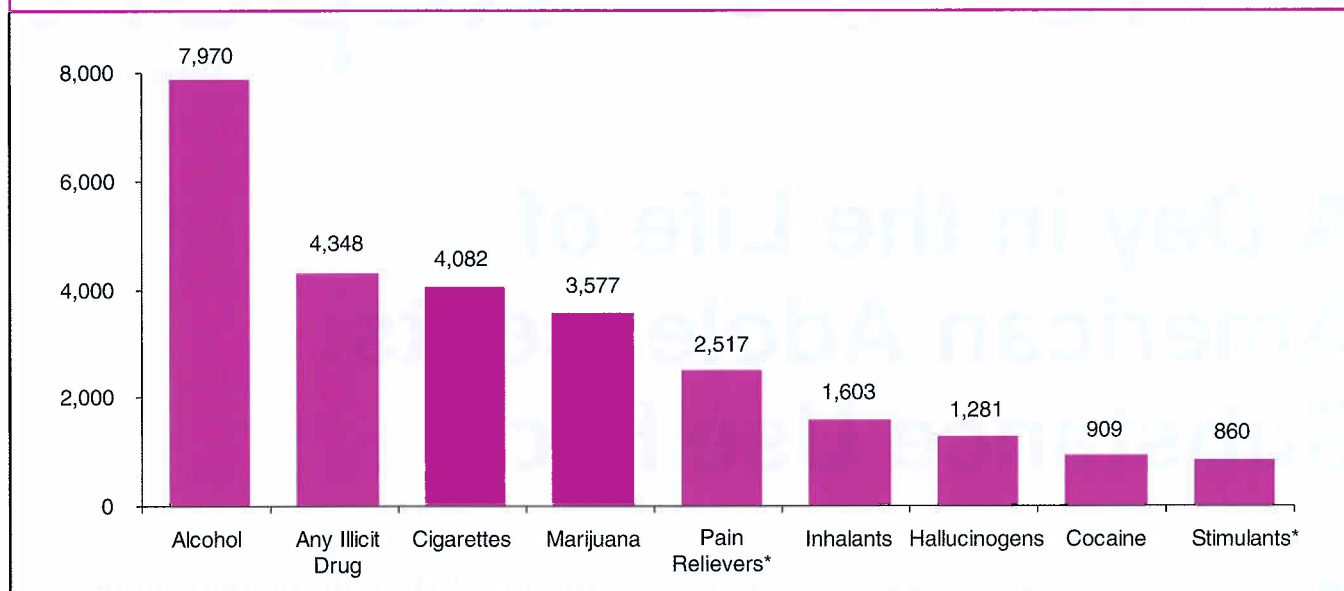
cigarettes.<sup>1</sup> Although the percentage of adolescents using alcohol and drugs declined between 2002 and 2006, the percentage of persons aged 12 to 17 receiving substance abuse treatment has remained relatively stable.<sup>2,3</sup> In 2005, 7.7 percent of all persons admitted to publicly funded treatment facilities were aged 12 to 17.<sup>4</sup>

The Office of Applied Studies (OAS) in the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) collects, analyzes, and disseminates critical public health data. OAS manages three national data collections that offer insight into adolescent substance use and treatment: the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), the Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS), and the National Survey of Substance Abuse Treatment Services (N-SSATS).<sup>5-8</sup>

### In Brief

- This issue of *The OAS Report* presents facts about adolescent substance use, including information on the initiation of substance use, past year substance use, and receipt of substance use treatment. The data presented in this report are from the 2006 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), the 2005 Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS), and the 2005 National Survey of Substance Abuse Treatment Services (N-SSATS).

**Figure 1. Number of Adolescents Aged 12 to 17 Who Used Cigarettes, Alcohol, or Illicit Drugs for the First Time on an Average Day: 2006 NSDUH**



Source: SAMHSA, 2006 NSDUH.

This issue of *The OAS Report* presents facts about adolescent substance use, including initiation, and receipt of treatment for substance use “on an average day.”<sup>9</sup> Data presented in this report from the 2006 NSDUH and the 2005 TEDS are for adolescents aged 12 to 17; data presented from the 2005 N-SSATS are for youth under 18.

### First Substance Use

According to the 2006 NSDUH, 10.6 percent of adolescents aged 12 to 17 drank alcohol for the first time in the past year, and 5.8 percent used an illicit drug<sup>10</sup> for the first time. The 2006 NSDUH also indicates that on an average day during the past year, adolescents aged 12 to 17 used the following substances for the first time (Figure 1):

- 7,970 drank alcohol for the first time;
- 4,348 used an illicit drug for the first time;
- 4,082 smoked cigarettes for the first time;
- 3,577 used marijuana for the first time;

- 2,517 used pain relievers nonmedically for the first time;
- 1,603 used inhalants for the first time;
- 1,281 used hallucinogens for the first time;
- 909 used cocaine for the first time;
- 860 used stimulants nonmedically for the first time;
- 236 used methamphetamine for the first time; and
- 86 used heroin for the first time.

### Cigarette, Alcohol, and Illicit Drug Use

According to the 2006 NSDUH, more than 8 million adolescents aged 12 to 17 drank alcohol in the past year, nearly 5 million used an illicit drug, and more than 4 million smoked cigarettes. In addition, on an average day during the past year, adolescents aged 12 to 17 used the following substances (Figure 2):

- 1,245,240 smoked cigarettes;
- 630,539 drank alcohol;

- 586,454 used marijuana;
- 49,263 used inhalants;
- 26,645 used hallucinogens;
- 13,125 used cocaine; and
- 3,753 used heroin.

The 2006 NSDUH also indicates that:

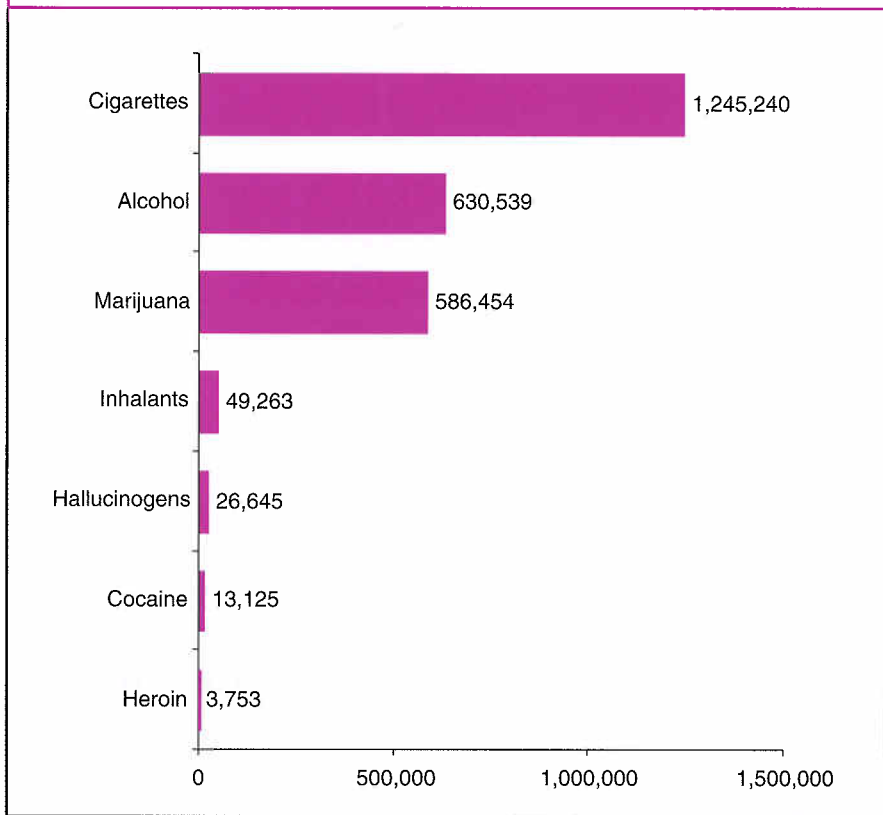
- adolescents who used alcohol in the past month drank an average of 4.7 drinks per day on the days they drank; and
- adolescents who smoked cigarettes in the past month smoked an average of 4.6 cigarettes per day on the days they smoked.

### Substance Abuse Treatment

TEDS reported that in 2005 there were 142,646 admissions for adolescents aged 12 to 17 to substance abuse treatment programs (TEDS data come primarily from facilities that receive some public funding). TEDS also indicates that on an average day in 2005, adolescent admissions to treatment presented with the following substances as the primary substance of abuse<sup>11</sup> (Figure 3):

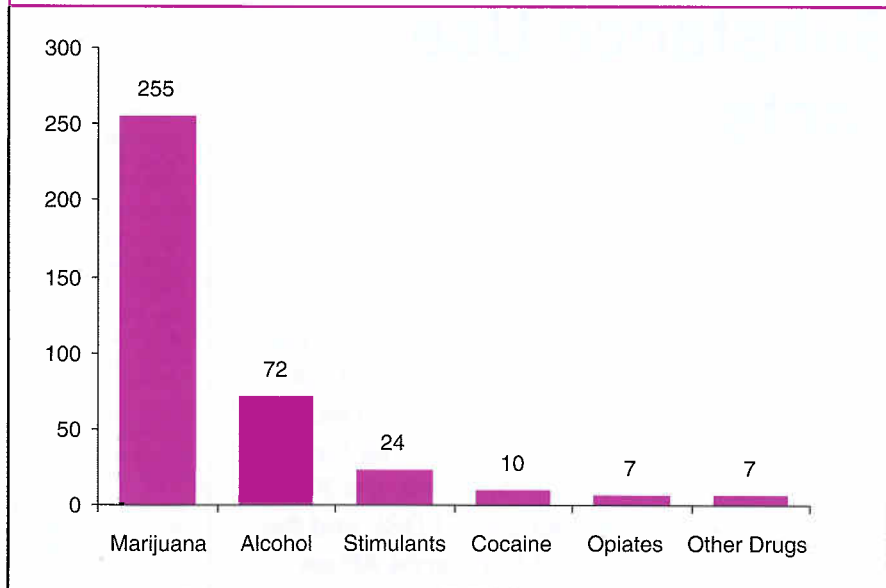
- 255 with marijuana;
- 72 with alcohol;
- 24 with stimulants;
- 10 with cocaine;
- 7 with opiates; and
- 7 with other drugs.

**Figure 2. Number of Adolescents Aged 12 to 17 Who Used Cigarettes, Alcohol, or Illicit Drugs on an Average Day: 2006 NSDUH**



Source: SAMHSA, 2006 NSDUH.

**Figure 3. Number of Adolescents Aged 12 to 17 Admitted to Publicly Funded Substance Abuse Treatment Facilities on an Average Day, by Primary Substance of Abuse: 2005 TEDS**



Source: SAMHSA, 2005 TEDS.

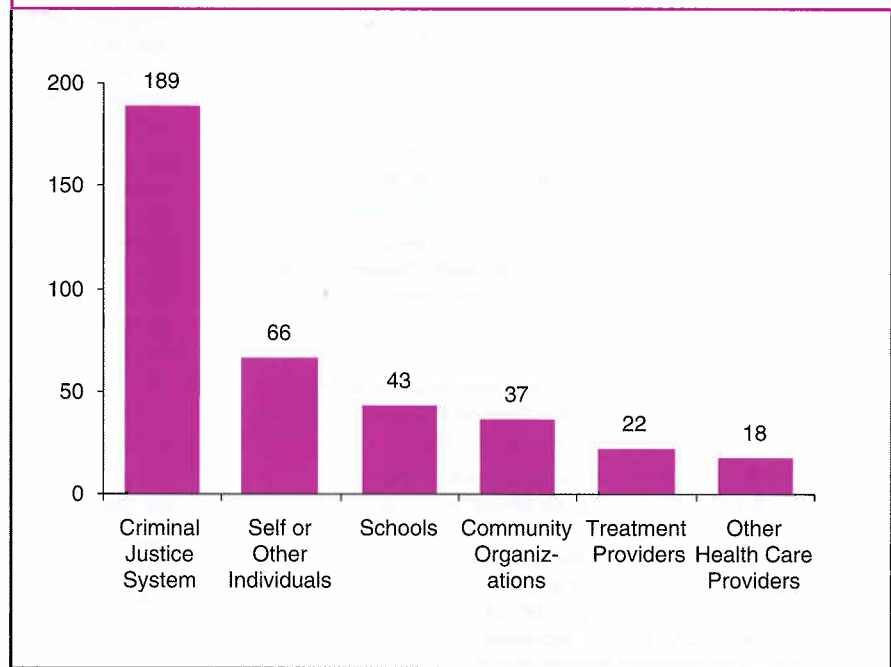
The 2005 TEDS also indicates that on an average day in 2005, the number of adolescent admissions to substance abuse treatment were referred by the following sources<sup>12</sup> (Figure 4):

- 189 by the criminal justice system;
- 66 by self-referral or referral from other individuals;
- 43 by schools;
- 37 by community organizations;
- 22 by alcohol or drug treatment providers; and
- 18 by other health care providers.

In addition, N-SSATS, which collects information on substance abuse treatment at both publicly and privately funded facilities, reports how many active clients<sup>13</sup> under the age of 18 received the following types of substance abuse treatment on an average day in 2005 (Figure 5):

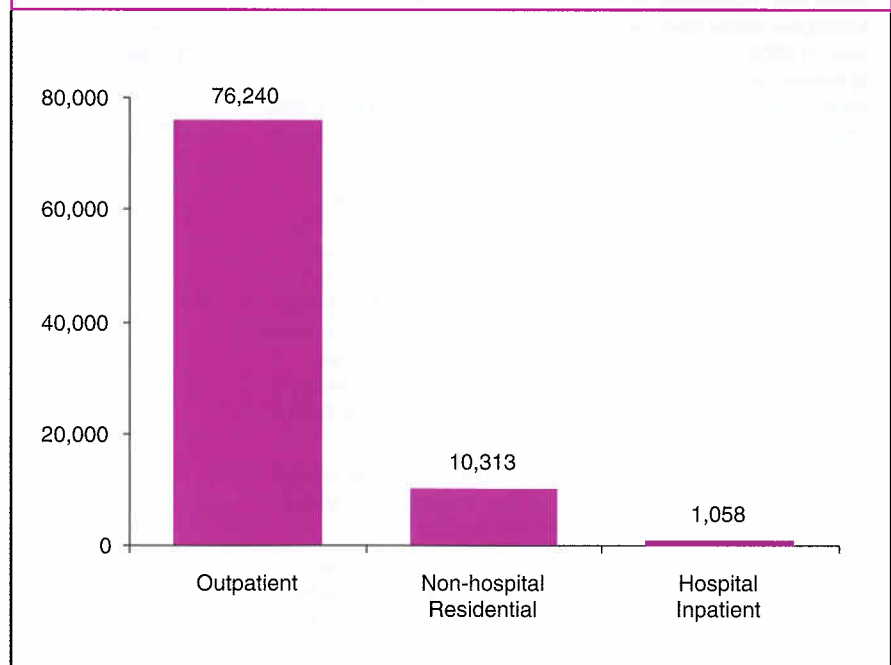
- 76,240 were clients in outpatient treatment;
- 10,313 were clients in non-hospital residential treatment; and
- 1,058 were clients in hospital inpatient treatment.

**Figure 4. Number of Substance Abuse Treatment Admissions among Adolescents Aged 12 to 17 on an Average Day, by Principal Source of Referral: 2005 TEDS**



Source: SAMHSA, 2005 TEDS.

**Figure 5. Number of Adolescents Under Age 18 Who Were Clients in Publicly or Privately Funded Substance Abuse Treatment Facilities on an Average Day, by Service Type: 2005 N-SSATS**



Source: SAMHSA, 2005 N-SSATS.

