Background
There are many factors associated with marijuana and other drug use among youth such as perceptions of risk, history of violence and other substance use, increased stressors and demands of adolescence, as well as family and social influences. In 2015, the Vermont high school youth risk behavior survey (YRBS) asked students about marijuana use, including frequency of use as well as perceptions about marijuana.

Marijuana Use
Overall, 37% of high school students reported ever using marijuana in 2015. By the time they graduate, nearly half of all students (49%) have tried marijuana.

In the last 30 days, 22% of students reported marijuana use. Among students using marijuana in the past 30 days, nearly a third reported using it rarely (1-2 times), 37% used it occasionally (3-19 times), while another third reported frequent use (20+ times).

Other Substance Use
As frequency of recent marijuana use increases, use of other substances also increases. Students who use marijuana more often are more likely to have ever misused a prescription drug, binge drank in the last month, or to currently use tobacco products (including e-cigarettes).

Mental Health and Other Risk Behaviors
As marijuana use increases among high school students, indicators of suicidality and feelings of hopelessness also increase. This includes feeling so sad or hopeless for two or more weeks in a row that they stopped doing some usual activities, making a suicide plan in the past year (data not shown), and attempting suicide in the last 12 months.

Likewise, participation in other risk behaviors such as bullying and risky sex also increase as the frequency of marijuana use increases. Students who frequently use marijuana are more likely than those with less frequent use to be bullied or to have bullied someone else. Frequent marijuana users are also more likely to have had sex with four or more people in their lifetime or to have used drugs or alcohol before their last sexual intercourse.
Perceptions of Marijuana Use
As marijuana use increases, student perceptions of marijuana use as wrong or risky decreases. Students who frequently use marijuana are less likely than those with less frequent use to think their parents or someone their age feel it would be wrong for them to use marijuana. Frequent marijuana users are also less likely to believe they risk harming themselves by regularly using marijuana.

Youth Assets
As marijuana use increases, perceptions about one's school and community, after school involvement and grades tend to decrease. Students who use marijuana more often are less likely to think their teachers really care about them, that they matter in their community, or to get mostly grades of A's and B's.

Selected Risk Behaviors, by Frequency of Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Felt sad or hopeless for 2+ weeks, past year</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted suicide, past year</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullied someone, past 30 days</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had sex with 4+ people, ever</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used alcohol or other drugs before last sex, past 30 days</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Perceptions of Use, by Frequency of Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Believe their parents/guardians feel it would be wrong or very wrong to use</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think it is wrong/very wrong for someone their age to use</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believe they risk harm if they regularly use</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student Assets, by Frequency of Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asset</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree teachers really care</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree you matter to community</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades mostly As and Bs</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


2 Interpreting the Data: These tables demonstrate the association between marijuana use and other behaviors. It is important to remember that YRBS data does not indicate causality as all data is collected at the same time. As a result, we cannot say that marijuana use causes a student to use other substances or experience other risky behaviors, only that there is a correlation between frequency of marijuana use and these behaviors and perceptions.

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