

Heroin Use on the Rise, Methamphetamine Use Decreases, National Survey Finds



A new national survey of drug use released recently finds heroin use is on the rise, while methamphetamine use is decreasing, Time.com reports.

The survey also found 5.3 percent of young adults used prescription drugs for nonmedical purposes in the past month, similar to rates in the previous two years. The survey found rates of teen drinking, including binge drinking, in the past month were lower last year compared with 2002 and 2009.

Prescription drug abuse rates among adults ages 18 to 25 were significantly lower last year than in 2009, when 6.4 percent of young adults used prescription drugs for nonmedical purposes, according to the 2012 National

Survey on Drug Use and Health, conducted by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

The survey found the number of Americans who said they used meth in 2012 fell to 440,000, from 731,000 in 2006. SAMHSA said the drop is most likely due to state laws restricting the sale of pseudoephedrine, a key ingredient of meth that is found in cold medicines such as Sudafed.

Marijuana is the most commonly used illicit drug, the survey found, with 7.3 percent of Americans saying they are current users. The number of people ages 12 and older who said they used heroin in the past year increased from 373,000 in 2007, to 669,000 in 2012.

Drug use is on the rise among people ages 50 to 64. The survey found 7.2 percent of people in this age group used illegal drugs last year, up from 3.4 percent a decade ago. Among adults ages 55 to 59, drug use rose from 1.9 percent to 6.6 percent from 2002 to 2012.

In 2012, more than half of Americans—52.1 percent—reported drinking alcohol, and almost one quarter—60 million people—reported binge drinking. The study also found fewer teens are smoking.

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