

Arizona Criminal Justice Commission



Arizona Youth Survey 2008 Prescription Drug Fact Sheet

Our mission is to sustain and enhance the coordination, cohesiveness, productivity and effectiveness of the criminal justice system in Arizona

August 2009

In the 2008 administration of the Arizona Youth Survey (AYS) three questions were used to capture lifetime and past 30-day use of prescription drugs. Specifically, youth were asked about lifetime and past 30-day use of prescription pain relievers, prescription sedatives, and prescription stimulants. These questions also allow for the creation of an overall prescription drug measure by capturing any type of prescription drug use. This method for measuring prescription drug abuse provides more specific information about the types of prescription drugs abused by youth than was captured in the 2006 AYS.

Table 1: Percentage of Arizona Students Reporting Substance Use in Their Lifetime, 2008

	8th Grade	10th Grade	12th Grade	Total
Alcohol	47.8	66.2	74.8	59.6
Cigarettes	25.9	39.9	50.8	36.0
Marijuana	16.2	32.5	43.1	27.4
Prescription Drugs	17.1	25.7	28.7	22.4
Prescription Pain Relievers	12.2	20.5	24.6	17.6
Prescription Sedatives	8.3	12.0	13.2	10.5
Prescription Stimulants	3.8	7.6	7.9	5.9
Inhalants	14.3	12.6	9.2	12.6
Over the Counter Drugs	9.7	12.9	13.4	11.5
Chewing Tobacco	7.1	12.9	17.7	11.3
Cocaine	2.7	6.8	11.2	5.9
Hallucinogens	1.9	5.2	7.9	4.3
Ecstasy	2.2	4.9	7.0	4.2
Methamphetamines	1.2	2.4	4.0	2.2
Steroids	1.7	2.3	2.4	2.0
Heroin	1.0	2.0	3.1	1.8

Prescription Drug Use by Arizona Youth

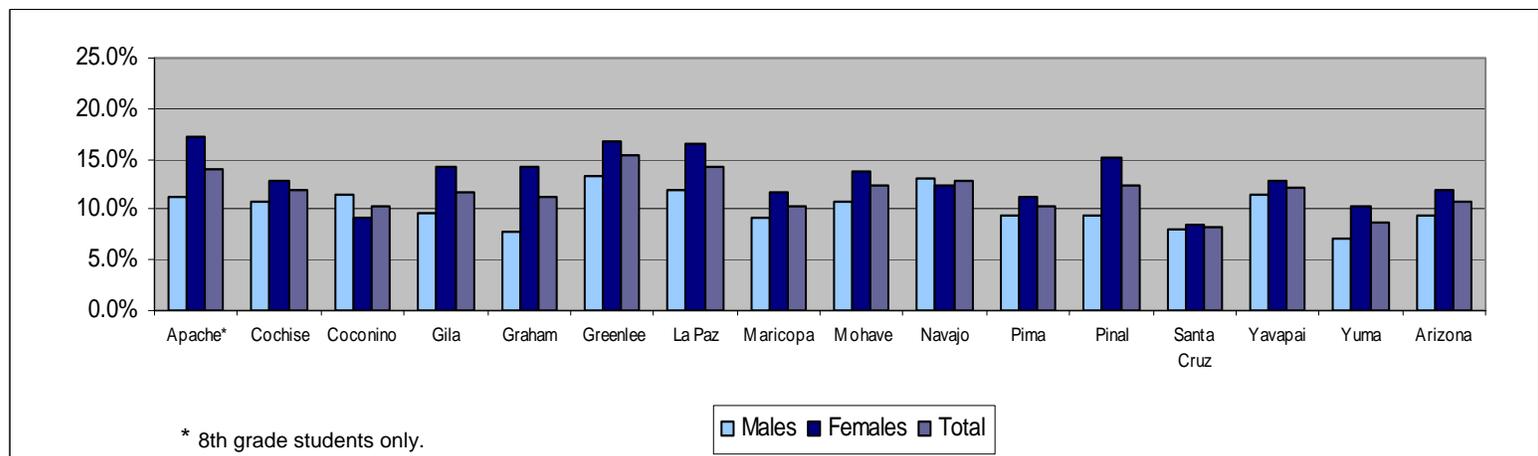
For both lifetime and past 30-day use, prescription drugs are abused by the fourth highest percentage of respondents, behind alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana. Among youth participating in the 2008 AYS, 22.4 percent reported abusing prescription drugs in their lifetime (Table 1) and 10.7 percent reported abusing prescription

Table 2: Percentage of Arizona Students Reporting Substance Use in the Past 30 Days, 2008

	8th Grade	10th Grade	12th Grade	Total
Alcohol	23.2	37.7	46.8	33.1
Cigarettes	8.7	16.6	23.9	14.7
Marijuana	7.6	15.1	18.7	12.5
Prescription Drugs	8.6	12.2	13.1	10.7
Prescription Pain Relievers	6.0	9.4	10.5	8.1
Prescription Sedatives	3.4	4.5	5.0	4.1
Prescription Stimulants	1.6	2.9	2.1	2.1
Over the Counter Drugs	5.6	6.4	5.9	5.9
Smokeless Tobacco	2.6	4.6	6.8	4.2
Inhalants	5.4	3.0	1.6	3.8
Cocaine	1.0	2.2	3.2	1.9
Hallucinogens	0.8	1.9	2.4	1.5
Ecstasy	0.8	1.5	2.0	1.3
Steroids	0.7	1.0	1.0	0.8
Methamphetamines	0.4	0.6	0.8	0.6
Heroin	0.4	0.7	1.0	0.6

drugs in the 30 days prior to taking the survey (Table 2). These percentages are significantly higher than what was reported by youth in the previous administration of the AYS. In 2006, 14.3 percent of youth reported abusing prescription drugs in their lifetime and 6.3 percent of youth reported abuse in the 30 days prior to taking the survey. Within the prescription drug category, prescription pain relievers are the highest abused prescription drug with 17.6 percent of youth reporting abuse in their lifetime and 8.1 percent of youth reporting abuse in the 30 days prior to taking the survey.

Chart 1: Percentage of Youth Reporting Prescription Drug Use by County and Gender, 2008



Prescription Drug Abuse by County and Gender

Of the 15 counties in Arizona, Greenlee (15.4%), La Paz (14.3%) and Apache (14.0%) have the highest rates of youth prescription drug abuse (Chart 1). The percentage of youth reporting prescription drug abuse in Apache County is particularly noteworthy because the Apache county sample only included 8th grade students while in all other counties 8th, 10th, and 12th graders participated. The lowest youth prescription drug abuse rates were in Santa Cruz (8.2%) and Yuma (8.7%) counties. Chart 1 also shows the gender differences in prescription drug abuse for each county and the state overall. In 13 of the 15 counties in Arizona, females reported abusing prescription drugs in the 30 days prior to taking the survey at a higher rate than males. Coconino County and Navajo County are the only counties where males reported abusing prescription drugs at a higher rate than females.

Table 3: Percentage of Students Reporting Other Substance Use

	Non-Prescription Drug Users	Past 30-day Prescription Drug Abuse
Past 30-day Alcohol Use	28.4	69.7
Past 30-day Cigarette Use	11.4	41.9
Past 30-day Chewing Tobacco Use	3.1	12.8
Past 30-day Marijuana Use	9.3	38.4
Past 30-day Inhalant Use	2.6	13.6
Past 30-day Hallucinogen Use	0.7	8.2
Past 30-day Cocaine Use	1.0	9.5
Past 30-day Ecstasy Use	0.5	7.7
Past 30-day Heroin Use	0.2	4.4
Past 30-day Methamphetamine Use	0.2	3.3
Past 30-day Steroid Use	0.5	3.9
Past 30-day Over the Counter Drug Use	3.4	26.3

Prescription Drug Abuse and Other Substance Use

Youth who reported prescription drug abuse reported much higher rates of other substance use than those youth who did not report abusing prescription drugs in the 30 days prior to taking the survey (Table 3). For example, 69.7 percent of youth who reported prescription drug abuse also reported alcohol use in the past 30 days, while only 28.4 percent of youth who did not abuse prescription drugs reported past 30-day alcohol use. This relationship holds true for all substance types reported in Table 3.

Prescription Drug Abuse and Antisocial Behavior

Youth who reported abusing prescription drugs in the past 30 days were also more likely to report antisocial behavior than youth who reported no prescription drug abuse. For example, 50.5 percent of youth who reported abusing prescription drugs also reported being drunk or high at school compared to 12.6 percent who reported no prescription drug abuse.

Prescription Drug Abuse and School Safety Issues

Similar to what is seen with other substance use and antisocial behavior, youth who report prescription drug abuse reported higher levels of school safety issues than those who have not abused prescription drugs (Table 4). Interestingly, this is true for both the threats to school safety (e.g., carried a weapon to school) and the victimization questions (e.g., being threatened at school or being bullied at school).

Chart 2: Percentage of Students Reporting Antisocial Behavior

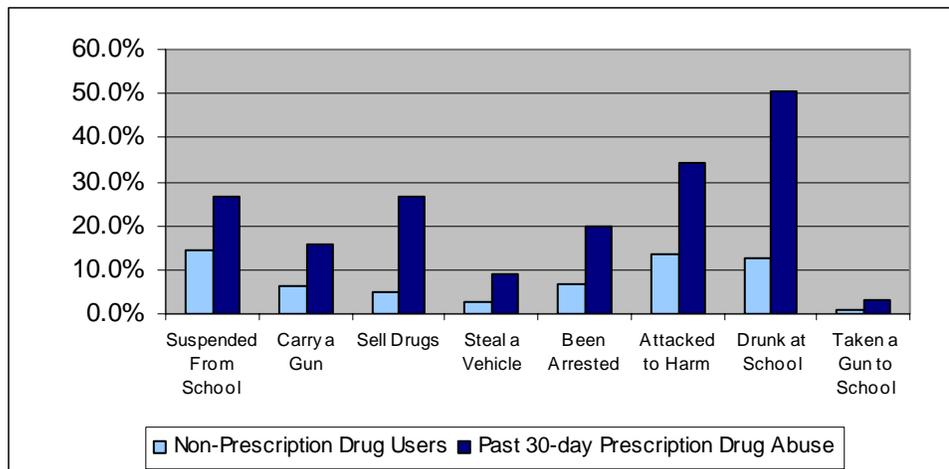


Table 4: Percentage of Students Reporting School Safety Issues

	Non-Prescription Drug Users	Past 30-day Prescription Drug Abuse
Threatened at School	9.8	21.9
Fight at School	15.6	29.3
Bullied at School	31.4	39.6
Felt Unsafe at or on the way to school	7.9	15.4
Carried a Weapon to School	4.8	15.1

This fact sheet was prepared by:
 Michelle Neitch, Research Analyst
 Arizona Criminal Justice Commission
 1110 W. Washington, Suite 230
 Phoenix, Arizona 85007
 (P) 602.364.1146