

Bachman, J. G., Johnston, L. D., & O'Malley, P. M. (1981). Smoking, drinking, and drug use among American high school students: Correlates and trends, 1975-1979. *American Journal of Public Health, 71*, 59-69.

## Abstract

This paper uses findings from five nationally representative surveys of high school seniors from 1975 to 1979 to examine the correlates of licit and illicit drug use, and to consider whether recent changes in youthful drug use are linked to any changes in the correlates. Male still exceed females in use of alcohol and marijuana, but no longer in cigarette smoking. Black seniors now report less drug use than Whites. Other dimensions of family background, region, and urbanicity show only modest associations with drug use. Above average drug use occurs among those less successful in adapting to the educational environment, as indicated by truancy and low grades; those who spend many evenings out for recreation; and those with heavy time commitments to a job and/or relatively high incomes. Drug use is below average among seniors with strong religious commitments and conservative political views. From 1975 through 1979, among seniors cigarette use peaked and subsequently declined, marijuana use rose and then leveled off, and the (still infrequent) use of cocaine rose rapidly. However, these shifts in drug use were not accompanied by substantial shifts in the above correlates of use. The findings suggest that the kinds of young people most at risk remain much the same, while the types and amounts of substances they use shift somewhat from year to year.