

Terry-McElrath, Y. M., O'Malley, P. M., & Johnston, L. D. (2008). Saying no to marijuana: Why American youth report quitting or abstaining. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, 69(6), 796–805.

Abstract

Objective: This article aims to contribute to the literature by reporting on a nationally representative study of U.S. youths regarding their self-reported reasons for abstaining from or quitting marijuana use and the relationships between such reasons and individual sociodemographic characteristics of gender and race/ethnicity.

Method: This article uses data from in-school surveys obtained from nationally representative cross-sectional samples of U.S. high school seniors from 1977 to 2005 ($N = 82,106$).

Results: Results indicate the following: (1) 50% of those reporting past-12-month marijuana use felt they should either stop or reduce their use; (2) among those saying they would not use marijuana in the coming year, the most frequently reported reasons cited were psychological and physical damage and not wanting to get high (reported by more than 60%), whereas the least frequently reported reasons included expense, concerns of having a bad trip, and availability (reported by fewer than 25%); and (3) clear differences existed in reported reasons by gender and race/ethnicity.

Conclusions: A significant percentage of U.S. high school seniors who are recent marijuana users wish to either reduce or stop their marijuana use and are basing such desires on a wide variety of reasons that show significant gender and racial/ethnic variation. Marijuana prevention and cessation policy and programming could potentially be strengthened by incorporating the findings from these analyses.