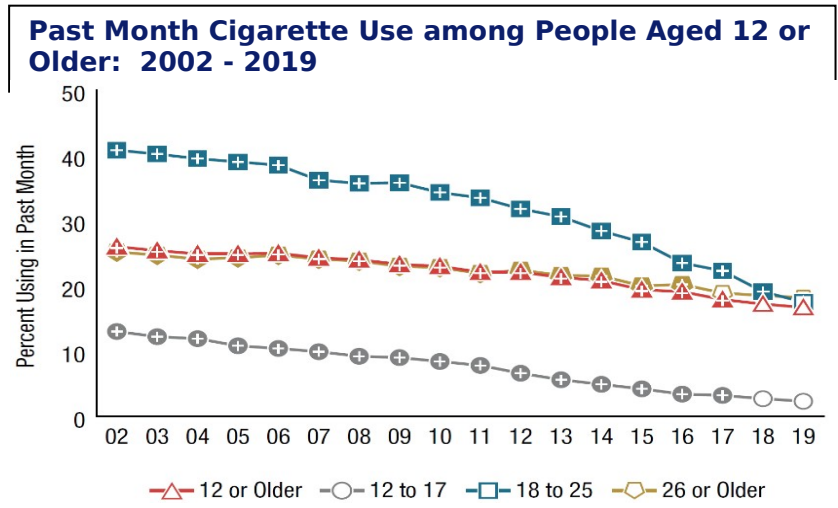


# Tobacco Use

An estimated 45.9 million Americans reported current use (during the past month) of cigarettes in 2019, which is approximately 1 in 6 people aged 12 and older. Of these, 26.8 million were daily cigarette smokers.

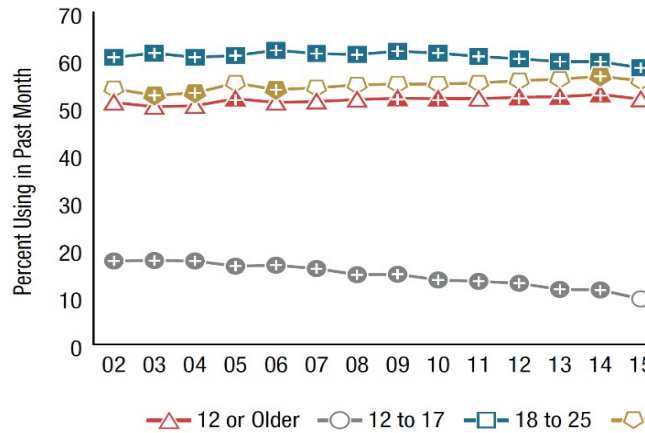
As shown in the graph to the right, cigarette use generally declined between 2002 and 2019 across all age groups.



+ Difference between this estimate and the 2019 estimate is statistically significant at the .05 level.

**Past Month Alcohol Use among People Aged 12 or Older: 2002 - 2019**

# Alcohol Use



Slightly more than half of all Americans aged 12 or older (50.8% or an estimated 139.7 million persons) were current drinkers in 2019, which is similar to the 139.8 million persons (51.1%) reported in 2018.

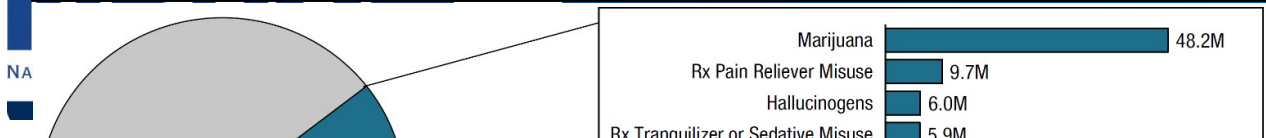
The graph on the left shows past month alcohol use by age group.

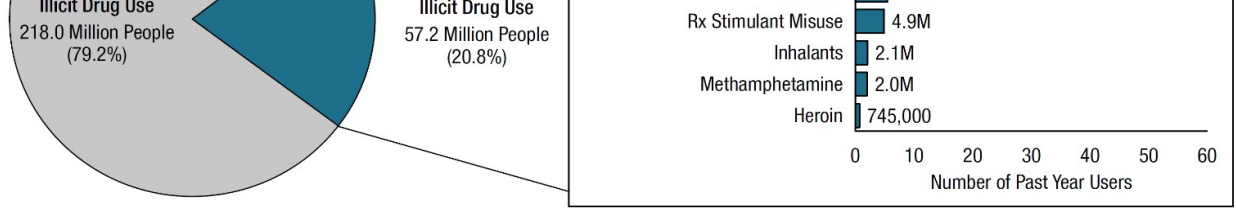
+ Difference between this estimate and the 2019 estimate is statistically significant at the .05 level.

# Illicit Drug Use

An estimated 57.2 million Americans were past year users of illicit drugs in 2019, meaning they used an illicit drug at least once during the year prior to the interview.

**Past Year Illicit Drug Use among People Aged 12 or Older: 2019**





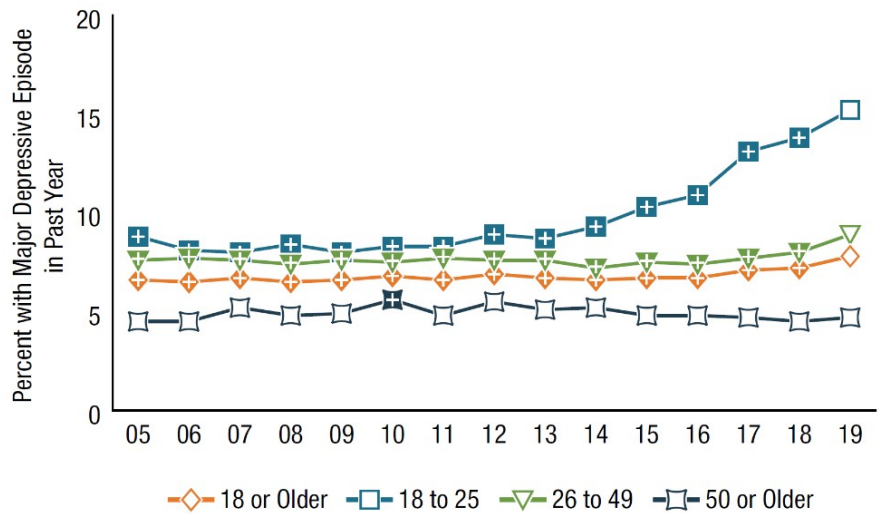
Note: The estimated numbers of past year users of different illicit drugs are not mutually exclusive because people could have used more than one type of illicit drug in the past year.

# Adult Mental Health

In 2019, an estimated 19.4 million adults, or 7.8% of the population aged 18 or older, had at least one major depressive episode (MDE) in the past 12 months.

Among adults, the percentage having MDE in the past year varied by age, as shown in the graph to the right.

**Major Depressive Episode in the Past Year among Adults Aged 18 or Older: 2005 -2019**

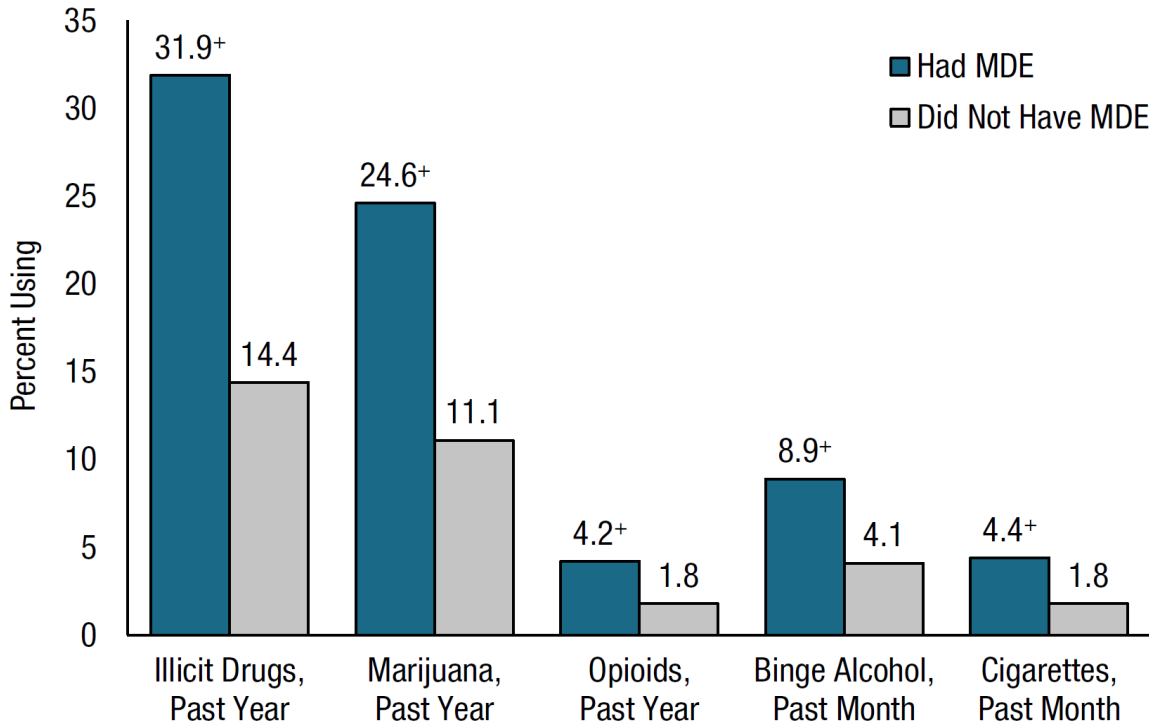


+ Difference between this estimate and the 2019 estimate is statistically significant at the .05 level.

# Youth Mental Health

Adolescents aged 12 to 17 with past year MDE were more likely than those without MDE to be substance users, as shown in the graph below. Youths with past year MDE were more likely to have used an illicit drug in the past year (31.9 vs. 14.4%).

**Substance Use among Youths Aged 12 to 17, by Past Year Major Depressive Episode (MDE) Status: 2019**



Difference between this estimate and the estimate for youths without MDE is statistically significant at the .05 level.  
 Note: Youth respondents with unknown MDE data were excluded.

Statistics and Quality, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Retrieved from <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/>

## Articles about the **National Survey on Drug Use and Health**

*From REUTERS.com, April 11, 2019 (online)*

### **Teen cigarette smoking declining more slowly in rural U.S.**

By SAUMYA JOSEPH

The odds of smoking for U.S. adolescents are 50 percent higher in rural areas than in urban areas, even as rates of teen smoking in both settings have fallen, a recent study found.

Using data from more than 95,600 adolescents who participated in the National Survey of Drug Use and Health, researchers analyzed smoking rates over two periods: 2008-2010 and 2014-2016. Fifteen percent of the youth lived in rural counties.

Teenage smoking in urban areas fell by half from the first period to the second, after accounting for socioeconomic factors such as gender, race, ethnicity and family income. But it only went down by a third in rural places.

“(This could mean) we’re going to have larger differences down the road with more people smoking in rural areas than urban areas, and it’s going to create a new public health problem that we haven’t really had before,” Noel Brewer of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, who was not involved in the study, told Reuters Health by phone.

It’s not clear from the study why more rural teens smoke. But earlier research has shown that rural youths have easier access to tobacco products, start smoking at younger ages and more often have family members who smoke at home.

“We can’t expect that the things we are doing in urban places (will) translate and work in rural communities,” lead study author Erika Ziller of the University of Southern Maine in Portland told Reuters Health by phone.

Efforts to reduce smoking “need to pay attention to the rural places as well and really understand how these policies or programs may work or not work as well in rural places,” she added.

Prevention efforts such as tobacco-free schools and workplaces, which have been implemented in many urban areas, are less common in rural places, Ziller and colleagues note in the American Journal of Public Health.

Rural attitudes on tobacco consumption may also affect prevention efforts, according to the study. For instance, the authors say, smoking among rural youth is often accepted and supported by adults, some of whom consider the habit a marker of social success.

From 2007 to 2014, cigarette smoking by U.S. adults also declined more rapidly in urban areas, possibly due to greater success of tobacco prevention and cessation programs in those regions, the researchers wrote.

This suggests that rural areas may require tailored anti-smoking interventions that reflect rural norms, the researchers say. They cite, for example, the Down and Dirty anti-smoking campaigns in Virginia and Vermont that are targeted to teens who love the outdoors.

Ziller noted that resources and public health infrastructure in rural areas are modest compared to urban areas, making it harder to implement evidence-based prevention programs.

One limitation of the study is that it does not account for vaping by teens. The study may have to be repeated, said Ziller, noting the surge in teenage use of e-cigarettes.

Ziller and Brewer believe policy changes, such as boosting prices of tobacco products by increasing taxes, could be the most effective way to lower smoking rates.

Restricting sale of cigarettes at rural outlets could also help, said Brewer, adding that it is easier to find stores that sell cigarettes in rural areas than in urban areas.

“Many of the most effective interventions have to do with changing the environment people are in, as opposed to trying to convince them that smoking is bad,” said Brewer.

SOURCE: [bit.ly/2TYIMmt](https://bit.ly/2TYIMmt) American Journal of Public Health, online March 21, 2019.

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Article available online at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-teens-smoking/teen-cigarette-smoking-declining-more-slowly-in-rural-u-s-idUSKCN1RN24J>

## Articles about the **National Survey on Drug Use and Health**

*From TIME.com, March 14, 2019 (online)*

# Depression and Suicide Rates Are Rising Sharply in Young Americans, New Report Says. This May Be One Reason Why

By MARKHAM HEID

Since the late 2000s, the mental health of teens and young adults in the U.S. has declined dramatically. That's the broad conclusion of a new study published in the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*.

Between 2009 and 2017, rates of depression among kids ages 14 to 17 increased by more than 60%, the study found. The increases were nearly as steep among those ages 12 to 13 (47%) and 18 to 21 (46%), and rates roughly doubled among those ages 20 to 21. In 2017—the latest year for which federal data are available—more than one in eight Americans ages 12 to 25 experienced a major depressive episode, the study found.

The same trends held when the researchers analyzed the data on suicides, attempted suicides and “serious psychological distress”—a term applied to people who score high on a test that measures feelings of sadness, nervousness and hopelessness. Among young people, rates of suicidal thoughts, plans and attempts all increased significantly, and in some cases more than doubled, between 2008 and 2017, the study found.

These findings were based on data collected from more than 600,000 people by the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, an annual nationwide mental-health survey conducted by a branch of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

“I think this is quite a wake-up call,” says Mary Helen Immordino-Yang, a professor of psychology and education at the University of Southern California (who was not affiliated with the new study). “These findings are coming together with other kinds of evidence that show we're not supporting our adolescents in developmentally appropriate ways.”

One of the study's authors agrees. “There is an overwhelming amount of data from many different sources, and it all points in the same direction: more mental health issues among American young people,” says Jean Twenge, a professor of psychology at San Diego State University and author of *iGen*, a book about how technology affects the lives of young people.

What's causing today's young people so much anguish? “This is always a tough question to answer, as we can't prove for sure what the causes are,” Twenge says. “But there was one change that impacted the lives of young people more than older people, and that was the growth of smartphones and digital media like social media, texting and gaming.”

While older adults also use these technologies, “their adoption among younger people was faster and more complete, and the impact on their social lives much larger,” Twenge says.

While not all the evidence is consistent, a substantial amount of research has found associations between heavy technology use and poor mental health outcomes among adolescents and young adults. Research aside, many parents, teachers, guidance counselors and others who work with young people say social media and heavy technology use are a problem.

The way young people communicate and spend their leisure time “has fundamentally changed,” Twenge adds. “They spend less time with their friends in person and less time sleeping, and more time on digital media.”

Immordino-Yang echoes many of Twenge's concerns. “There's a lot we don't know, and we can't say conclusively what's driving these [mental health] trends,” she says. “But in the real world when dealing with the health of children, you need to make your best guess and move ahead before things are unequivocally proven.”

“It makes sense,” she says, “to pay attention to adolescent behaviors we know are changing and to target those behaviors for intensive scrutiny, and in the meantime to have [young people] engage in behaviors that don't lead to poor well-being.” She highlights unfettered access to social media as one recent and potentially unhealthy change. “There's this overload of information and stimulation and a much bigger sphere of influence that they're being exposed to,” she says. “Given what we know about adolescent development and vulnerability and the intensive need for intimate and healthy social connection during these years, you can see how social media may not be developmentally appropriate.”

But other experts say the existing evidence doesn't support singling out social media or technology as a culprit. “When it comes to social media and depression, the findings are all over the place,” says Laurence Steinberg, a distinguished professor of psychology at Temple University and an expert in adolescence.

“I think every generation of adults tries to pin a negative trend they see in young people on whatever the current technological fad is,” he says. While he agrees that the data show depression is rising among young people, he says he doesn't see “a clear cost” associated with technology or social media use.

“Certainly there are some stressors that are inherent in social media use, but there are other stressors as well,” he says. He mentions increased competition to get into college and “parents hovering” as potential factors. “It's probably not one thing,” he says, “but the cumulative impact of a lot of things.”

Twenge says it's tough to compare the current figures to historical rates of youth depression—mostly because historical statistics either don't exist or aren't comparable to current measures. But there is data on youth suicide going back several decades. “There was a big peak of teen suicide in the early 1990s that got a lot of attention,” she says. According to the latest data, current teen suicide rates are now significantly higher than those 1990 highs, she says.

The CDC has also issued reports showing that rates of suicide among young people jumped 56% between 2007 and 2016, after declining between 1999 and 2007.

“There should no longer be any doubt,” Twenge says. “There is a mental health crisis among American teens and young adults.”

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Article available online at: <https://time.com/5550803/depression-suicide-rates-youth/>