

# The NHSDA Report

April 11, 2002

## Binge Drinking Among Underage Persons

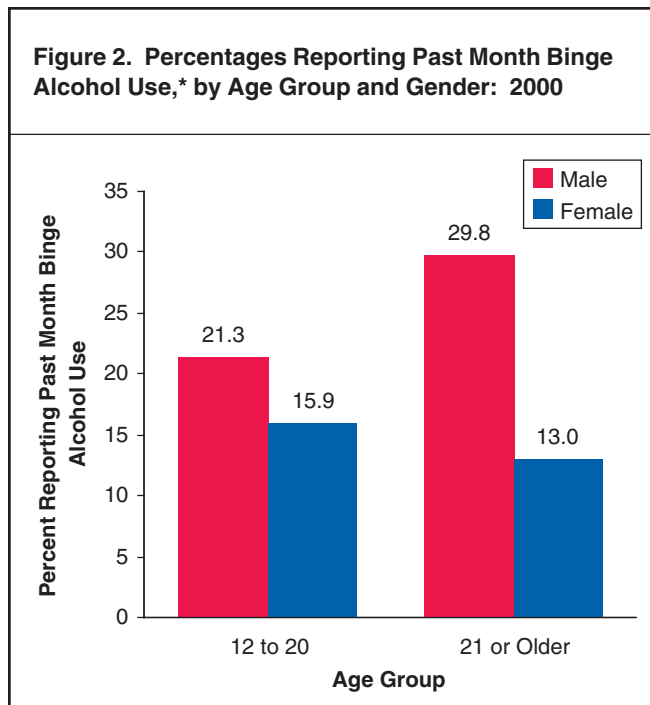
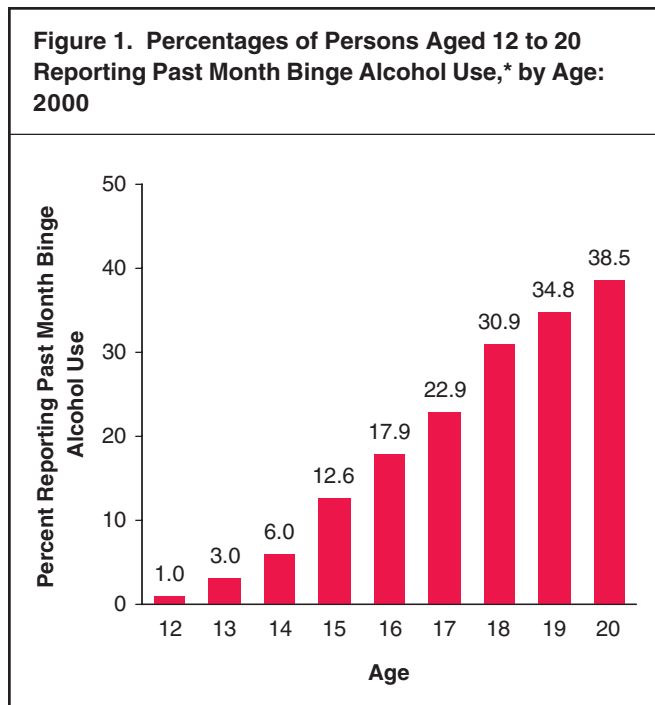
### In Brief

- In 2000, almost one in five underage persons aged 12 to 20 was a binge drinker, drinking five or more drinks on the same occasion on at least one day in the past 30 days
- The rate of binge drinking among underage persons was almost as high as among adults aged 21 or older
- Underage persons who reported binge drinking were 7 times more likely to report using illicit drugs during the past month than underage persons who did not binge drink

The 2000 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHSDA) questioned more than 70,000 persons aged 12 or older nationwide, including almost 35,000 persons aged 12 to 20, regarding their frequency and quantity of drinking or use of any illicit drug during the month before the survey. Binge drinking was defined as drinking five or more drinks on the same occasion on at least 1 day in the past 30 days. By “occasion” is meant at the same time or within a couple of hours of each other. “Any illicit drug” refers to use at least once of marijuana/hashish, cocaine (including crack), inhalants, hallucinogens (including PCP and LSD), heroin, or any prescription-type psychotherapeutic used nonmedically during the 30 days before the survey.<sup>1</sup> Respondents aged 18 to 22 were also asked about their college enrollment status.

### Binge Drinking Among Underage Persons Compared with Those Aged 21 or Older

According to the 2000 NHSDA, an estimated 46 million persons aged 12 or older were binge drinkers. Of these, almost 7 million



were younger than 21, the legal drinking age. The proportion of underage persons aged 12 to 20 who were binge drinkers (19 percent) was similar to that among adults aged 21 or older (21 percent) for whom alcohol use is legal. The percentage of underage persons who binged on alcohol increased with age, from 1 percent of 12 year olds to 39 percent of 20 year olds (Figure 1). Youths aged 12 to 16 had lower rates of binge drinking than the total population aged 12 or older, but persons aged 17 to 20 were more likely to report binge drinking during the past 30 days than the total population aged 12 or older.

The difference between males and females was less among those aged 20 or younger (21 percent males vs. 16 percent females) than among those aged 21 or older (30 percent males vs. 13 percent females) (Figure 2). Underage females were more likely to report binge drinking (16 percent) than were females aged 21 or older (13 percent). Among underage persons, fewer Asians and

blacks reported binge drinking than Hispanics, American Indians/Alaska Natives, or whites (Figure 3).

### Binge Drinking and Illicit Drug Use Among Minors

In 2000, underage persons who reported binge drinking (43 percent) were more likely to report past month use of any illicit drug than were their peers who did not binge drink (6 percent) (Table 1).

Underage persons who reported binge drinking were almost 9 times more likely to have used marijuana/hashish during the past month and were more than 6 times more likely to have used any illicit drug other than marijuana during the past month compared with underage persons who did not binge drink. Underage binge drinkers were 11 times more likely to have used hallucinogens during the past month and 6 times more likely to have used psychotherapeutic drugs nonmedically during the past month

than underage persons who did not binge drink.

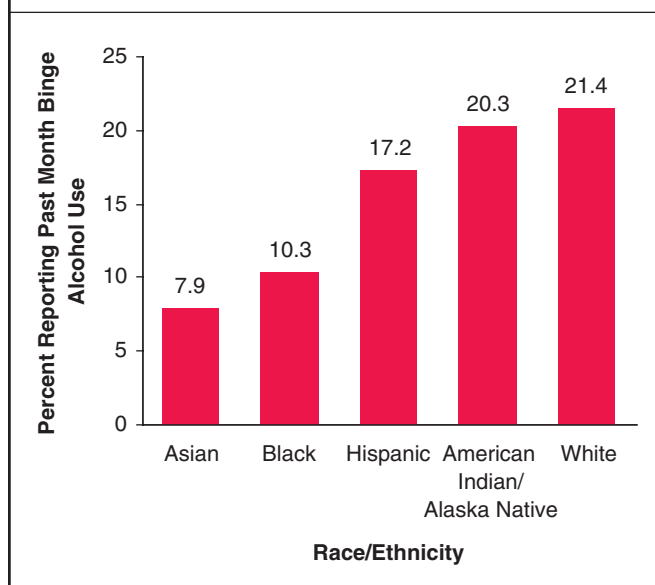
### Binge Drinking on Campus

Among young adults aged 18 to 22, the rate of binge drinking was higher among full-time college students (41 percent) than among those who were not enrolled full-time as college students (36 percent) (Figure 4). The rate of binge drinking increased with age among 18 to 21 year olds but was lower among 22 year olds regardless of college enrollment status. Differences in binge drinking rates by college enrollment status were greater for 19 and 20 year olds than others in this age group. The highest rates of binge drinking among full-time college students and other persons were among 21 year olds.

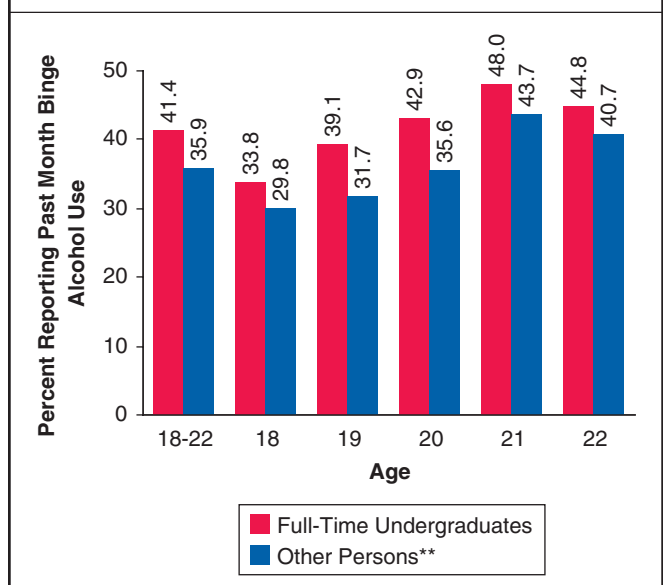
#### End Note

1. Use was defined as nonmedical if the drug was not prescribed for the respondent or if the respondent took the drug only for the experience or feeling it caused.

**Figure 3. Percentages of Persons Aged 12 to 20 Reporting Past Month Binge Alcohol Use,\* by Race/Ethnicity: 2000**



**Figure 4. Percentages of Young Adults Aged 18 to 22 Reporting Past Month Binge Alcohol Use,\* by College Enrollment Status and Age: 2000**



**Figure and Table Notes**

\* Binge alcohol use is defined as drinking five or more drinks on the same occasion on at least 1 day in the past 30 days. By "occasion" is meant at the same time or within a couple of hours of each other.

\*\* Other persons include respondents aged 18 to 22 not enrolled in school, enrolled in college part time, enrolled in other grades either full or part time, or enrolled with no other information available.

\*\*\* Any illicit drug refers to the use of marijuana/hashish, cocaine (including crack), inhalants, hallucinogens (including LSD and PCP), heroin, or any prescription-type psychotherapeutic used nonmedically during the 30 days prior to the interview. Any illicit drug other than marijuana indicates use at least once of any of these listed drugs, regardless of marijuana/hashish use; marijuana/hashish users who also have used any of the other illicit drugs are included.

\*\*\*\* Nonmedical use of any prescription-type pain reliever, tranquilizer, stimulant, or sedative; does not include over-the-counter drugs.

Source (all figures and tables): SAMHSA 2000 NHSDA.

**Table 1. Percentages of Persons Aged 12 to 20 Reporting Past Month Illicit Drug Use, by Past Month Binge Alcohol Use:\* 2000**

Drug	No Binge Alcohol Use	Binge Alcohol Use
Any Illicit Drug***	6.2	43.1
Marijuana/Hashish	4.3	38.0
Any Illicit Drug Other Than Marijuana***	2.7	18.4
Nonmedical Use of Any Psychotherapeutic****	1.8	10.8
Hallucinogens	0.6	6.6
Inhalants	0.5	2.6
Cocaine	0.2	4.5
Heroin	<0.1	0.4

The National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHSDA) is an annual survey sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The 2000 data are based on information obtained from nearly 72,000 persons aged 12 or older. The survey collects data by administering questionnaires to a representative sample of the population through face-to-face interviews at their place of residence.

The NHSDA Report is prepared by the Office of Applied Studies (OAS), SAMHSA, and by RTI in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina.

Information and data for this issue are based on the following publication and statistics:

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2001). *Summary of findings from the 2000 National Household Survey on Drug*

*Abuse* (NHSDA Series: H-13, DHHS Publication No. SMA 01-3549). Rockville, MD: Author.

Also available on-line: <http://www.DrugAbuseStatistics.samhsa.gov>.

Additional tables: 2.24A, 2.24B, 2.102A, 2.102B, and 2.103B from [http://www.samhsa.gov/oas/nhsda/2kdetailedtabs/Vol\\_1\\_Part\\_2/V1P2.htm](http://www.samhsa.gov/oas/nhsda/2kdetailedtabs/Vol_1_Part_2/V1P2.htm) and

Table 6.41B from [http://www.samhsa.gov/oas/nhsda/2kdetailedtabs/Vol\\_1\\_Part\\_4/V1P4.htm](http://www.samhsa.gov/oas/nhsda/2kdetailedtabs/Vol_1_Part_4/V1P4.htm).

Additional tables available upon request.



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