



Four Things to Know from the 2018 Juvenile Substance Abuse Monitoring Study

The Applied Research Division of SANDAG conducts annual interviews with juvenile and adult arrestees within 48 hours of their booking into a local detention facility through a program called SAM (Substance Abuse Monitoring). As part of these interviews, questions are asked regarding drug use history and other risk-taking behavior, and because a confidential and anonymous urine sample is provided, an objective measure of drug use trends over time is available. This CJ Flash highlights four quick facts from the full bulletin, which is available [here](#).

Fast Fact 1

Most of the youth detained at Juvenile Hall have tried **at least one** illicit substance and use started with one of the gateway drugs – marijuana, alcohol, or tobacco.

68%

tried all three gateway drugs

12

average age of first use

0%

tried a harder drug before a gateway drug

Fast Fact 2

The percentage of youth positive for any drug was at a **19-year high** in 2018 (58%), driven by the highest percentage positive for marijuana (55%) since 2000.



11% of juveniles thought marijuana could be harmful to someone, compared to **33%** for alcohol and **60%** for tobacco



Juveniles who used marijuana in the past 30 days used it a mean of **16.1 days**, compared to **7.5 days** for those who used alcohol

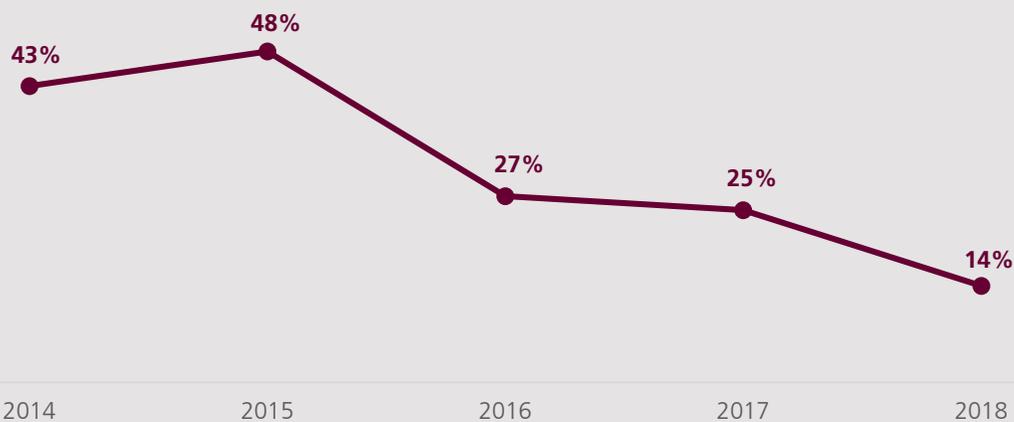


91% of juveniles say it is **VERY EASY** to **EASY** to obtain marijuana

Fast Fact 3

Spice use is down considerably among this population following the passage of an ordinance in the City of San Diego in 2016 to more effectively prohibit the manufacture, sale, and distribution of the drug. In addition, none of the youth in 2018 said they were using it to avoid a positive drug test.

Percentage that reported ever trying spice



Fast Fact 4

While none of the juveniles who had ever tried heroin in 2018 said they first used prescription opiates, the percentage that had used prescription drugs illicitly has increased steadily, from 35 percent in 2014 to **56 percent** in 2018.

61% say it is **VERY EASY** to **EASY** to get prescription drugs without a prescription

About 1 in 3 got the prescription drugs by taking them from someone – most often family or a stranger



SAMY juveniles who had ever abused prescription drugs were more likely to have also tried street drugs



After tranquilizers, the most frequently abused prescription drugs by SAM youth included codeine, Percocet, and OxyContin

