

# Survey shows lower levels of youth e-cigarette use, but experts still concerned

August 22 2016

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The 26th Indiana Youth Survey, conducted by the Indiana Prevention Resource Center at Indiana University's School of Public Health-Bloomington, highlights a decrease in the use of e-cigarettes among students in Grades 7 to 12. But experts say more needs to be done to curb use among youth.

"We are concerned by the numbers of youth using electronic vapor products, as well as traditional tobacco products, such as cigarettes," Indiana Prevention Resource Center executive director Ruth Gassman said. "All tobacco or nicotine-based products have health risks."

Among the findings:

- Indiana 12th-graders reported using electronic cigarettes at a rate of 20.9 percent, which is greater than the national rate of 16.2. The same students used tobacco cigarettes at a rate of 14.1 percent, compared to 11.4 percent of seniors surveyed nationally. Tobacco use in general decreased for all students except ninth-graders.
- Electronic cigarettes or vape pens were the most popular nicotine-containing substance used by youth in the month before the survey was administered. This is the second year the survey has asked about use of electronic vapor products.

[The 2016 survey results](#) presented in this news release are based on a unique random sample of 24,761 students from 113 schools. In previous

years, the survey results were based only on a convenience sampling approach that invited/welcome any and all schools to participate. The random sample removes potential bias from uneven sampling in certain areas and allows the results to be better compared with larger, national random sampling surveys. The results from this sample provide more accurate state-level estimates compared to those generated from the convenience sample. The 2016 survey report available online also includes a section on the convenience sample of 107,801 students in Grades 6 through 12 at 398 public and nonpublic schools.

The findings address the following issues: e-cigarette and tobacco use, alcohol use, marijuana use, methamphetamine use, [prescription drug abuse](#), gambling, mental health, parental deployment or incarceration, and risk and protective factors.

## **Other drug use**

Prescription drug use continues to be a serious health problem among adults, with Indiana's opioid use problem making national headlines. But most Indiana youth are not abusing prescription drugs, according to the survey, with 93.5 percent of students indicating they did not use prescription drugs to get high.

School-age youth are unlikely to use heroin, with a rate of less than 1 percent, or less than one in 100 students, for all grades.

"We note that youth use of heroin is not following adult trends, and we hope that continuing efforts by health educators and communities lower the rates even further," Gassman said.

Marijuana use among sixth-graders was reported at 1.3 percent over the past 30 days. Students in the eighth grade reported 6.3 percent use, which was lower than the national rate of 6.5 percent. Tenth-graders

used at a rate of 12.1 percent, compared to 14.8 percent nationally. Use among seniors, at 21.1 percent, is similar to the national rate of 21.3 percent. Sixth-graders were not asked about Spice, or synthetic marijuana. Eighth-graders reported 0.9 percent use of Spice, while 1.7 percent of 10th-graders and 1.5 percent of 12th-graders used it.

## **Alcohol use more prevalent in older youth**

Alcohol continues to be an easily available drug frequently used by older students. Sixth-graders reported that 3.7 percent used alcohol during the past 30 days. The number of students drinking increased to 12.7 percent for eighth-graders, compared to the national rate of 9.7 percent; 20.9 percent for 10th-graders, compared to the national rate of 21.5 percent; and 33.4 percent for seniors in high school, compared to 35.3 percent nationally. Seniors also reported binge drinking (five or more drinks in a row) at a rate of 16.4 percent. Nationwide, 17.2 percent of 12th-graders had had five or more drinks in a row on at least one day in the previous month.

The most common source of alcohol for students was their own parents or guardians.

## **Gender**

For most drugs and in all grades, the percentage of male users was higher than the percentage of female users. However, the percentage of females in Grades 8 to 10 who used cigarettes, [prescription drugs](#), over-the-counter drugs, marijuana and alcohol (including binge drinking) was higher than males.

## **Gambling behaviors higher among eighth-graders**

Youth were asked about whether they had gambled in the previous 12 months, including playing card games, the lottery, bingo, online gambling and sports betting. These rates are not compared with national figures because there is not a yearly national survey.

Students in the eighth grade gambled at higher levels than 10th- and 12th-graders in the categories of personal games of skill, sports betting, bingo, online gambling, personal challenges and other forms of gambling.

Eighth-grade [students](#) engaged in sports betting at a rate of 18.9 percent, while 12th-graders gambled on sports at a rate of 15.2 percent. However, eighth-graders reported playing the lottery at a rate of 10.4 percent in the past year, whereas 23.3 percent of 12th-graders purchased lottery tickets. Lottery ticket purchase is legal for 18-year-olds.

Students were also asked about consequences brought about by gambling, including problems with friends and family, losing money or possessions, academic problems, issues with the legal system, and feeling bad about gambling.

"Monitoring the prevalence of gambling activities among youth is important for planning prevention efforts," said Mary Lay, project manager of the Indiana Problem Gambling Awareness Program.

"Gambling can be a recreational outlet for adults, but casinos are only for those 21 years or older, and the lottery is not legal for anyone under 18."

Two versions of the survey were given this year—one to sixth-graders and one to seventh- through 12th-graders. The survey instrument for sixth-graders uses simpler language and asks about fewer substances. Schools participating in the survey had the option to add up to 15 questions specific to their community, and several corporations took advantage of this opportunity.

Provided by Indiana University

Citation: Survey shows lower levels of youth e-cigarette use, but experts still concerned (2016, August 22) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-08-survey-youth-e-cigarette-experts.html>

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