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# New Mexico Youth Risk & Resiliency 2015 Survey Results Report: Drug Use and Related Behaviors.

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# Drug Use and Related Behaviors

Drug use by youth is associated with poor educational attainment, impaired cognitive function, mental health issues, and involvement in violent or risky behaviors. Long term drug use puts youth at increased risk for addiction, illness and early death as adults. The

New Mexico Youth Risk & Resiliency Survey (NM-YRRS) includes questions about lifetime and current<sup>†</sup> drug use, access, and behaviors as well as protective (resiliency) factors that can help reduce these risky behaviors.

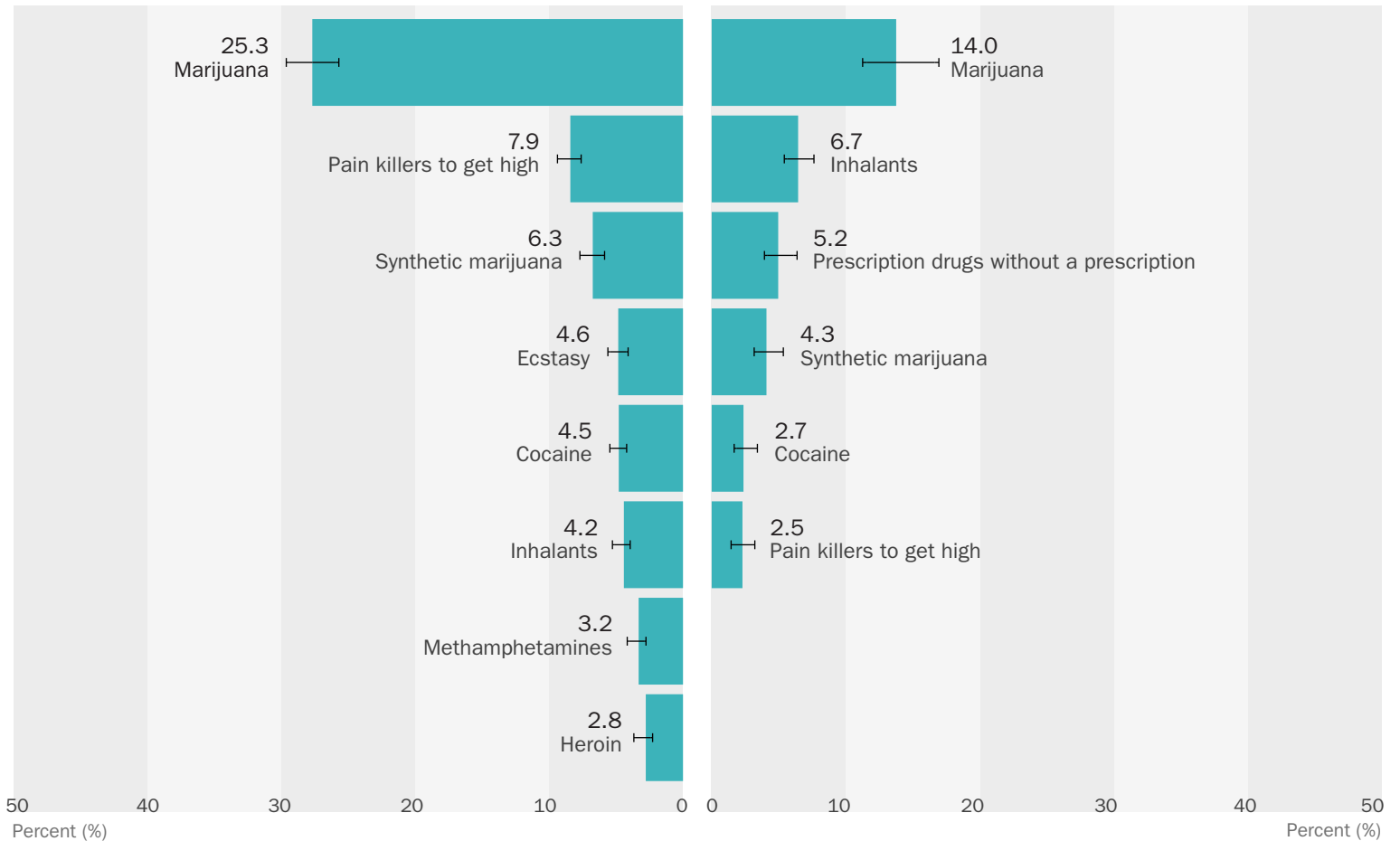
<sup>†</sup> Current use is defined as any use in the past 30 days.

## Individual Drug Use Prevalence

For both middle school and high school students, marijuana was the most commonly used drug. Among high school students, current marijuana use was followed by pain killers to get high, synthetic marijuana, ecstasy, cocaine, inhalants, methamphetamines, and heroin. Among middle school students, lifetime marijuana use was followed by inhalants, prescription drugs without a prescription, synthetic marijuana, cocaine, and pain killers to get high.

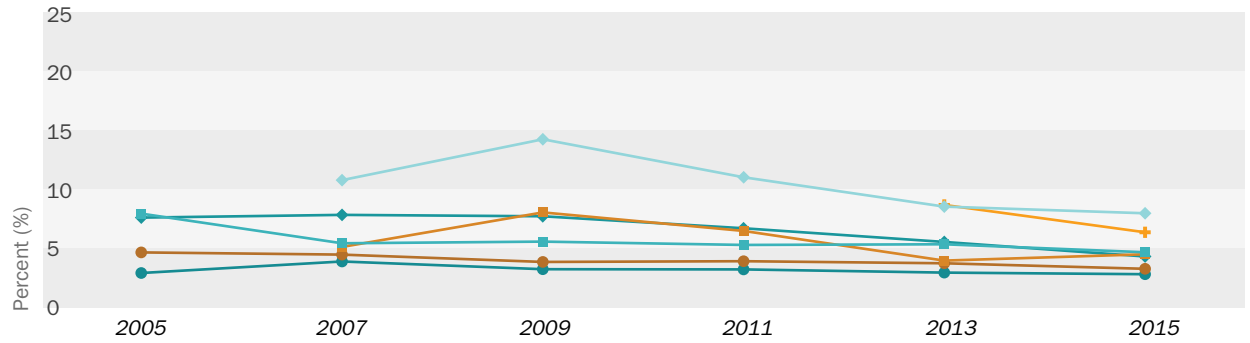
Figure 1  
*Current drug use, Grades 9–12, NM, 2015*

*Lifetime drug use, Grades 6–8, NM, 2015*



## Drug Use Trends (High School)

Figure 2  
Trends in current drug use  
Grades 9–12, NM  
2005–2015



	2005	2007	2009	2011	2013	2015
◆ 1 Painkillers to get high		10.8	14.2	11.0	8.5	7.9
◆ 2 Synthetic marijuana					8.6	6.3
■ 3 Cocaine	7.9	5.4	5.6	5.2	5.3	4.6
■ 4 Ecstasy		5.1	8.0	6.4	3.9	4.5
◆ 5 Inhalants	7.5	7.8	7.7	6.7	5.5	4.2
● 6 Methamphetamines	4.6	4.4	3.9	3.9	3.7	3.2
● 7 Heroin	2.9	3.9	3.2	3.2	2.9	2.8

### Summary of high school trends:

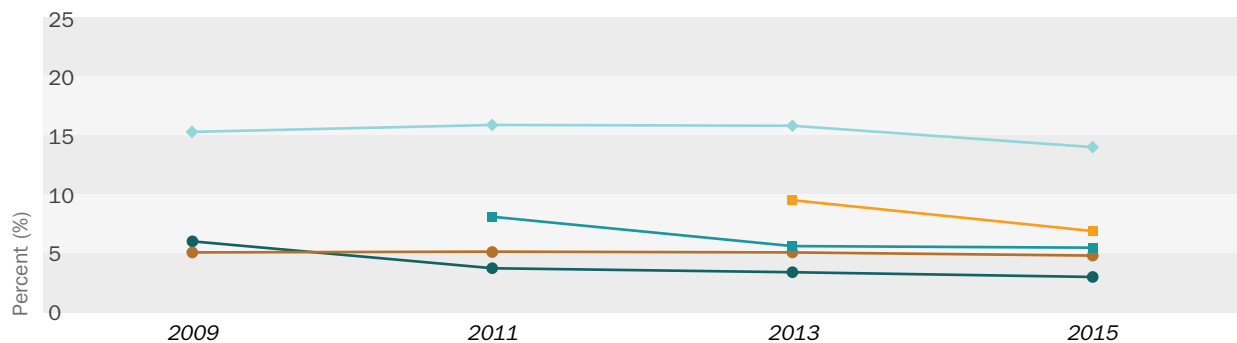
- Current synthetic marijuana (spice) use decreased by nearly 27% from 2013 to 2015.
- Current use of painkillers to get high or ecstasy decreased from 2009 to 2015.
- Current inhalant or cocaine use decreased by 44% from 2005 to 2015.
- Current methamphetamine use decreased a little over 25% from 2005 to 2015.
- There is no trend (no increase or decrease) for heroin use.

### Summary of 2015 NM high school drug use indicators with NM-U.S. comparison:

	NM%	U.S.%	at higher risk	NM rank
Tried marijuana before age 13	16.5	7.5	NM	1 (of 35 states)
Current marijuana use	25.3	21.7	NM	1 (of 36 states)
Ever used cocaine	8.8	5.2	NM	2 (of 32 states)
Ever used ecstasy	7.9	5.0	NM	2 (of 27 states)
Ever used methamphetamines	4.4	3.0	NM	5 (of 29 states)
Ever used heroin	3.5	2.1	NM	8 (of 32 states)
Ever injected any illegal drug	3.2	1.8	NM	11 (of 25 states)
Ever took prescription drugs without a prescription	14.3	16.8	US	18 (of 32 states)
Offered, sold, or given illegal drugs on school campus in the last 12 months	27.5	21.7	NM	4 (of 32 states)

## Drug Use Trends (Middle School)

Figure 3  
Trends in current drug use  
Grades 6–8, NM  
2009–2015



	2009	2011	2013	2015
◆ Ever used marijuana	15.1	15.9	15.7	14.0
■ Ever used inhalants *			9.3	6.7
■ Ever took prescription drugs without a prescription *		8.0	5.5	5.2
● Tried marijuana before age 11	4.9	5.0	5.0	4.4
● Ever used cocaine *	5.7	3.6	3.3	2.7

\* Indicates a statistically significant trend,  $p < 0.05$ .

### Summary of middle school trends:

- Ever used cocaine decreased by more than 50% from 2009 to 2015.
- Ever used a prescription drug without a prescription decreased by nearly 50% from 2011 to 2015.
- Inhalant use decreased from 2013 to 2015.
- There is no trend (no increase or decrease) for marijuana use.

## Drug Use and Student Characteristics

### Drug Use by Sex

#### Grades 9–12

Boys had higher current use rates than girls for synthetic marijuana (7.5% vs. 5.0%), cocaine (6.3% vs. 2.6%), ecstasy (6.0% vs. 3.2%) methamphetamines (4.7% vs. 1.6%), and heroin (4.3% vs. 1.2%). Boys and girls had similar current use rates for marijuana (25.6% vs. 24.9%), pain killers to get high (8.7% vs. 6.9%), and inhalants (4.6% vs. 3.8%). Boys had a higher rate of ever using injection drugs in their lifetime (4.4% vs. 1.9%).

#### Grades 6–8

There were no statistically significant differences between boys and girls in prevalence of lifetime use of marijuana (15.1% vs. 13.0%), inhalants (6.6% vs. 6.7%), synthetic marijuana (5.3% vs. 3.2%), cocaine (2.9% vs. 2.5%), painkillers to get high (3.0% vs. 1.9%), or injection drugs (1.3% vs. 1.0%).

### Drug Use by Grade

#### Grades 9–12

Among high school students, current marijuana use increased with grade level, from 20.4% among 9th graders, to 32.6% among 12th graders. The difference by grade level for current use of at least one drug other than marijuana was not statistically significant.

#### Grades 6–8

Among middle school students, lifetime use of marijuana increased by almost 5 times from 6th grade to 8th grade (6th = 4.8%; 8th = 23.4%). There was not a statistically significant difference in the rate of lifetime use of at least one drug other than marijuana by grade level.

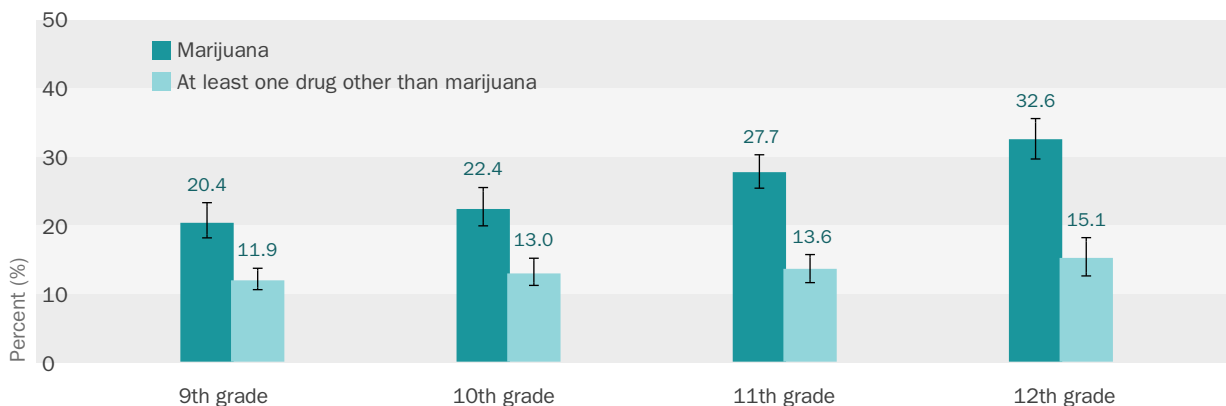


Figure 4  
Current drug use by grade  
Grades 9–12, NM  
2015

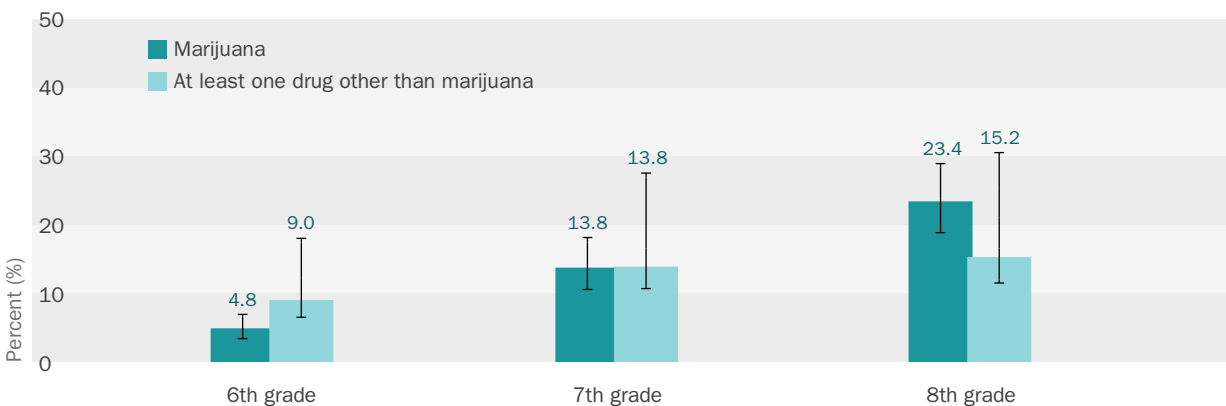


Figure 5  
Current drug use by grade  
Grades 6–8, NM  
2015

## Drug Use and Student Characteristics (cont.)

### Drug Use by Race/Ethnicity

#### Grades 9–12

- American Indians (33.9%) and Black or African Americans (30.1%) had higher rates of current marijuana use than Hispanics (25.9%), Asian/Pacific Islanders (23.1%) or Whites (20.4%).
- White students (9.7%) had a lower rate of current use of at least one drug other than marijuana than Hispanic (13.7%), Asian/Pacific Islander (17.9%), American Indian (18.4%), or African American (19.9%) students.

#### Grades 6–8

- American Indian students (22.1%) had a higher lifetime marijuana use rate than White students (7.9%). Lifetime marijuana use for Hispanic (15.8%), Asian/Pacific Islander (17.1%), and African-American (13.5%) students were not statistically different from other race/ethnicity groups.
- There were no statistically significant differences by race/ethnicity for lifetime use of at least one drug other than marijuana (Hispanic = 14.1%; American Indian = 13.5%; White = 10.8%; Asian/Pacific Islander = 10.6%; Black or African American = 9.8%).

### Drug Use by Parent Education

Among high school students, the prevalence of current drug use decreased with higher levels of parent education. Students whose parents had less than a high school education had a higher rate of current marijuana use than those whose parents had a high school education (30.9% vs. 19.0%) and had a higher rate of use of any drug other than marijuana (16.0% vs. 10.6%).

Information about parents' level of education is not collected in the Middle School NM-YRRS.

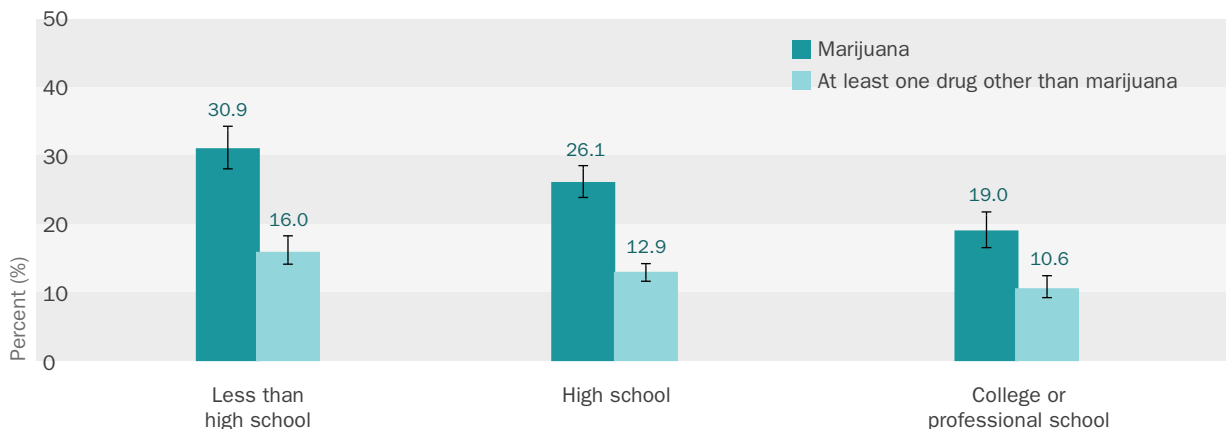


Figure 6  
Lifetime drug use  
by parent education  
Grades 6–8, NM  
2015

### Drug Use by Rural/Urban School

Among high school students there were no statistically significant differences by rural/urban status for either current marijuana use or current use of at least one other drug other than marijuana.

## Marijuana Only and Drugs Other Than Marijuana

Among students who used any drugs, the majority used marijuana, either by itself or in combination with other drugs. Among high school students who were current drug users, 87.0% were current marijuana users, while 54.1% used only marijuana and no other drugs. Among middle school students who ever used drugs in their lifetime, 69.5% had ever used marijuana, while 36.9% used only marijuana and no other drugs. Students who used marijuana only had distinctly different levels of risk and resiliency than students who used one or more drugs other than marijuana.

### Grades 9–12

Most NM high school students (71.0%) did not use any drug in the past 30 days.

- 15.7% used marijuana only
- 7.2% used only one drug other than marijuana
- 6.1% used multiple drugs other than other than marijuana

### Grades 6–8

Most NM middle school students (79.8%) never used any drug in their lifetimes.

- 7.5% ever used marijuana only
- 8.3% ever used only one drug other than marijuana
- 4.5% ever used multiple drugs other than marijuana

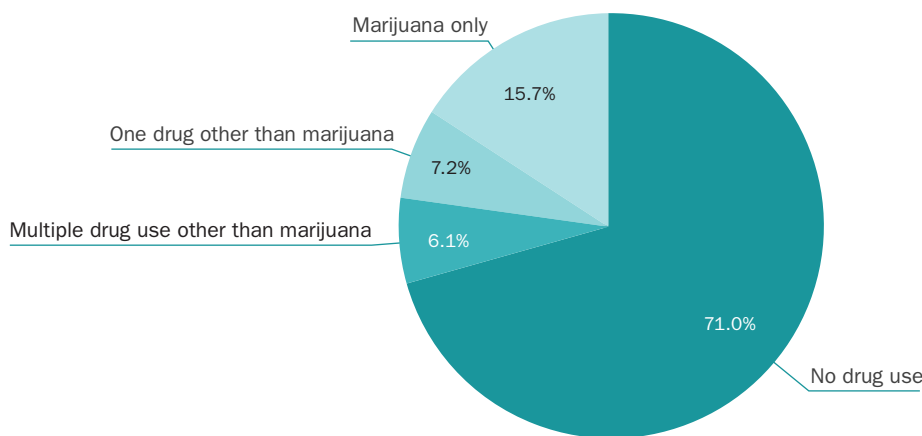


Figure 7  
Current drug use  
Grades 9–12, NM  
2015

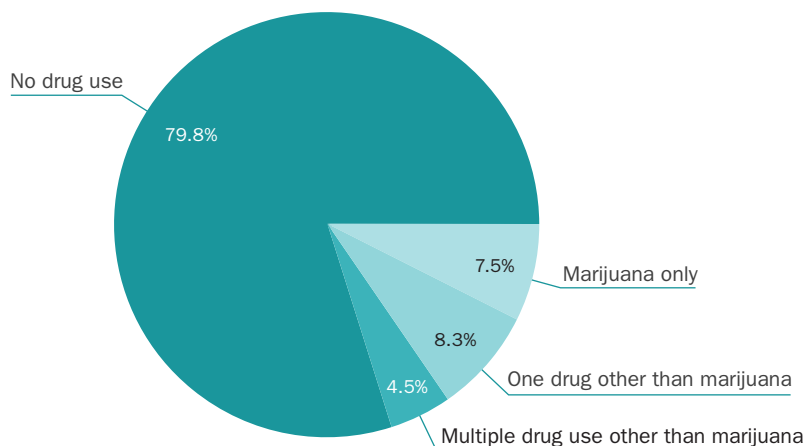


Figure 8  
Lifetime drug use  
Grades 6–8, NM  
2015

## Youth at High Risk for Drug Use

High school students who had a physical disability or long-term health problem, identified as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB), lived in unstable housing, or who were not born in the USA were at a high risk for drug use. While none of these groups had a higher rate of using marijuana only, they all had higher rates of using multiple drugs other than marijuana.

### Physical Disability Status

Youth who answered yes to the question “Do you have any physical disabilities or long-term health problems?” were classified as having a physical disability. Compared to high school students without a disability, those with physical disabilities were two times as likely to use multiple drugs other than marijuana and were more likely to use one drug other than marijuana. They were not more likely to use marijuana only.

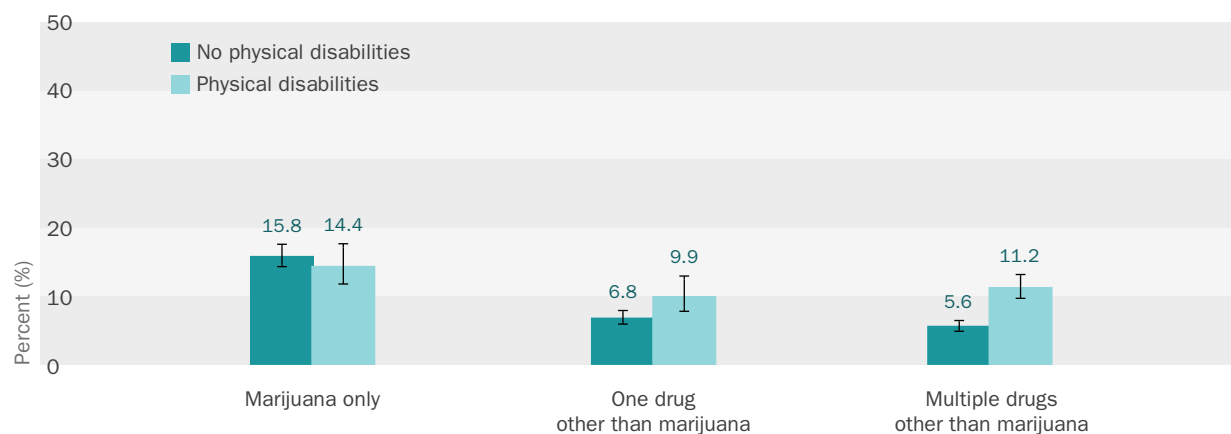


Figure 9  
Current drug use by physical disability status  
Grades 9–12, NM  
2015

### Sexual Minority Status

High school youth who identified as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB) were 5 times more likely to use multiple drugs other than marijuana than straight students and were more likely to use one drug other than marijuana. They were not more likely to use marijuana only than straight students.

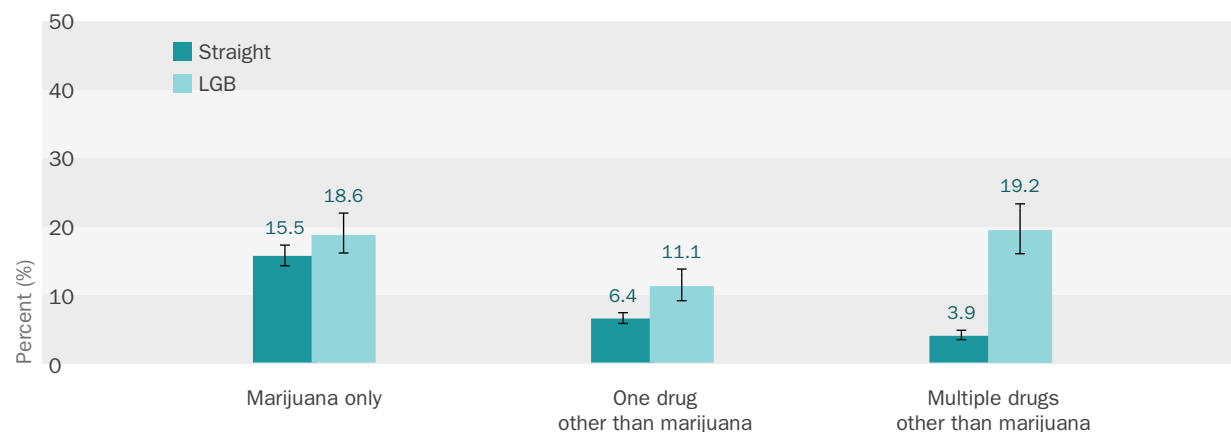


Figure 10  
Current drug use by LGB status  
Grades 9–12, NM  
2015



## Youth at High Risk for Drug Use (cont.)

### Housing Instability

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act defines youth as homeless if they lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. For the YRRS, youth who answered they usually slept in a place other than their parent's/guardian's home when asked, "During the past 30 days, where did you usually sleep at night?" were classified as living in unstable housing. The YRRS definition of living in unstable housing is consistent with the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness.

High school students who experienced housing instability were 10 times more likely to use multiple drugs other than marijuana than those in stable housing and were more likely to use one drug other than marijuana. They not more likely to use marijuana only than those in stable housing.

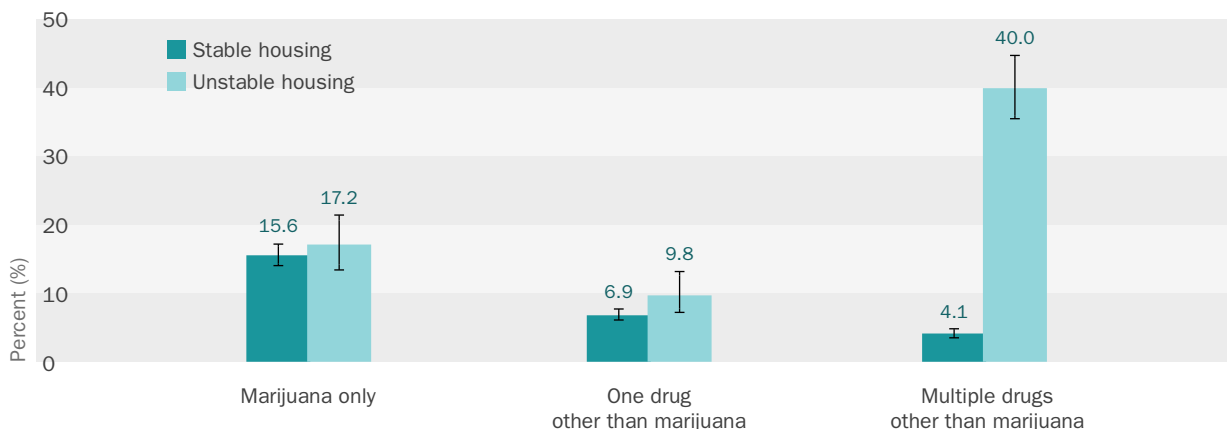


Figure 11  
Current drug use by housing stability  
Grades 9–12, NM  
2015

### Born Outside the USA

High school students who were born outside the USA were four times more likely to use multiple drugs other than marijuana than those born in the USA. They were not more likely to use one drug other than marijuana, and they were more likely to use marijuana only.

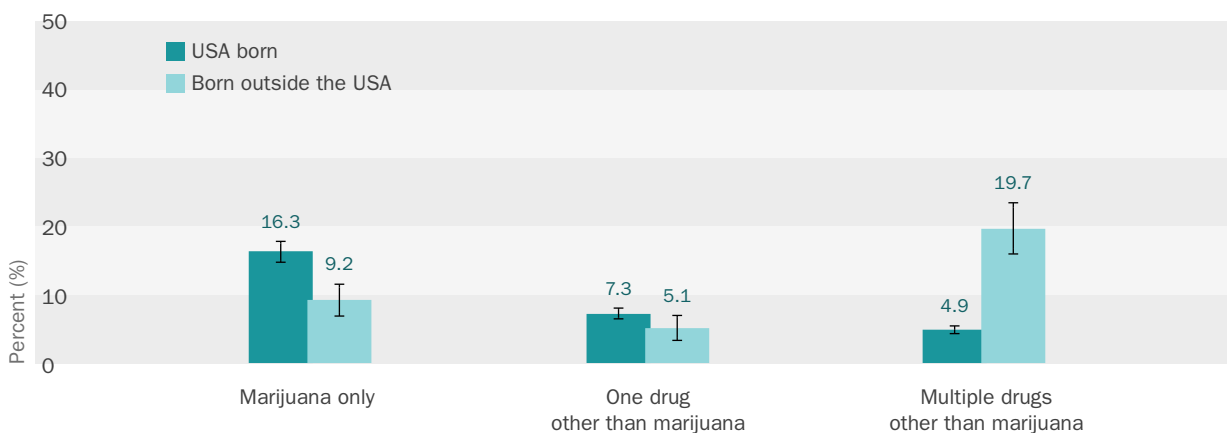


Figure 12  
Current drug use by country of birth  
Grades 9–12, NM  
2015

## Drug Use and Other Risk Behaviors

Among both high school and middle school students, drug use was associated with a variety of risk behaviors and characteristics associated with failure to succeed academically, unintentional injury, violence, mental health, alcohol use, and tobacco use. In general, as the level of drug use increased from no drug use to multiple drug use, the prevalence of engaging in these risk behaviors also increased.

### Drug Use and Other Behaviors (High School)

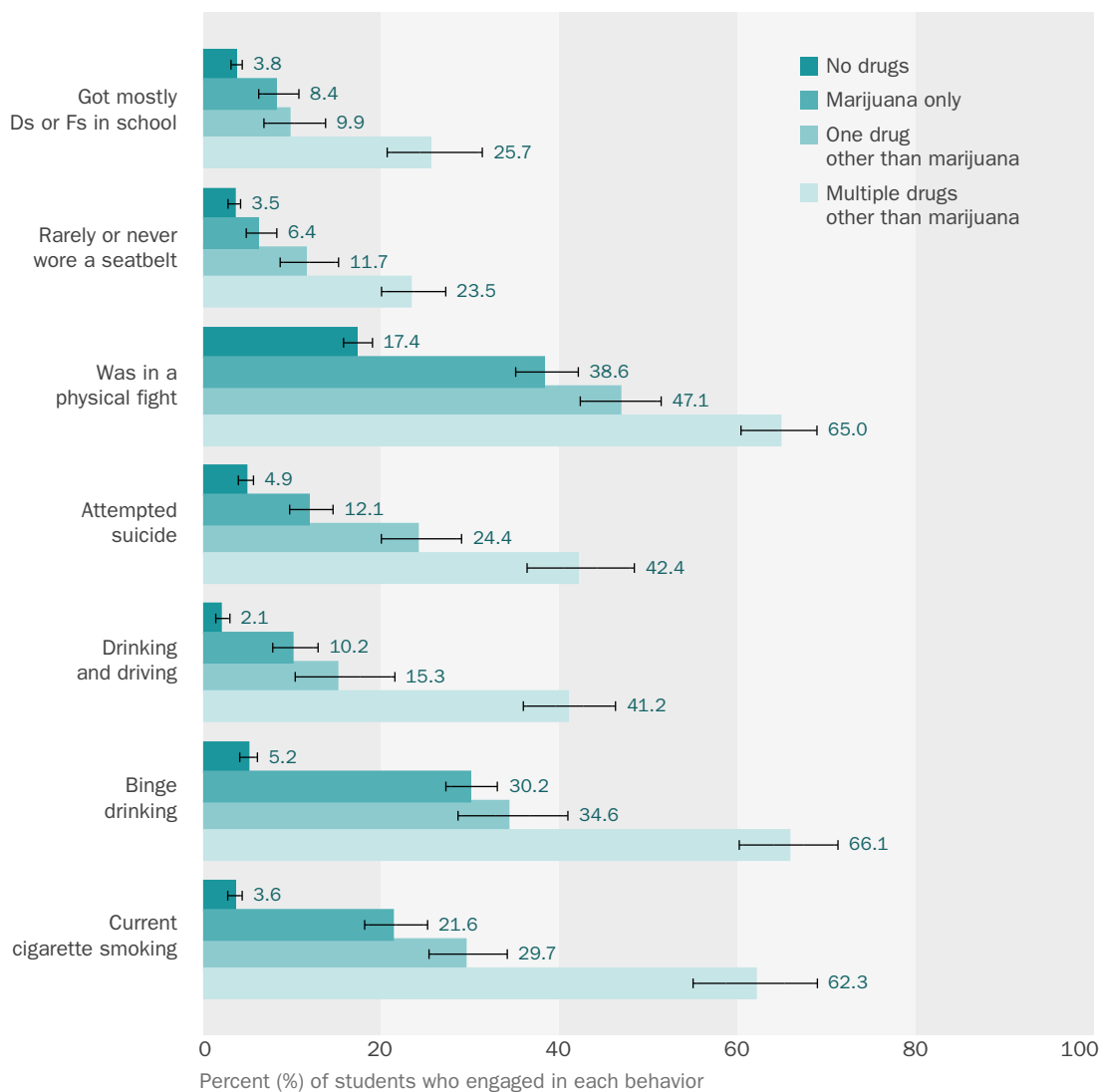


Figure 13  
Selected risk behaviors  
by current drug use  
Grades 9–12, NM  
2015

## Drug Use and Other Risk Behaviors (cont.)

### Drug Use and Other Behaviors (Middle School)

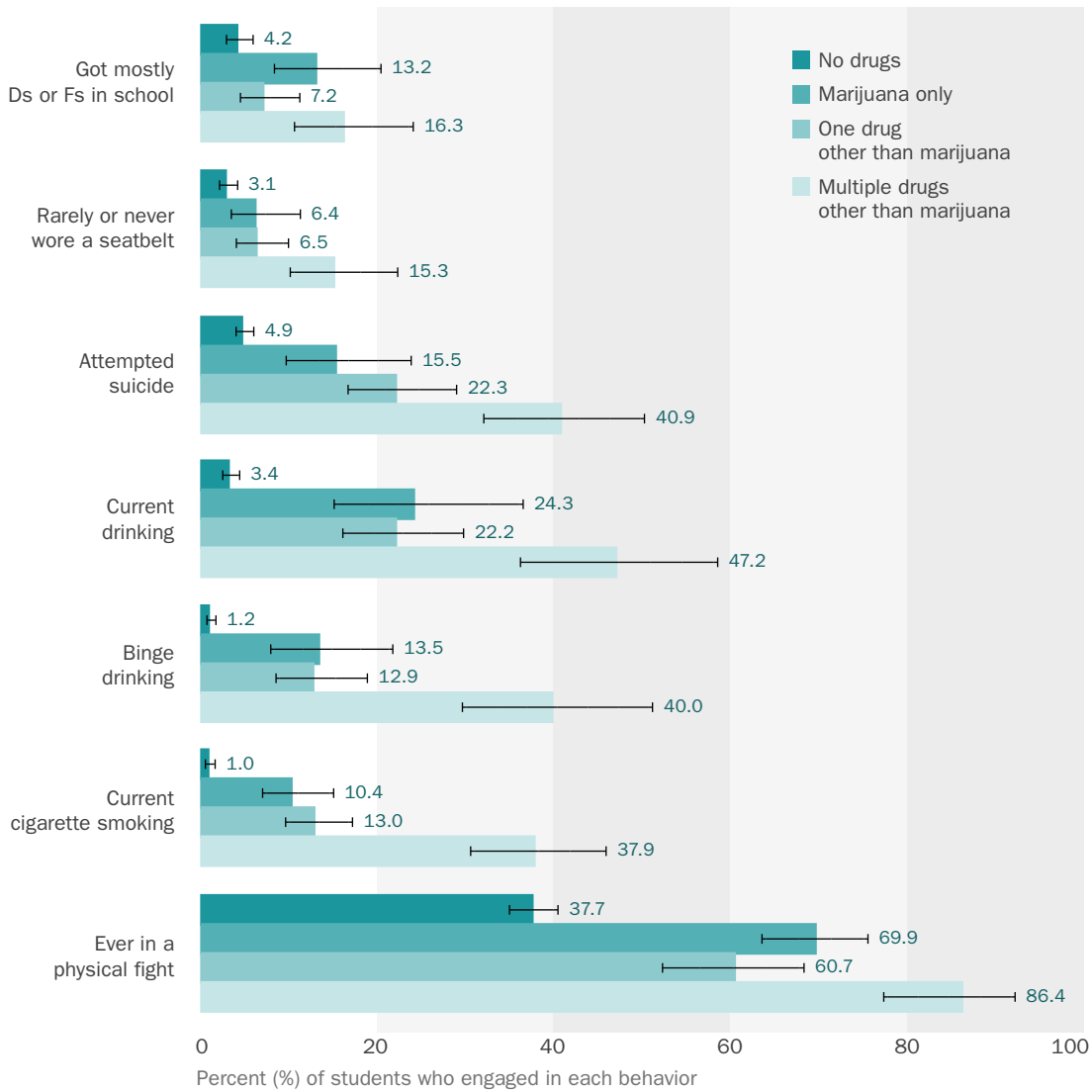
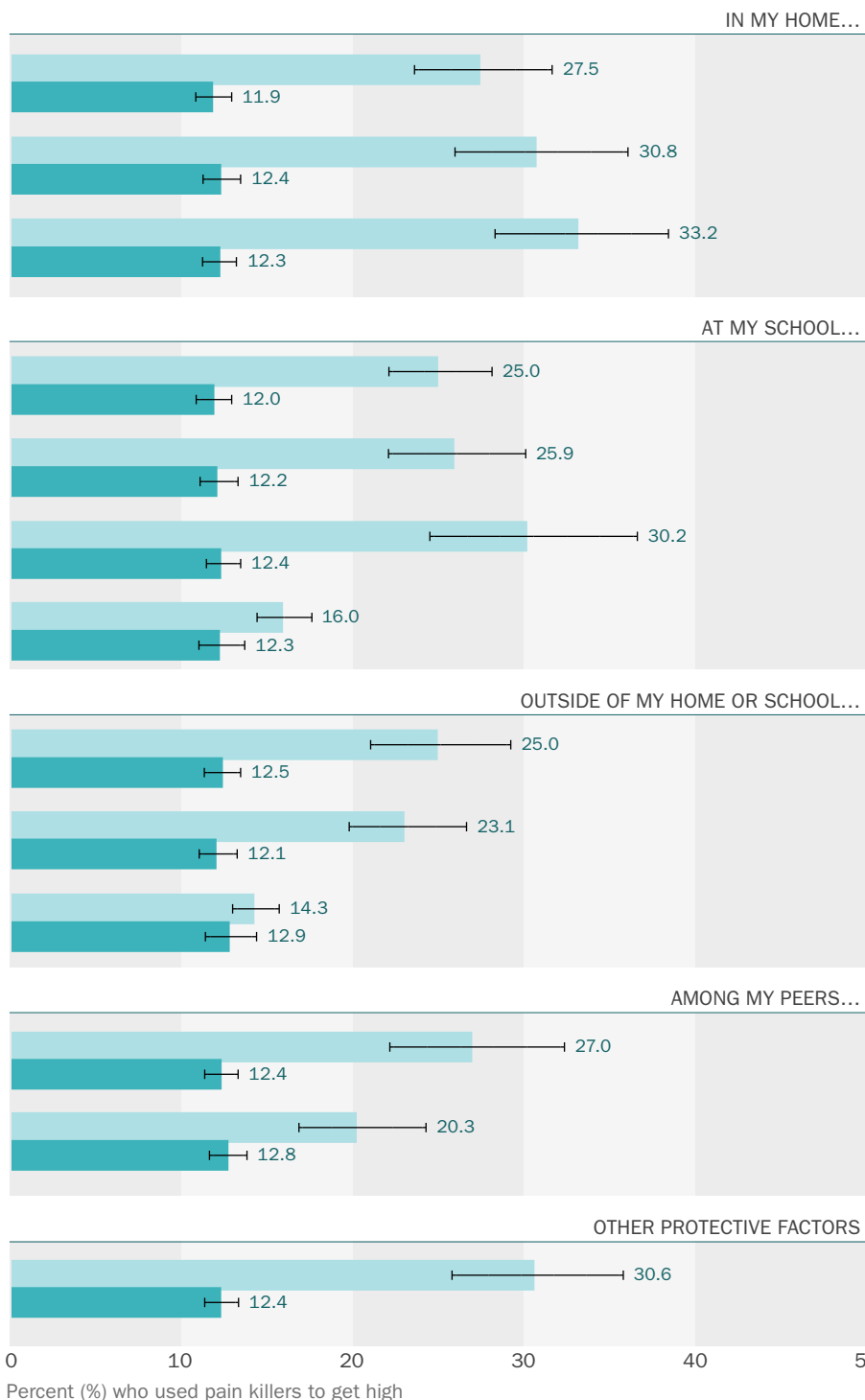


Figure 14  
Selected risk behaviors  
by current drug use  
Grades 6–8, NM  
2015

## Risk and Resiliency

Students who low levels of resiliency had higher rates of current drug use than students who had higher levels of resiliency.



**Figure 15**  
*Current use of pain killers to get high by resiliency factors*  
 Grades 9–12, NM 2015

■ Not at all true  
 ■ A little bit, pretty much, or very much true

**How to read this chart:**

Each colored bar represents the rate of suicide attempts (past 12 months) among high school students.

For example: Among students who said it was “a little bit true,” “pretty much true,” or “very much true” that they have a friend about their own age who really cares about them, 12.4% used pain killers to get high, compared to 27.0% of students who said it was “not at all true.”

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