



**Public Health**  
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Kansas City, MO, Health Dept.

## Drug Use

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, illicit drug use is the 10<sup>th</sup> leading actual cause of death in the United States. In 2003, an estimated 8.2% of the US population  $\geq 12$  y of age were current illicit drug users.<sup>376</sup> Marijuana was the most commonly used illicit drug. An estimated 18.2% of unemployed adults  $\geq 18$  y old were current illicit drug users compared to 7.9% of full-time and 10.7% of part-time workers. Overall, most illicit drug users, 74.3%, were employed. Rates of drug abuse were highest among Native Americans, 12.1% and lowest among Asians, 2.8%; blacks had a rate of 8.7%, whites of 8.3%, and Hispanics 8.0%. According to the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, girls have become first-time users of alcohol, cigarettes and marijuana at rates that exceed those of boys.<sup>377</sup> In addition, teen girls outnumber boys in their misuse of prescription drugs.

A telephone survey in 2004 commissioned by the Kansas City Health Department had 1.1% of respondents reporting use of illicit drugs.<sup>378</sup>

In 2005, the Kansas City Police Department made 6,817 arrests for narcotics.

The federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN) 2004 data estimated that, nationally, nearly 2 million emergency department visits were drug-related visits and that 1.3 million were associated with drug misuse or abuse (Table 86).<sup>379</sup> Cocaine was involved in approximately 41% of illicit drug related emergency department visits; marijuana was the next most common reason (23%) A DAWN case is defined as any emergency department visit related to recent drug use, including use of drugs plus alcohol, or alcohol alone in persons  $< 21$  y of age.

<sup>376</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. 2004. Overview of findings from the 2003 national survey on drug use and health. NHSDA Series H-24, DHSS Public No SMA 04-3963. [www.sansha.gov](http://www.sansha.gov)

<sup>377</sup> Office of National Drug Control Policy. 2006. Girls and Drugs. A new analysis: recent trends, risk factors, and consequences. [www.mediacampaign.org/pdf/girls\\_and\\_drugs.pdf](http://www.mediacampaign.org/pdf/girls_and_drugs.pdf)

<sup>378</sup> Kansas City Health Department. 2004. 2004 Health Assessment Survey. [www.kcmo.org/health](http://www.kcmo.org/health).

<sup>379</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. 2006. Drug Abuse Warning Network 2004: national estimates of drug-related emergency department visits. <http://DAWNinfo.samsha.gov>.



The number of emergency department visits and hospitalizations in Kansas City during 1999 and 2003 for drug related (excluding alcohol) problems are presented in Table 87. Emergency department visits increased 45% for whites (128 to 185) and 77% for blacks (164 to 291), while hospitalizations declined 39% for whites (190 to 116) and 41% for blacks (139 to 82).

**Table 86 Percentage of drug-related emergency department visits nationally, based on DAWN, 2004**

<b>Drug</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Illicit drug only	30%
Pharmaceutical only	25%
Illicit drug plus alcohol	15%
Illicit drug plus pharmaceutical	8%
Illicit drug plus pharmaceutical plus alcohol	14%

**Table 87 Number of persons seeking medical care for drug use, Kansas City, MO**

	<b>Emergency Departments</b>		<b>Hospitalizations</b>	
	<b>1999</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2003</b>
Total	311	504	336	206
<15	5	3	0	0
15-44	261	405	273	138
>45	45	96	63	68

DAWN mortality data for 2003, reported 121 deaths from drugs in the Missouri counties of Clay, Jackson, and Platte; 106 due to drug misuse and 15 due to suicide.<sup>380</sup> Of the drug misuse related deaths, 20 (rate of 103.0 per 100,000 population) were among Clay County residents, 81 (rate of 122.8) involved Jackson County residents, and 5 deaths (rate of 63.0) occurred among Platte County residents (Table 88). Of the drug related suicide deaths, 4 (rate of 20.6) occurred among Clay County residents and 11 (rate of 16.7) among Jackson County residents. Sixty-eight percent of the drug misuse deaths occurred outside of a health care facility as did 71% of the suicide deaths.

<sup>380</sup> Drug Abuse Warning Network, 2003: Area profiles of drug related mortality. DAWN Series D-27, DHHS Publication No. (SMA) 05-4023, Rockville, MD, March 2005. <http://dawninfo.samhsa.gov/pubs/mepubs/default.asp>

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Between 2000 and 2004, the age-adjusted drug-related death rate among Kansas City residents has remained relatively stable (Figure 84). Over the years, blacks were 50% more likely to have a drug-related death than whites.

**Table 88 Drug related deaths for residents of Clay, Jackson, and Platte counties, MO, 2003\***

	Sex		Age			
	Male	Female	<21 y	21-34 Y	35-54 y	≥55 Y
Drug misuse	170.6	60.2	14.4	101.1	237.5	86.2
Suicide	15.5	16.6	7.2	10.6	31.9	10.8

\* Data from SAMHSA 2003 DAWN survey

The DAWN data also reported that 31% of the deaths in the three counties involved some combination of alcohol and, at least, one drug, or alcohol alone in persons <21 y of age. And, 29% of the deaths involved just a single drug (none attributed to just alcohol). Of the single drug deaths, cocaine was involved in 55%. Additionally, 33% of the suicides involved alcohol, but always in combination with some other drug. Drugs and/or alcohol were involved in 17 deaths resulting from accidents or injuries.

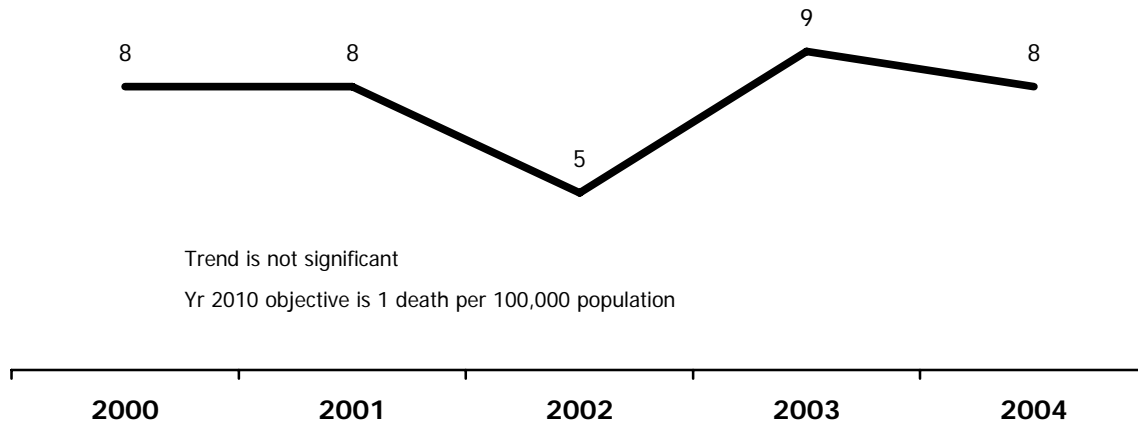
In Missouri, the prevalence of the use of illicit drugs in the prior month is approximately 8%, with 1.9% of the population ≥12 y of age being illicit drug dependent and 3% being dependent or an abuser.<sup>381</sup> Each year, about 2% Missourians ≥12 y of age try marijuana for the first time. For the period 1999-2001, the northwestern counties of Missouri were reported to have an estimated 5% of the population being current marijuana users and to have an average annual rate of 1.5% for first use of marijuana.<sup>382</sup> For the counties embracing the Kansas side of the Kansas City metropolitan area, the current usage rate was estimated at 4.7% and 2% for first use.

<sup>381</sup> Wright D, Sathe N. 2006. State estimates of substance use from the 2003-2004 National Surveys on Drug Use and Health. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. [www.oas.samhsa.org](http://www.oas.samhsa.org).

<sup>382</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. 2005. Substate estimates from the 1999-2001 national surveys on drug use and health. [www.oas.samhsa.gov](http://www.oas.samhsa.gov).



**Figure 84 Age-adjusted drug-related death rates per 100,000 population, Kansas City, MO**



The National Institute on Drug Abuse sponsors a program known as *Monitoring the Future* which is based on a series of surveys examining the behaviors, attitudes, and values of American secondary school students, college students, and young adults up to age 45 y old towards drugs and their use. At the core of *Monitoring the Future* is a series of annual surveys of adolescents that is conducted by the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research. According to those surveys, illicit drug use reached its recent peak among teens in 1996 or 1997, depending on grade. Since then, only the 8<sup>th</sup> graders have exhibited a gradual, ongoing decline in illicit drug use. Use in the upper grades held fairly constant until 2002, when all three grades finally began to show some decline. That decline continued into 2003, with statistically significant drops observed in annual prevalence in 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades and a nearly significant drop in 12<sup>th</sup> grade. In 2004, the level of use for most drugs held steady.<sup>383</sup> In addition, fewer young people in each grade said that they have ever used an illicit drug.

In the Kansas City area, similar surveys of adolescents had been supported by the Kaufman Foundation, and more recently taken over by the Partnership for Children (Table 89). The age of initiation into marijuana use appears to be at 15 or 16 y old. However, >25% of students first smoked marijuana between the ages of 12 and 14.

<sup>383</sup> Johnston LD et al. 2006. Monitoring the Future national results on adolescent drug use; overview of key findings, 2005. National Institute of Health Pub No 05-5726. Bethesda, MD: National Institute on Drug Abuse. [www.monitoringthefuture.org](http://www.monitoringthefuture.org)

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**Table 89 Percentages of 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students who ever tried selected drugs, Kansas City, MO\***

	School Year				
	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
8 <sup>th</sup> grade					
Marijuana	23.5	20.9	23.5	19.7	16.9
Cocaine	2.9	2.4	3.2	2.6	3.4
10 <sup>th</sup> grade					
Marijuana	39.8	37.4	26.9	29.3	35.5
Cocaine	5.2	4.5	3.9	4.8	5.8
12 <sup>th</sup> grade					
Marijuana	50.1	48.4	48.9	46.6	48.2
Cocaine	7.4	7.8	9.2	6.7	8.5

\* Source: Kauffman Teen Survey Trends

For cocaine, among 8<sup>th</sup> grade users, 21% reported using it >20 times in the prior 30 days; 30% of boys who used cocaine versus 9% of girls. Overall cocaine use increased among 10<sup>th</sup> graders, but <50% reported using it in the prior 30 days. Tenth grade girls reported a higher rate of cocaine use, 1 to 4 times in the prior 30 days, while more boys said they had used it ≥5 times. Among 12<sup>th</sup> graders who reported using cocaine, the majority had not used it in the previous 30 days and there was no difference between males and females.