

“Gateway” Theory & Teen Use

Science-Based Policy For Cannabis

Institute of Medicine at the National Academy of Science (1999 Report Commissioned by Congress)

“MOST DRUG USERS BEGIN WITH ALCOHOL & NICOTINE BEFORE MARIJUANA”

Institute of Medicine Joy JE, Watson SJ, Benson JA, eds. (1999). Marijuana and medicine: Assessing the science base. Institute of Medicine at the National Academy of Science. Washington DC: National Academy Press

Congress has also acknowledged that it is the illegality of cannabis that places its consumers at risk of using other illegal drugs. Prohibition, itself, creates the gateway effect, not cannabis.

PubMed.Gov Article - University of Illinois

“These findings suggest that for a large number of serious drug users, marijuana does not play the role of a 'gateway drug'. We conclude that prevention efforts which focus on alcohol and marijuana may be of limited effectiveness for youth who are at risk for serious drug abuse.”

Mackesy-Amiti ME, Fendrich M, et. al. (1997). “Sequence of drug use among serious drug users: typical vs atypical progression.” Drug Alcohol Depend ;45(3):185-96. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/9179520>

Study Published by Journal of School Health & PubMed.Gov

“Alcohol is the most commonly used substance, and the majority of polysubstance using respondents consumed alcohol prior to tobacco or marijuana initiation.”

Barry AE, et al. (2016). Prioritizing Alcohol Prevention: Establishing Alcohol as the Gateway Drug and Linking Age of First Drink With Illicit Drug Use. Journal of School Health. 2016. Jan;86(1):31-8 <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/m/>

National Institute of Drug Abuse

“Most people who use marijuana do not go on to use other, "harder" substances.”

National Institute of Drug Abuse. (2015). Is Marijuana a Gateway? NIH, DC p6 <http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/marijuana/marijuana-gateway-drug>

“Scientists are also conducting preclinical and clinical trials with marijuana and its extracts to treat...substance use disorders; mental disorders.”

National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2015). Is Marijuana Medicine? Revised April 2015 NIH, DC <http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/marijuana-medicine>

Published by Journal of School Health

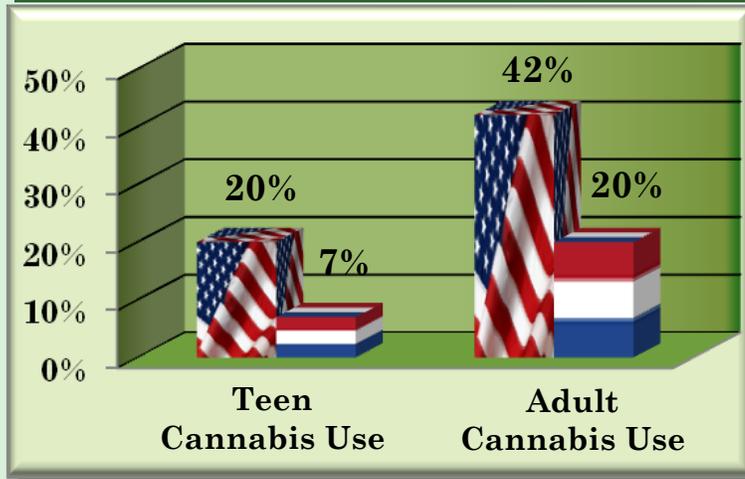
“alcohol represented the “gateway” drug, leading to the use of tobacco, marijuana, and other illicit substances. Moreover, students who used alcohol exhibited a significantly greater likelihood of using both licit and illicit drugs.”

Kirby, T., Barry, A. E. et.al. (2012). Alcohol as a Gateway Drug: A Study of US 12th Graders. Journal of School Health 82: 371–379. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1746-1561.2012.00712.x/>

Teen Use

Prohibition is not preventing children from obtaining cannabis; however, “We Card” programs can be implemented to ensure that only adults over 21 can legally purchase cannabis. A store owner interested in staying in business will not sell to children, nor will they offer them any harder substances to try. Left unregulated, it is easier for children to obtain cannabis than alcohol, because it is unlikely that they will be asked for I.D. if they try to make a cannabis purchase. Also, having not been rigorously tested, the unregulated cannabis could be laced with dangerous & addictive substances.

2008 World Health Organization Report Comparing U.S. v Netherlands



According to the World Health Organization, in the U.S., where cannabis is criminalized, the teen use rate is **nearly triple** the teen use rate in the Netherlands, where cannabis has been regulated in a manner similar to alcohol since the 1970s. Further, the U.S. adult rate is **over twice as high as** the Netherlands' adult use rate.

World Health Organization. (2008). *Toward a Global View of Alcohol, Tobacco, Cannabis, and Cocaine Use: Findings from the WHO World Health Surveys*. Public Library of Science Medicine Vol.5 No. 7:p.1057

NIDA/Johns Hopkins Study

“Despite considerable changes in state marijuana policies over the past 15 years, marijuana use among high school students has largely declined.”

Johnson RM, Fairman B., et al. (2015). Past 15-year trends in adolescent marijuana use: Differences by race/ethnicity and sex. *Drug Alcohol Depend.* Oct 1;155:8-15 Funded By: National Institutes of Health's National Institute on Drug Abuse and National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism <http://www.jhsph.edu/news/news-releases/2015/teen-marijuana-use-down-despite-greater-availability.html>

A 2014 University of Delaware study, funded by the Delaware Department of Health and Human Services, shows teen use of nicotine is on a steady decline in Delaware. Not one teen had to be arrested or subjected to the criminal justice system for that to occur, and no lives were permanently destroyed with a damaging criminal record. Education, regulation, & robust “We Card” programs are proven to reduced use.

Center for Drug & Health Studies, University of Delaware. (2014). Delaware School Survey: Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs Among Delaware Teens Funded by DHSS/DSDMH <https://www.cdhs.udel.edu/content-sub-site/Documents/DDATA/2014%20DSS%20State%20Report.pdf>

American Pediatric Society

“The illegality of marijuana has resulted in the incarceration of hundreds of thousands of adolescents, with overrepresentation of minority youth. A criminal record can have lifelong negative effects on an adolescent who otherwise has had no criminal justice history. These effects can include ineligibility for college loans, housing, financial aid, and certain kinds of jobs.”

American Pediatric Society. (2015). The Impact of Marijuana Policies on Youth: Clinical, Research, and Legal. <http://m.pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2015/01/20/peds.2014-4146.full.pdf>

Education
Not
Prohibition