

Peers & Substance Use in Missouri



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Peers are highly influential in an adolescent's choice to use substances. The Missouri Student Survey asks several questions about the youth's perception of their friends' attitudes about using substances and one question about their friends' actual use. All data below is from the 2014 Missouri Student Survey.

One series of questions asks "How cool do you think your peers believe someone your age would be if they used [substance]?". Results are presented in the table below.

Student's Reported Past Month Substance Use by Perceived "Coolness" Of Use

	Cigarettes	Alcohol	Marijuana
Very Cool	21%	35%	29%
Not at All Cool	5%	5%	3%

Another series of questions asks "How wrong do your friends feel it would be for you to use [substance]?". Results are presented in the table below.

Student's Reported Past Month Substance Use by Perceived "Wrongness" Of Use

	Cigarettes	Alcohol	Marijuana
Not Wrong at All	36%	42%	38%
Very Wrong	2%	3%	1%

A third series of questions asks "During the past year (12 months), how many of the friends you feel closest to have used [substance]?". Results are presented in the table below.

Student's Reported Past Month Substance Use by Friend's Use

	Cigarettes	Alcohol	Marijuana
2+ Friend using	27%	34%	28%
0 Friends using	2%	3%	1%

While this suggests that targeting prevention efforts towards an entire peer group is important, it should be noted that this data does not prove that peer use causes a student to use. It is equally like that those students who use substances chose peer groups who will support that choice.

Behavioral Health



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