

Howard County: Substance Use and Mental Health among High School Cannabis Users



SUMMARY— The Maryland Statewide Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup (SEOW) analyzed the 2018 Maryland Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) for the state and each jurisdiction, focusing on high school students. Among Howard County high school students:

- ◇ Females reported lower rates of current cannabis use than males.
- ◇ Lifetime cannabis users had higher rates of lifetime use of other drugs compared to non-users.
- ◇ Current cannabis users had higher rates of current alcohol use compared to non-users.
- ◇ Current cannabis users had higher rates of feeling sad or hopeless, considered suicide, and/or made a suicide plan compared to non-users.

The 2018 Maryland YRBS is the source of data used for all figures. We have presented results about 'cannabis' use where the survey poses questions regarding 'marijuana' use to reflect a more scientifically appropriate name. The survey uses three time frame measurements when assessing students' substance use and mental health status. Lifetime use is defined as whether or not a student has ever used a substance. Past year substance use is defined as any use in the past 12 months. Current use is defined as substance use in the past 30 days. Current binge alcohol use is defined as five or more drinks in a row in the past 30 days.

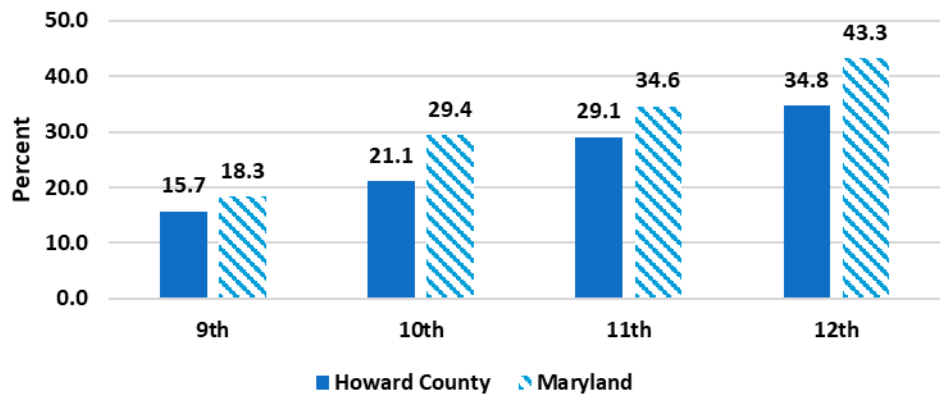


Cannabis Use

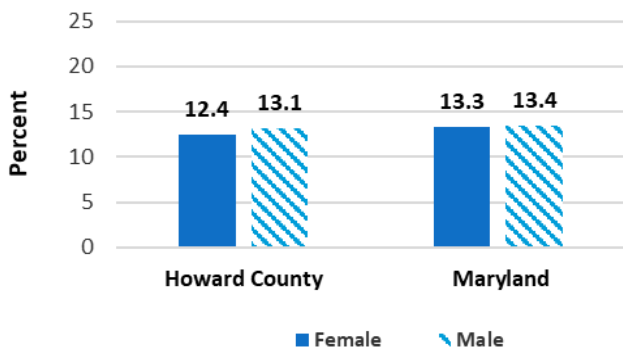
According to the 2018 Maryland Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), 15.7% of Howard County high school 9th graders reported ever using cannabis in their lifetime. More than twice as many Howard County 12th graders reported lifetime cannabis use (34.8%).

Compared to their peers statewide, Howard County high school students reported lower rates of lifetime cannabis use.

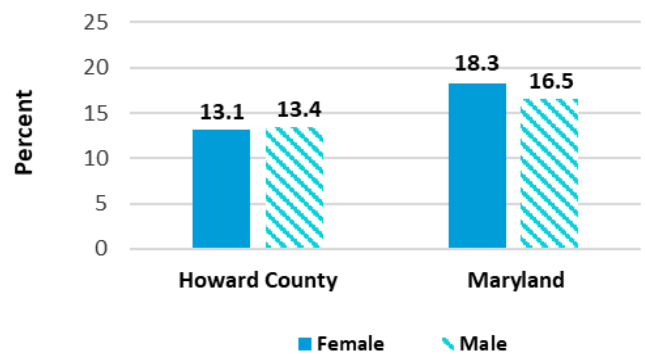
Lifetime Cannabis Use by Grade



Lifetime Electronic Vapor Cannabis Use by Sex



Current Cannabis Use by Sex

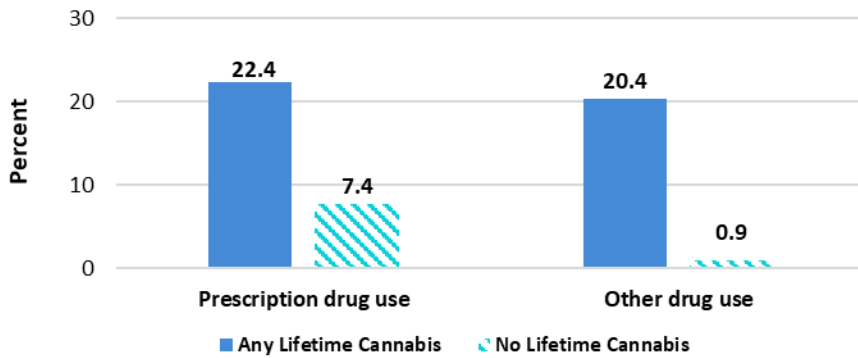


Howard County female students reported a lower rate of any lifetime electronic vapor cannabis use (12.4%) than female students statewide (13.3%). Male students in Howard County reported a similar rate of any lifetime electronic vapor use than male students statewide (13.1% vs. 13.4%, respectively). A lower percentage of Howard County female students reported current cannabis use than female students statewide (13.1% vs. 18.3%, respectively). Similarly, male students in Howard County reported a lower rate of current cannabis use compared to male students statewide (13.4% and 16.5%, respectively).



Other Drug Use

Any Lifetime Drug Use by Lifetime Cannabis Use



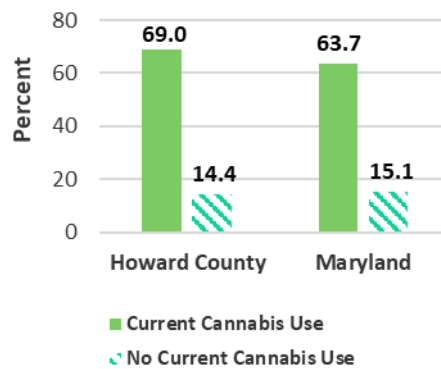
Howard County students who reported any lifetime cannabis use were more likely to report using other substances when compared to their non-cannabis using peers. Over a fifth (22.4%) of those who used cannabis in their lifetime reported using a prescription pain medication without a doctor's prescription. Overall, 20.4% of students who reported using cannabis in their lifetime reported using at least one other drug, including: synthetic cannabis (14.0%), ecstasy (6.7%), or cocaine (7.5%).

'Prescription drug use' is defined as pain medications (e.g., codeine and hydrocodone). 'Other drug use' includes synthetic marijuana, ecstasy, cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine.

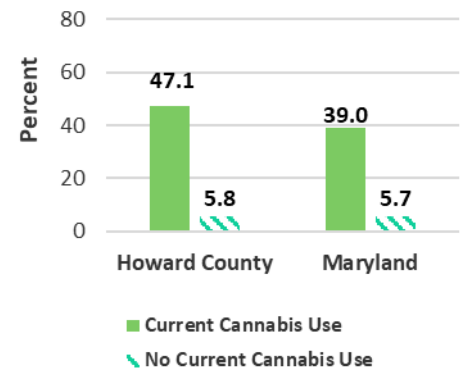
Howard County students who reported current cannabis use were more likely to report current alcohol use (69.0%) compared to their non-cannabis using peers (14.4%). Lower rates of current alcohol use were reported by students who reported current cannabis use statewide (63.7%).

Howard County students who reported current cannabis use were more likely to report current binge drinking (47.1%) compared to peers who denied cannabis use (5.8%). Lower rates were reported by students statewide (39.0% and 5.7%, respectively).

Current Alcohol Use by Current Cannabis Use

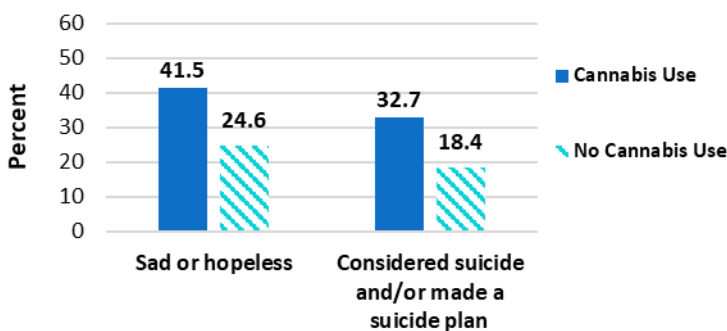


Current Binge Alcohol Use by Current Cannabis Use

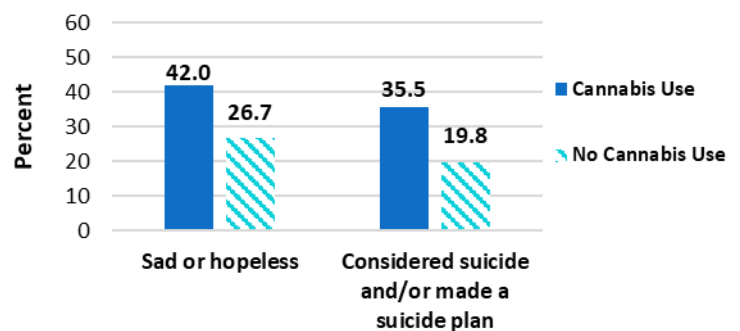


Mental Health

Mental Health Status by Lifetime Cannabis Use



Mental Health Status by Current Cannabis Use



Compared to peers who reported never using cannabis in their lifetime, Howard County high school students who reported any lifetime cannabis use were more likely to report feeling sad or hopeless (41.5% vs. 24.6%, respectively) or considered suicide/made a suicide plan (32.7% vs. 18.4%, respectively). A higher percentage of Howard County high schools students who reported current cannabis use reported feeling sad or hopeless (42.0%) compared to non-cannabis using peers (26.7%) and had higher rates of considered suicide/made a suicide plan (35.5% vs. 19.8%, respectively).