

# Drug use slides

## Local therapist says numbers still scary

By Darrell Pressley  
staff writer

Though the results of a University of Michigan survey show drug use on the decline among high school and college students, the number of young people doing drugs is still significant, said Mary Kay Meier, program supervisor for the Maple Grove Youth Treatment Center in West Bloomfield.

In the annual study, "Monitoring the Future," U-M social scientist Lloyd D. Johnston and several colleagues reported a decrease in the use of crack cocaine and other illicit drugs by high school seniors, college students and young adults between the ages of 19 and 29.

"We are seeing a continuing decline in the proportion of these populations who are actively using any illicit drug, as well as in the proportions using a number of specific drugs such as marijuana, cocaine, crack, stimulants and sedatives," Johnston said in the report.

Cigarette and alcohol use, however, remain high - and the use of hallucinogens has remained constant, according to the study. In fact, the use of LSD is at its highest since 1983.

"THERE IS SOME decline in numbers and that's encouraging," said Meier, who works with adolescents involved in six-week residential plus follow-up treatment. "But

**'Alcohol is the most abused substance in the country. That's the drug that gets the least attention.'**

— Mary Kay Meier  
Maple Grove Treatment Center

I'm still concerned that the numbers are significant."

In 1990, one in 20 high school students (5.3 percent) reported using cocaine at some time in the prior year. That number is down from 13 percent in 1985.

Only one in 50 seniors (1.9 percent) used crack during that time period, down from 4 percent in 1987.

And, for the first time the survey noted a significant drop in the proportion of high school seniors saying they felt they could get cocaine powder fairly easily if they wanted some (down from 54 percent in 1989 to 42 percent in 1990) and crack cocaine (down from 47 percent in 1989 to 42 percent in 1990).

In reviewing the report, Meier said some teenagers who take the survey do not include every instance in which they use a drug - and cut down on their usage when taking the survey.

"The kids who come into treatment tell me that they minimize their use when they take the sur-

vey," Meier said.

Meier added she doesn't agree with the term illicit drugs, because it

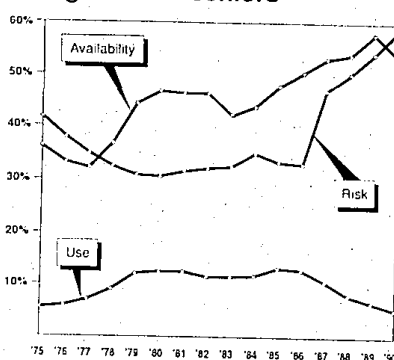
does not include alcohol. "Even alcohol in adults is illicit," she said.

"Alcohol is the most abused substance in the country. That's the drug that gets the least attention."

There is a downplay on alcohol, "because parents drink and they want to continue drinking," Meier said, adding that if teenagers are just drinking, then parents feel they should not be too concerned.

ALCOHOL USE, however, is widespread among those under 21, al-

### Cocaine trends among high school seniors



Availability: Percent saying fairly easy or very easy to get  
Risk: Percent saying great risk of harm in using once or twice  
Use: Percent using once or more in past 12 months

Source: University of Michigan

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though some modest declines have been recorded in use among high school seniors. The proportions reporting any alcohol use in the prior month fell from a peak of 72 percent in 1980 to 57 percent in 1990. And, for the first time in 15 years of the survey, use of alcohol at any time by high school seniors dipped below the 90 percentile mark to 89.5. Highest use was 93.2 percent in 1980.

"Considering that the purchase of alcohol is illegal for all high school seniors, these are still very troubling levels of drinking, though the statistics have been gradually moving in the right direction," Johnston said.

Though there is a decrease in smoking in the general population, there has been no change in the younger generation, Johnston said.

In 1990, 29 percent of high school seniors said they smoked at least some in the prior month, the same number in 1981. The daily smoking rate declined from 20 to 19 percent over the same interval.

THE INCREASE in the use of hallucinogens is consistent with what we're seeing. It subsided for a while, but recently we're seeing an increase, Meier said.

"When the media focuses on one

drug, we kind of lose our awareness of other kinds of chemicals," Meier said.

The numbers for college students using sedatives, hallucinogens, cigarettes increased between 1989 and 1990. Statistics overall, however, have decreased in alcohol and other substances.

With added educational programs and treatment programs for young adults, the study shows that there seems to be more of an awareness of the dangers of these drugs, Meier said.

There is also less tolerance among drug use in our adult population, she said. As parents begin to stop their own drug abuse, "that will continue to have a benefit on our kids."

ALTHOUGH THE NUMBERS are high, the survey is still encouraging, Meier said. "It feels good to know there has been some positive impact," she said.

Adolescents are risk takers and it is important to provide them with education before they become substance abusers, Meier said.

And, she cautioned, the survey is somewhat skewed because "kids who are regular users are not going to be around for their senior year, so they won't see the survey."

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### OCC schedules blood banks

You can give blood on the campuses of Oakland Community College.

No appointments are necessary during the 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. schedule on the dates and locations listed.

• Tuesday, Feb. 12 - Orchard Ridge Campus, 27055 Orchard Lake Road, Farmington Hills.

• Thursday, Feb. 14 - Royal Oak Campus, 739 S. Washington, Royal Oak.

• Wednesday, Feb. 20 - Highland Lakes Campus, 7350 Cooley Lake Road, Union Lake.

More information about the blood banks can be obtained by calling Sylvia Berggren at 967-5757.

### Parks board reappoints 3

Jean Fox, Pecky Lewis Jr. and John Olsen have been reappointed to three-year terms on the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission, the policy-making body for the county park system.

Fox, a member of the Farmington Hills City Council, and Lewis are beginning their fourth terms. Olsen, a county commissioner from Huntington Woods, is beginning his second.



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