

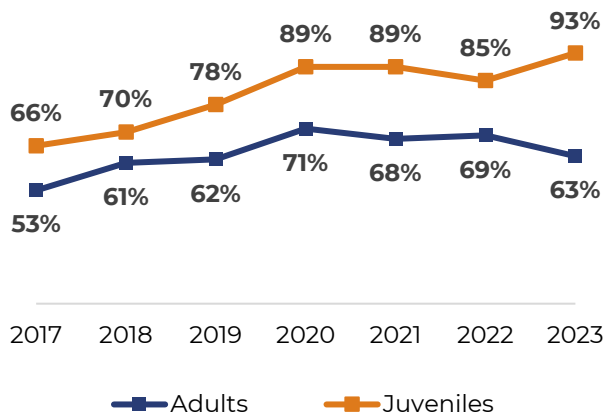
Marijuana Use Among San Diego Arrestees: Seven Years After Proposition 64

As part of SANDAG’s Substance Abuse Monitoring (SAM) project, adults and juveniles booked into San Diego County jails are interviewed in an effort to learn more about substance use trends in the region. Following the passage of Proposition 64 in 2016, which legalized the recreational use of marijuana in California for individuals 21 years of age and older, monitoring marijuana usage trends has become essential for evaluating the potential impacts of legalization on public health and safety. This CJ Flash highlights results from 216 interviews conducted in 2023 and draws comparisons to data from previous years where noteworthy.¹ Findings reveal key trends related to consumption methods, sources of purchase, and perceived benefits and risks.

Highlight 1: Juveniles are increasingly choosing to vape THC

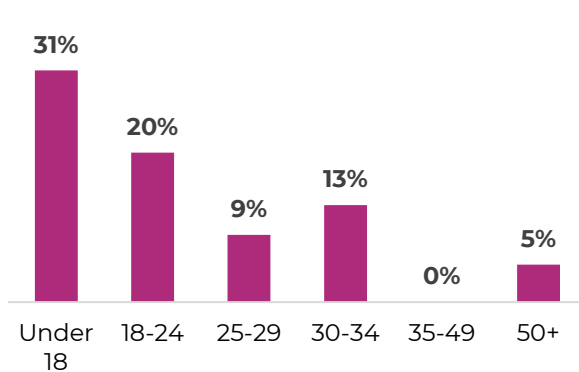
In 2023, over two-thirds (69%) of all respondents reported having vaped THC, with juveniles reporting a significantly higher rate at 93%, compared to 63% among adults. Although juveniles have consistently reported higher vaping rates than adults, the sharp increase in their usage over the years is particularly noteworthy. A clear generational divide also emerged when respondents reported their preferred THC consumption methods. Younger individuals were significantly more likely to report vaping as their preferred method of consuming THC.

Figure 1: Percentage of respondents who have ever vaped THC, 2017 to 2023



Source: SANDAG, 2023

Figure 2: Percentage of respondents who prefer vaping THC by age group*



*Significant at $p < 0.05$.

Note: Age categories 35-39, 40-44, 45-49 were merged to show a cumulative 0%.

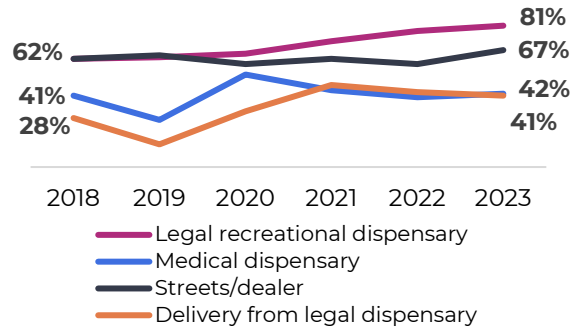
Source: SANDAG, 2023

¹ In 2023, the marijuana addendum was completed with 216 individuals (174 adults and 42 juveniles). Due to an overall decrease in the number of respondents interviewed over time, results should be interpreted with caution. More information about the SAM program is available at [SANDAG.org/cj](https://www.sandag.org/cj).

Highlight 2: Despite a rise in legal recreational purchases, most still buy from street sources

Adults are increasingly reporting purchasing marijuana from legal recreational dispensaries (81% in 2023 compared to 62% in 2018). The rate of adults reporting deliveries from legal dispensaries has also increased over time, from 28% in 2018 to 41% in 2023. However, this shift towards legal recreational sources has not replaced illegal purchases from street dealers, which remains the second most commonly reported source in 2023.

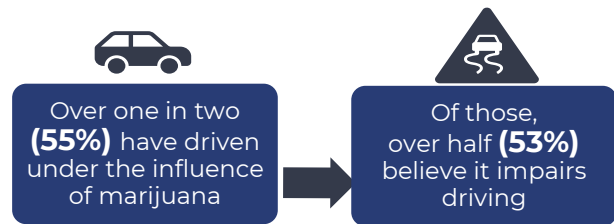
Figure 3: Sources of marijuana acquisition from 2018 to 2023



Highlight 3: Most adults who drove under the influence acknowledge impairment risks

Over half (55%) of adult respondents in 2023 reported ever driving after ingesting or smoking marijuana. Of those, over one in two (53%) believe driving under the influence of marijuana impairs driving. This is particularly notable, given that most adult respondents (69%) believe the potency of marijuana has increased since they first began to use it (not shown).

Figure 4: Adults' experience with driving under the influence of marijuana

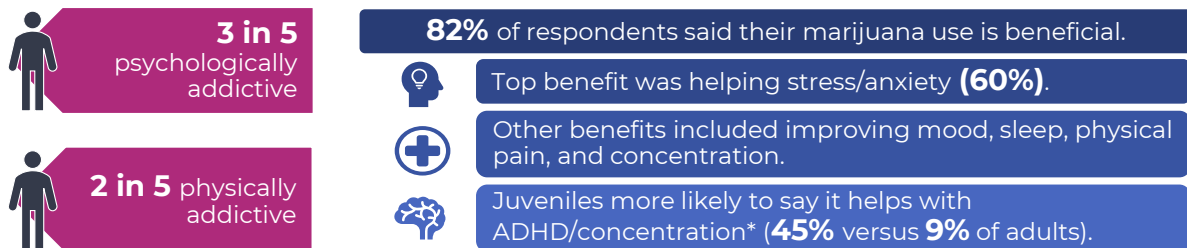


Source: SANDAG, 2023

Highlight 4: Majority of respondents view marijuana as beneficial despite addiction risks

In 2023, three in five (60%) respondents believed marijuana is psychologically addictive and two in five (40%) felt it is physically addictive. Despite these beliefs, a majority of respondents (82%) consider marijuana to be beneficial, particularly for relieving stress and anxiety, suggesting that perceived rewards may outweigh the risks of addiction.

Figure 5: Respondent perceptions of marijuana's addictiveness and benefits



*Significant at $p < 0.05$.

Source: SANDAG, 2023

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