

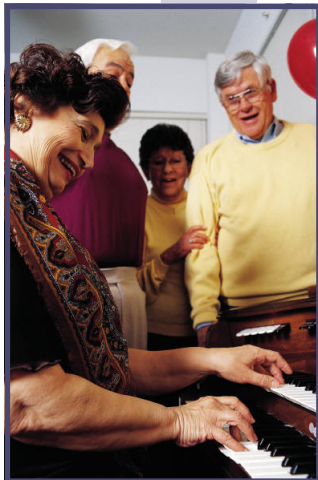
Chapter 9

Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Use

This chapter examines the prevalence of alcohol, tobacco and other drug use. Substance use, including tobacco use and nicotine dependence, is associated with a variety of serious health and social problems.

Highlights of this chapter include:

- ◆ In 2001, three-fourths of all adults in Sonoma County reported consuming alcohol in the past month, significantly higher than the reported consumption for California adults.
- ◆ From 2000 to 2002, there was a significantly higher rate of alcohol-related motor vehicle injuries in Sonoma County than in California. Over 40% of all deaths from motor vehicle accidents were alcohol-related.
- ◆ In 2004, more than one in three (36%) Sonoma County 11th graders reported drinking and driving or riding in a car driven by someone who had been drinking, significantly higher than for California 11th graders (27%).
- ◆ In 2004, more Sonoma County 9th and 11th graders surveyed reported having smoked marijuana (16% and 28%) in the past 30 days than smoked tobacco (9% and 16%, respectively).



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Over 72 conditions requiring hospitalization are wholly or partially attributable to substance use or abuse.¹ Alcohol, tobacco or other drug use is associated with developing chronic diseases, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease; with transmission of communicable diseases, such as hepatitis B and C and HIV; violence; respiratory illnesses, such as emphysema; unsafe health behaviors, such as high risk sexual practices; injury, such as traffic injuries and fatalities; perinatal health problems, such as fetal alcohol syndrome and low birth weight; mental illness, such as substance-induced mood disorder; and poor oral health.²

Substance abuse affects all racial/ethnic, cultural, and economic groups. Alcohol is the most commonly abused substance and cigarette smoking is far more prevalent than illicit drug use.³

Alcohol Use

Availability

Retail liquor outlets include restaurants and other establishments that sell alcohol. Sonoma County's growing wine industry, and the tourism from wine (such as winery gift shops) account for much but not all of the higher number of liquor outlets in the county.

While the concentration of retail liquor outlets per 100,000 population in California has decreased

Table 9.1
Retail Liquor Outlets*, Sonoma County and California 1999-2002

	1999	2000	2001	2002
Sonoma County	267.6	270.6	276.7	285.6
California	194.7	194.6	191.6	188.7

*Per 100,000 population.

Source: Community Indicator of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Risk, Sonoma County 2004.

Table 9.2
Adult Drinking Habits by Gender

	Male	Female
Moderate drinker	2 or less drinks/day	1 or less drinks/day
Heavy drinker	More than 2 drinks/day	More than 1 drink/day
Binge drinker	5+ drinks in a short period of time	4+ drinks in a short period of time

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Alcohol and Public Health, Q&A on Consumption.

each year, the proportion of outlets in Sonoma County has increased (Table 9.1).⁴

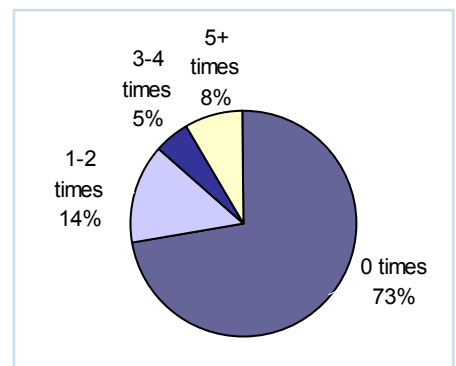
Alcohol Use by Adults

In 2001, three-fourths of Sonoma County adults reported consuming alcohol in the previous month compared to 59% of California adults.⁵

In 2001, 21% of Sonoma County adults reported that they had consumed more than five drinks at one time (considered binge drinking) at least once in the past month.

Over 8% of adults reported binge

Figure 9.1
Adult Binge Drinking* in the Past Month by Number of Times 5+ Drinks were Consumed, Sonoma County 2001



*For adults who reported that they consumed alcohol in the past month. Source: California Health Interview Survey, Sonoma County 2001.

drinking five or more times in the past month (Figure 9.1), significantly higher than the California rate of 4.7%.

The Healthy People 2010 goal for adults age 18+ is to reduce to 6% those who engaged in binge drinking in the past month.⁶

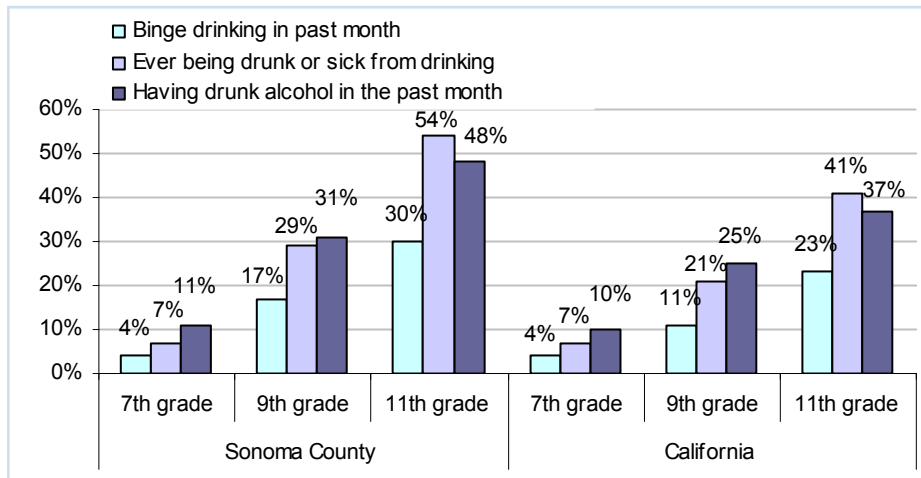
Alcohol Use by Youth

The California Healthy Kids Survey is a bi-annual survey of public school students that asks youth about their alcohol, tobacco and other drug use, in addition to other health-related behaviors. Highlights from the 2004 survey are presented in Figure 9.2 and Figure 9.3.⁷

Reported alcohol usage increased with educational grade level. Students in 11th grade report significantly higher alcohol use than stu-

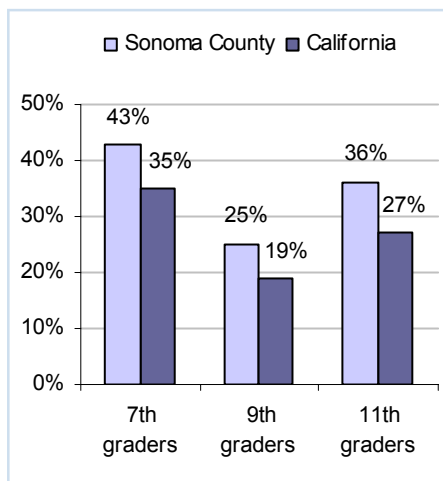


Figure 9.2
Percent of Sonoma County students who reported...



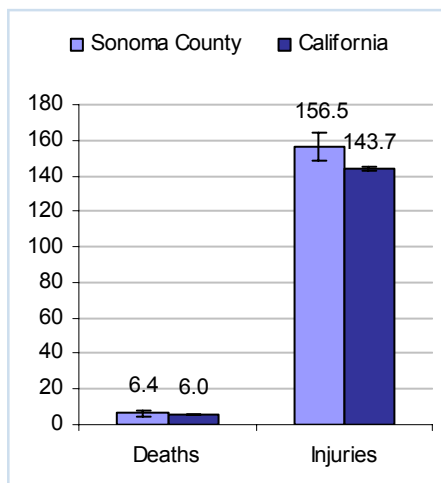
Source: California Healthy Kids Survey, Sonoma County 2004.

Figure 9.3
Percent of Students who Report Drinking and Driving, or Being a Passenger in a car Driven by Someone who has been Drinking, Sonoma County and California 2004



Source: California Healthy Kids Survey, Sonoma County 2004.

Figure 9.4
Alcohol-related Death and Injury Rates* from Motor Vehicle Accidents, Sonoma County and California 2000-2002



*Rates are age-adjusted and per 100,000 population.

Source: California Highway Patrol Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System 2002.

dents in 7th and 9th grades.

In 2004, 25% of Sonoma County 7th graders reported having used alcohol or other drugs. Prevalence of drug or alcohol use climbs to 76% for 11th graders.

For three alcohol questions asked, Sonoma County 9th and 11th grade students reported significantly higher alcohol use rates than California 9th and 11th grade students.

The Healthy People 2010 target for adolescent binge drinking in the past month is 2% of youth age 12-17. For Sonoma County teens, the proportion reporting recent binge drinking is many times higher than this for all ages, including those who are youngest.⁸

More than one in three (36%) Sonoma County 11th graders reported drinking and driving or riding in a car driven by someone who had been drinking. This is significantly higher than for California 11th graders (27%).

Alcohol-related Outcomes

From 2000 to 2002, over 40% of all deaths from motor vehicle accidents to Sonoma County residents were alcohol-related.⁹

From 2000 to 2002, there was a significantly higher rate of alcohol-related motor vehicle injuries in Sonoma County than in California (156.5/100,000 licensed drivers

compared to 143.7/100,000) (Figure 9.4).

The overall alcohol-related collision rate decreased significantly from 1998-1999 to 2000-2001 (124.7/100,000 and 110.2/100,000). This decrease was due to a significant decline in the rate of alcohol-related injury collisions. The two year average alcohol-related fatal collision rate did not change significantly over the 1998-2002 time period (Figure 9.5).¹⁰

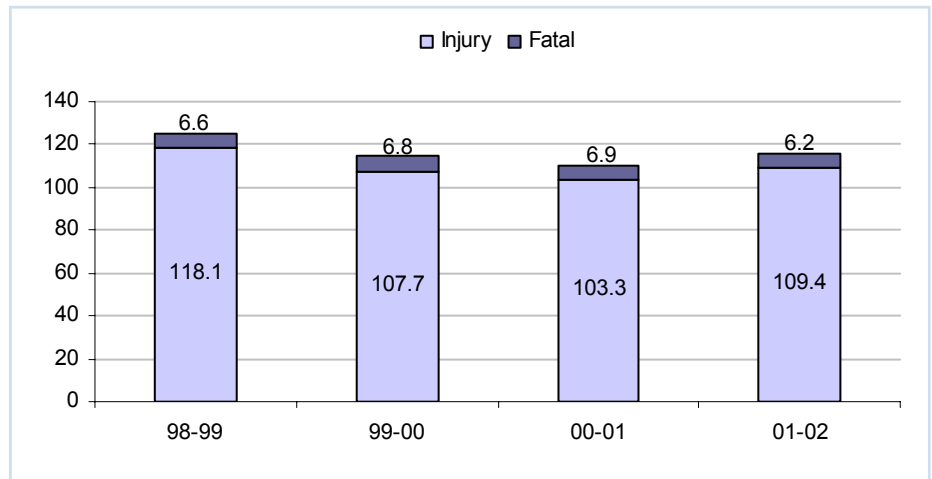
Admission rates of adolescents (age <18) and adults into alcohol and drug treatment programs have increased significantly since the 1990's. However, since the rates are directly linked to program capacity and treatment demand, they are less useful as a measurement of overall prevalence of substance abuse in the population.¹⁰

Tobacco

Despite the high level of public knowledge of the damaging effects of cigarette smoking, tobacco use remains a leading preventable cause of disease and death.¹¹ Tobacco use, both smoking or chewing, has been linked to a wide range of serious health problems, including heart disease, cancer, respiratory ailments (such as chronic obstructive lung disease), burns, low birth weight, and SIDS and other problems of infancy.

These health problems occur not

Figure 9.5
Alcohol-involved Collision Rates* by Outcome, Two Year Rolling Average, Sonoma County 1998-2002



*Rates are per 100,000 licensed drivers.

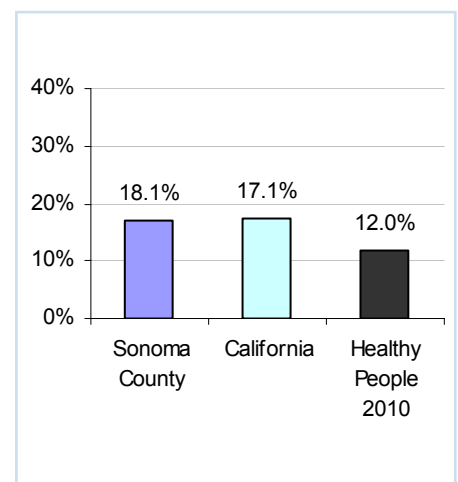
Source: California Highway Patrol Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System 1998-2002.

only in persons who use tobacco, but also among individuals exposed to second-hand smoke.¹² See Chapters 6 and 11 for more information on tobacco-related chronic diseases.

The prevalence of current smokers in Sonoma County in 2001 was similar to the California prevalence (16.9% compared to 17.4%, respectively) (Figure 9.6). As of 2001, Sonoma County had not met the Healthy People 2010 goal of 12% current smokers in the population.¹³

In 2001, approximately 31.2% of Sonoma County men and 28.5% of women reported that they were former smokers; 51.8% of men and 56.7% of women report they have never smoked.

Figure 9.6
Percent of Population who are Current Cigarette Smokers, Sonoma County and California 2001



Source: California Health Interview Survey, Sonoma County 2001.



Table 9.3
Perceived Harm of Frequent* Cigarette Smoking, Sonoma County 2004

	7th grade	9th grade	11th grade
Extremely harmful	56%	53%	63%
Harmful	32%	33%	28%
Somewhat harmful	9%	10%	7%
Mainly harmless	2%	2%	1%
Harmless	2%	2%	1%

*Frequent use is defined as daily or almost daily.

Source: California Healthy Kids Survey 2004.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 80% of adult tobacco users start smoking as teens.¹⁴ In 2004, approximately 14% of 7th graders reported ever smoking. This rate increased significantly by the 11th grade to 44%.

The percent of 9th and 11th grade students in Sonoma County who reported being current smokers (as defined by smoking any cigarettes in the past 30 days) has decreased each year since 2000. In 2004, 9% of 9th graders and 16% of 11th graders reported being current smokers, compared to 13% and 24%, respectively in 2000. These smoking rates are similar to California teen smoking rates.

In 2004, the proportion of 11th grade students who perceived frequent use of cigarettes as extremely harmful was significantly higher than for 7th and 9th graders (Table

9.3), even though the proportion of students who were current smokers increased with grade level.

In 2004, the proportion of Sonoma County youth who reported having used smokeless tobacco in the past 30 days was between two and five percent.

Second-hand Smoke

In the U.S., an estimated 21 million, or 35%, of children live in homes where residents or visitors smoke in the home on a regular basis. Between 50% and 75% of these children are estimated to have detectable blood levels of cotinine, the breakdown product of nicotine.¹⁵

Increased attention to the health dangers of second-hand tobacco smoke exposure, particularly for infants and children within their own homes, is evident in the changes in beliefs, policies, and levels of exposure to tobacco smoke in the tri-county region of Sonoma, Napa and Marin counties.¹⁶

Almost 98% of adults in the tri-county region are protected by a complete smoking ban in their workplace.¹⁷ This approaches the Healthy People 2010 goal of 100% of worksites with a formal smoking policy that prohibits smoking, or limits it to separately ventilated areas.¹⁸

In California, over three-quarters (76.9%) of homes were smoke-free

in 2002, a significant increase from 1999 (72.8%). In 2002, nearly half of all smokers (49%) lived in smoke-free homes (homes where smoking was not allowed indoors).¹⁹

Between 1996 and 2002, the number of adults in the tri-county region who reported a complete smoking ban in their homes rose from 66% to 80%.²⁰

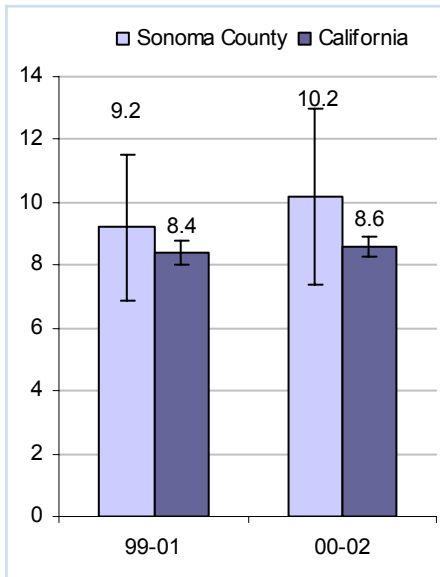
In 2003, according to data collected by the Sonoma County Families First Home Visiting program on families with a recent first-born child who agreed to participate, 5% or fewer mothers reported that they were smokers and 10% of families said there was exposure to second-hand tobacco smoke in their homes.²¹

Illegal Drugs

Illegal drug use is difficult to measure. The problem of inaccurate response is common in surveys of drug abuse, since illegal drug use is a stigmatized behavior and respondents are reluctant to report it accurately. Also, surveys used to estimate illegal drug use prevalence in the population do not adequately reach those at highest risk for abuse – people in prisons and jails, hospitals, residential treatment centers, homeless people, and school dropouts.²²

Methamphetamine use is a growing problem in Sonoma County and in California, with methamphetamine-

Figure 9.7
Drug-related Death Rate*, Three Year Rolling Average, Sonoma County and California 1999-2002



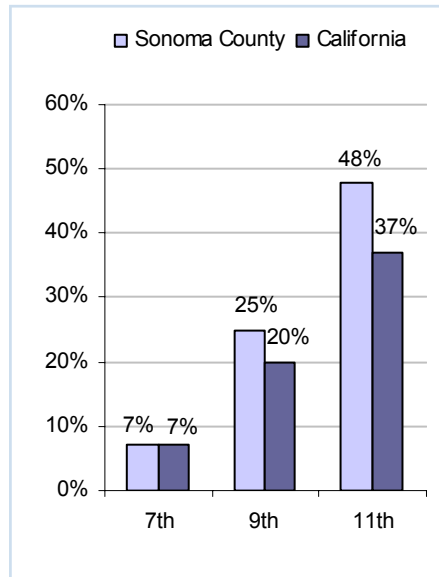
*Rates are age-adjusted and per 100,000 population.
Source: California Department of Health Services, county health status profiles 2003-2004.

related arrests increasing as much as 100% since 2001.²³ In 2003-2004, more than 40% of all Sonoma County drug treatment admissions were for methamphetamine use.²⁴

Drug-related deaths include deaths due to mental and behavioral disorders due to substance abuse, accidental or intentional poisoning by drugs and other biologics or solid/liquid substances and vapors, and poisoning by and exposure to drugs and biologic substances with undetermined intent.²⁵

The age-adjusted death rate for drug-related causes did not change

Figure 9.8
Percent of Students who have Ever Been "High" from Drug Use, Sonoma County and California 2004



Source: California Healthy Kids Survey, Sonoma County 2004.

significantly from 1999-2001 to 2000-2002 in Sonoma County.²⁶

Sonoma County had similar rates of drug-related death as California from 1999 to 2002 (Figure 9.7).

Sonoma County has not met the Healthy People 2010 goal for drug-related deaths (1.0/100,000).²⁷

Almost half of Sonoma County 11th graders reported they had ever been high from drugs. While this proportion decreased slightly from 2002 (51%) to 2004 (48%), it was still significantly higher for Sonoma County than for California (Figure 9.8).

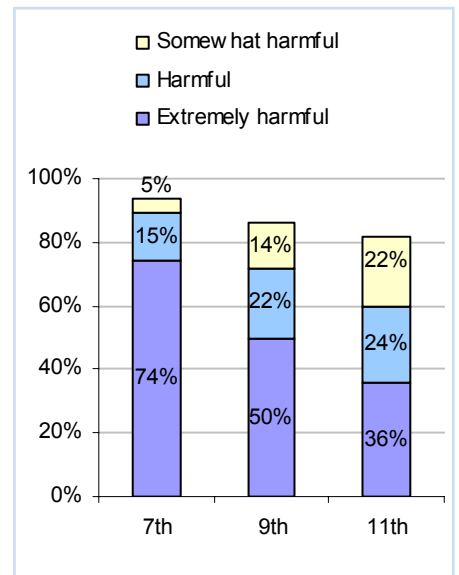
In 2004, the percent of Sonoma

Table 9.4
Percent of Students Reported Having Used Marijuana in the Past 30 Days, Sonoma County and California 2004

	7th	9th	11th
Sonoma County	4%	16%	28%
California	4%	12%	20%

Source: California Healthy Kids Survey, Sonoma County and California 2004.

Figure 9.9
Perceived Harm of Frequent* Marijuana Use, Sonoma County 2004



*Frequent use is defined as daily or almost daily.

Source: California Healthy Kids Survey 2004.

County youth in 7th and 9th grades who reported smoking marijuana in the past 30 days was similar to California. For 11th graders, however, the percent was significantly higher for Sonoma County students than for California (Table 9.4). However, this level represents a



significant decrease from 2002 (32%) to 2004 (28%).

In Sonoma County in 2004, more 7th, 9th and 11th grade youth reported they had smoked marijuana in the past 30 days than tobacco (14.5% of students surveyed versus 8.5%).

The proportion of Sonoma County students who reported that they viewed daily/almost daily use of marijuana as extremely harmful decreased with education level, 74% of 9th graders compared to only 36% of 11th graders (Figure 9.9). Sixty-three percent of these 11th graders, however, viewed frequent cigarette smoking as extremely harmful.

Sonoma County has not met the Healthy People 2010 goal to increase the proportion of adolescents who perceive great risk (extreme harm) associated with frequent marijuana use to 80% (in 2004 the average for 7th through 11th graders was 55.6%).²⁸



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