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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 1983

Dear School Principal:

In the past several years I have visited drug rehabilitation centers and prevention programs across the country to talk with as many young people as possible. What I have seen and heard is enough to make the strongest heart break.

Never have I felt as compelled to do something about an issue as I feel now about the problem of drug use among our school-age children. The children who are using drugs are younger all the time. Drugs are taking away their hope, their promise, their spirit and, sometimes, even their lives.

I am writing to you because we need your help in solving this terrifying problem. No one can do it alone. All of us -- educators, parents and students -- need to work together.

Very soon you will receive a package of materials especially designed to help combat the drug problem. The package will contain clever comic books written on the subject, a classroom poster, a teacher's guide and awards for students participating in the project.

These materials are designed with fourth-graders in mind. More than a million of the books will be available, but unfortunately, even this quantity cannot reach all of the fourth-graders in the nation. With your encouragement, we hope the students will share these materials with their classmates this spring or in the fall.

I thank Secretary Bell, the Department of Education and the Association of Elementary and Secondary School Principals for their assistance and I commend the generous corporations which provided the financial resources for this project.

With educators, parents and students all working together, I am convinced we can make a difference and make possible a drug-free future for our youth.

Sincerely,

Nancy Reagan

NANCY REAGAN

THE WHITE HOUSE

Dear Friend:

Don't let anyone tell you that you can't be a hero. You can--and you are about to learn how.

Picture yourself in a battle. In fact, it is one of the most important battles our nation has ever fought. You are right in the center of combat. Sound incredible? It is all part of being a hero.

Is this an imaginary battle? Not at all. Many young people are already in it and they would do anything to be on the winning side. But they've learned about it too late.

The battle is against drug abuse. Declare that you will stay drug-free. At any cost. You're guaranteed to win. And you'll be a hero--to your mother and father, family and friends, but most of all, to yourself.

There's a lot more to it and you'll learn about it as you go along. The President feels as strongly as I do about winning this battle. His Drug Awareness Campaign put this material together and generous corporations paid for it. It was done especially for you. We hope you will give being a hero your very best effort.

Sincerely,

Ronald Reagan

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

April 25, 1983

PRIVATE SECTOR DRUG ABUSE AWARENESS PROGRAM

Dr. Carlton Turner, Special Assistant to the President for Drug Abuse Policy, today announced the release of the first in a series of drug abuse awareness comic books. Joining Dr. Turner were representatives of DC Comics, a division of Warner Communications, and The Keebler Company.

DC Comics donated the talent and artwork for the comic books, and production was made possible by a grant from The Keebler Company. A million copies of the comic book package are being mailed this month to elementary schools across the nation for distribution to fourth grades. The Department of Education assumed mailing and distribution responsibilities.

The comic book project is part of a White House campaign to enlist the private sector in the national campaign against drug abuse. The Keebler Company and DC Comics sponsored the first comic book project for the fourth grade; a similar project for fifth and sixth graders is being developed. The fifth grade project is being sponsored by IBM, the National Federation of Parents for a Drug Free Youth, and DC Comics Inc. The sixth grade project is being made possible by the National Soft Drink Association and DC Comics.

The First Lady wrote a letter to the students which has been included in each comic book. She also sent a letter to the principals of each school encouraging their support of the program.

A related project for the development of a drug abuse awareness coloring book for kindergarten through third grades is also planned.

Also joining in the announcement was Dr. Terry Borton, Editor-in-Chief of the classroom publication The Weekly Reader. Dr. Borton released the findings of a readership poll from the fourth through twelfth grades. The poll, comprising responses from 500,000 school children, makes clear the case for early education in drug abuse awareness. The grade school children report peer pressure to try drugs and alcohol is evident as early as the fourth grade.

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“JOIN THE PRESIDENT’S DRUG AWARENESS CAMPAIGN”



WE WANT YOU
TO BE A HERO...
STAY DRUG FREE!



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

UPDATE ON DRUG ABUSE PREVENTION CAMPAIGN

-- TRENDS IMPROVING --

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April 28, 1983

UPDATE ON DRUG ABUSE PREVENTION CAMPAIGN--TRENDS IMPROVING

The Administration has embarked on a vigorous program to reduce drug abuse in the United States, including international initiatives and strong law enforcement to reduce the availability of illicit drugs. The South Florida Task Force, the 12 DEA/FBI Regional Task Forces, and The National Narcotics Border Interdiction System are part of the supply reduction effort.

Simultaneously, a major long-term prevention campaign was mounted on the health side, directed primarily at drug abuse among young people. It is primarily a non-Federally funded private sector prevention initiative, with emphasis on Federal leadership serving as a catalyst for action.

The prevention effort is beginning to pay dividends. Thus far in 1983, the surveys used to measure drug abuse reflect significant improvement in use patterns. The 1982 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse, The 1982 High School Seniors Survey, The Gallup Youth Survey, and a survey of high achievers by Who's Who Among American High School Students show similar trends. For example:

- In 1978, marijuana use by high school seniors peaked at 11% or 1 in 9 reporting daily use. In 1982, daily use had dropped to 6.3% or 1 in 16.
- The Household Survey reports that between 1979 and 1982, 2.4 million Americans stopped using marijuana, 1.1 million Americans stopped using hallucinogens, 195,000 Americans stopped using cocaine, and 7.3 million Americans, including 2.4 million youngsters, stopped using alcohol on a regular basis.

Additionally, the Department of Defense surveys show significant improvement in drug use trends in the military. Preliminary results show a sharp decline in current marijuana use by junior enlisted personnel. Final results are expected in June.

Mrs. Reagan's involvement in the prevention effort directed at youth has received wide acclaim. Her highly visible support is contributing to the broad public interest and to people getting involved in doing something about drug problems in homes, schools, businesses, and communities.

The Administration's strategy has been directed at a long-term objective of drug-free youth and several initiatives have been planned, in cooperation with the private sector. Two recent well-publicized activities include a special survey by Weekly

Reader periodicals, published by Xerox Education Publications, directed at elementary school children. The first of its kind, it is a survey of young children's attitudes on drugs and alcohol. The survey results indicate a need for change in our approach to drug abuse education. Significant findings:

- 25% of the 4th graders said children their age feel some or a lot of pressure to try beer, wine, liquor, or marijuana.
- The peer pressure increases each year: in the 7th grade 50% feel encouraged to use marijuana, 60% to drink alcohol.
- In the lower grades, the motivation to use drugs or drink was to feel older, in middle grades to fit in, in older grades to have a good time.
- The children in 4th grade believe schools are not a major source of information about drugs; most of their information comes from movies and television and their families. This probably reflects current school drug abuse programs which are based on previous assumptions of a later exposure age and do not start until the 6th or 7th grade.

Simultaneous with the announcement of the survey results was an announcement of a major new initiative directed at elementary school children, with the first project directed at 4th grade children. The first in a series of drug abuse awareness comic books was released on April 25th and includes a million copies of the "New Teen Titans" comic book, with teacher's guide, posters, certificates, and letters from Mrs. Reagan.

The comic book project is part of the White House strategy to enlist the private sector in the national campaign against drug abuse. The Keebler Company and DC Comics sponsored the first comic book project for the fourth grade, and the Department of Education mailed packets to 35,000 elementary schools across the United States. A similar project for fifth and sixth graders is being developed. The fifth grade project is being sponsored by IBM, the National Federation of Parents for a Drug Free Youth, and DC Comics, Inc. The sixth grade project is being sponsored by the National Soft Drink Association and DC Comics. A related project for the development of a drug abuse awareness coloring book for kindergarten through third grades is also planned.

The major press coverage and nationwide interest in the two announcements demonstrate that the President's prevention program is on target. We will continue sending strong messages that this Administration and the American people will not tolerate drug trafficking or drug abuse in the United States.

Selected examples of other private sector participation:

"Pharmacists Against Drug Abuse," sponsored by McNeil Pharmaceuticals.

"Team Up Against Drugs", sponsored by the professional sports organizations.

Congressional Wives Group, organized by Carolyn Mattingly, wife of Senator Mack Mattingly.

Steering Committee on Prescription Drug Abuse, sponsored by the American Medical Association.

Program against look-alike drugs, sponsored by the American Pediatrics Society.

Lions' War Against Drugs, sponsored by Lions Clubs, International.

"The Chemical People" campaign, produced by WQED/Pittsburgh and sponsored by a new National Coalition for the Prevention of Drug and Alcohol Abuse, with 26 service and civic groups participating (representing 15 million members and volunteers).

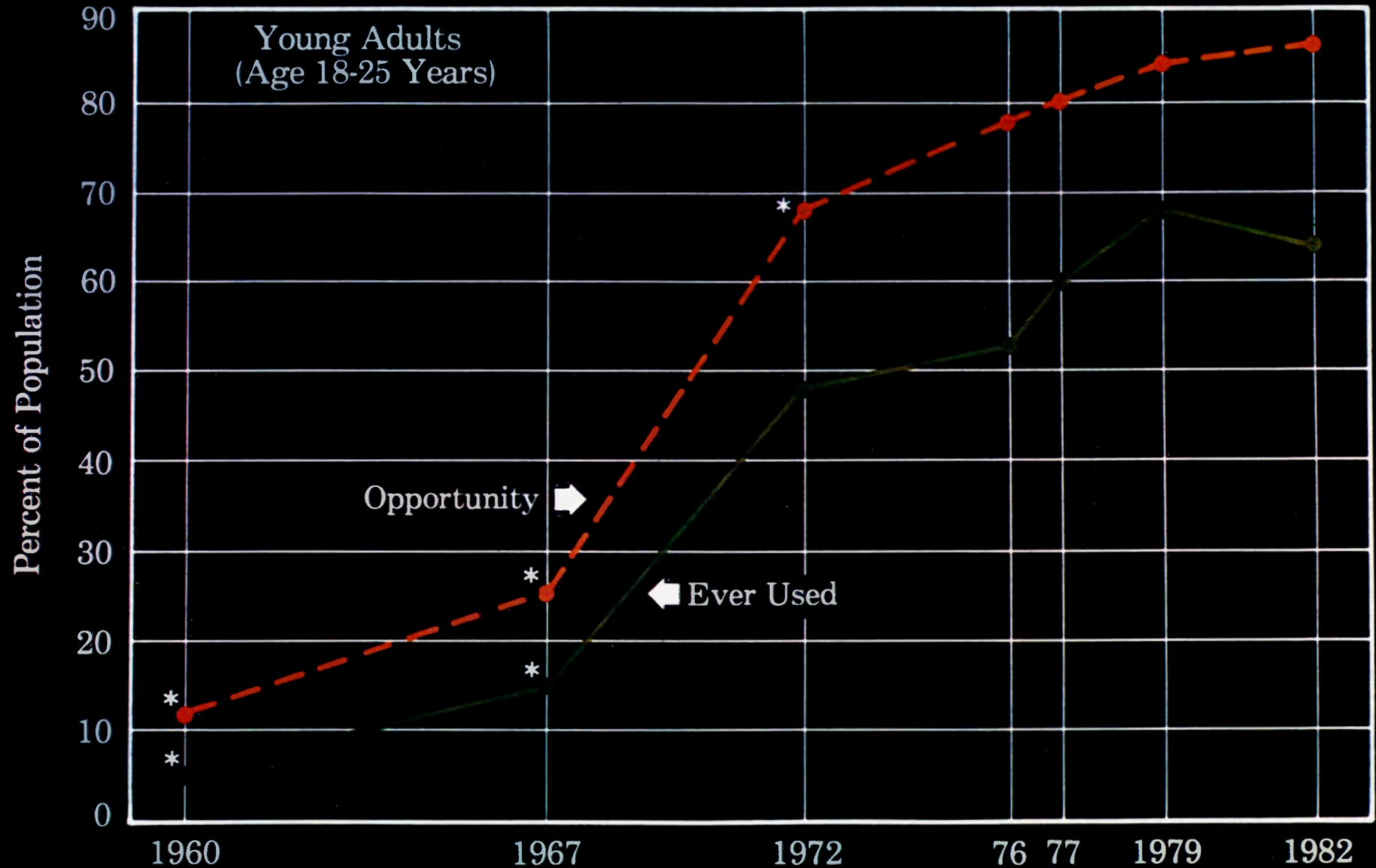
"Don't be a Dope" campaign, sponsored by NBC.

SELECTED GRAPHS AND TABLES

From the
1982 HIGH SCHOOL AND HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS

Prepared by the:
National Institute on Drug Abuse

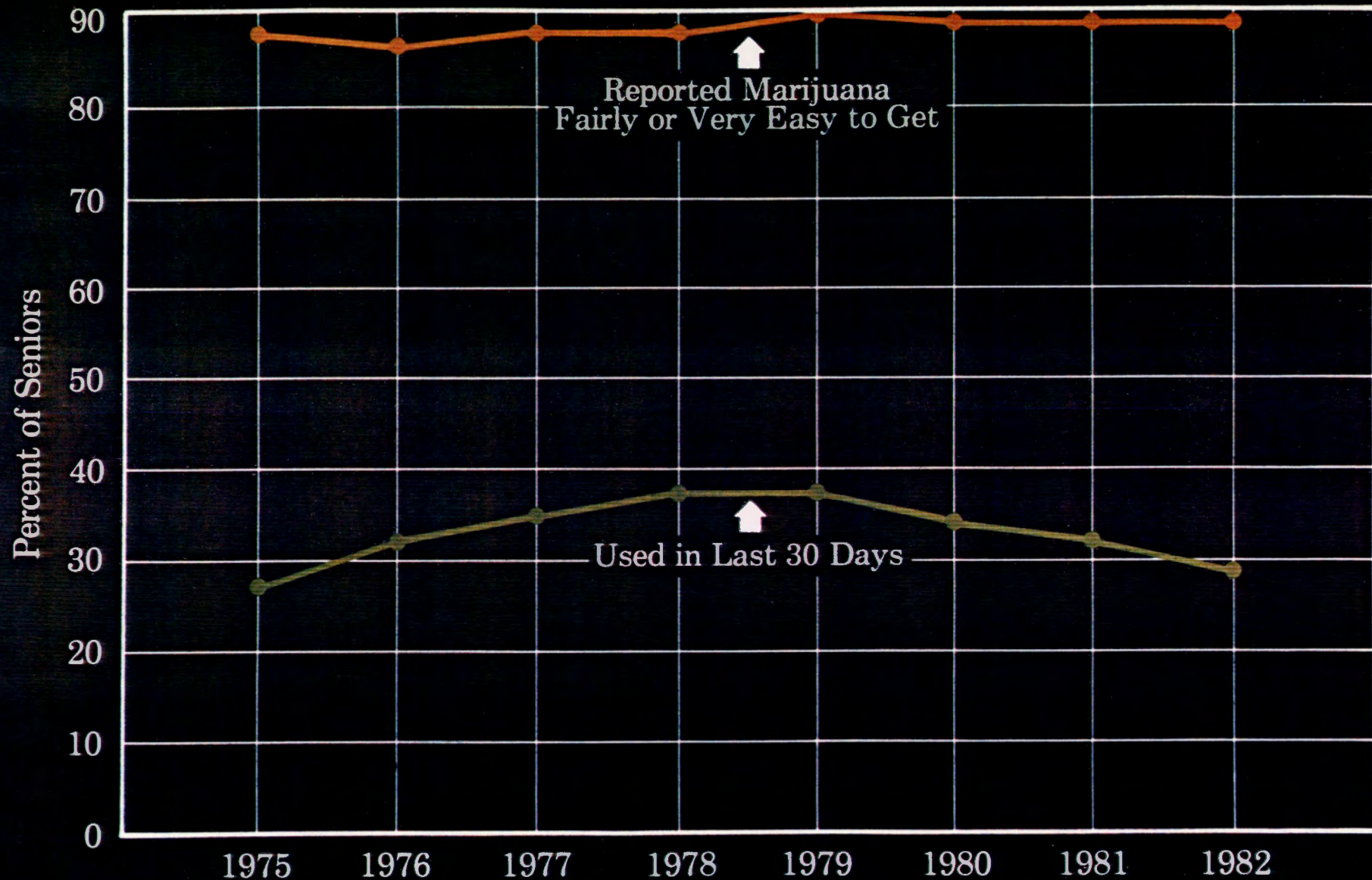
Opportunity to Try Marijuana and Lifetime Experience, Young Adults: 1982



*"Projection" based on reconstructed data.

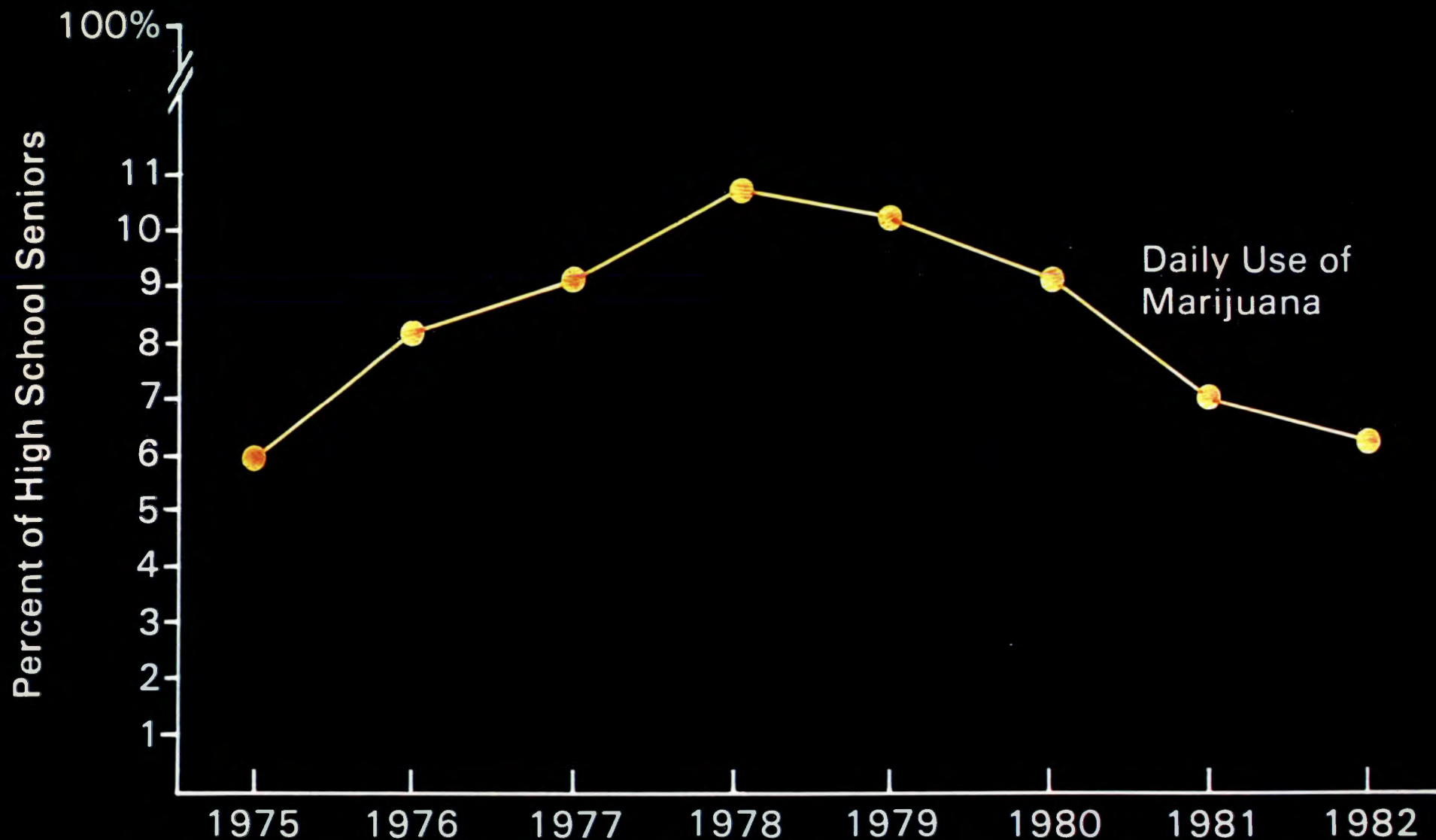
Source: National Institute on Drug Abuse, data from National Household Survey on Drug Abuse

Trends in Marijuana Use and Perceived Availability Among High School Seniors: 1975-1982



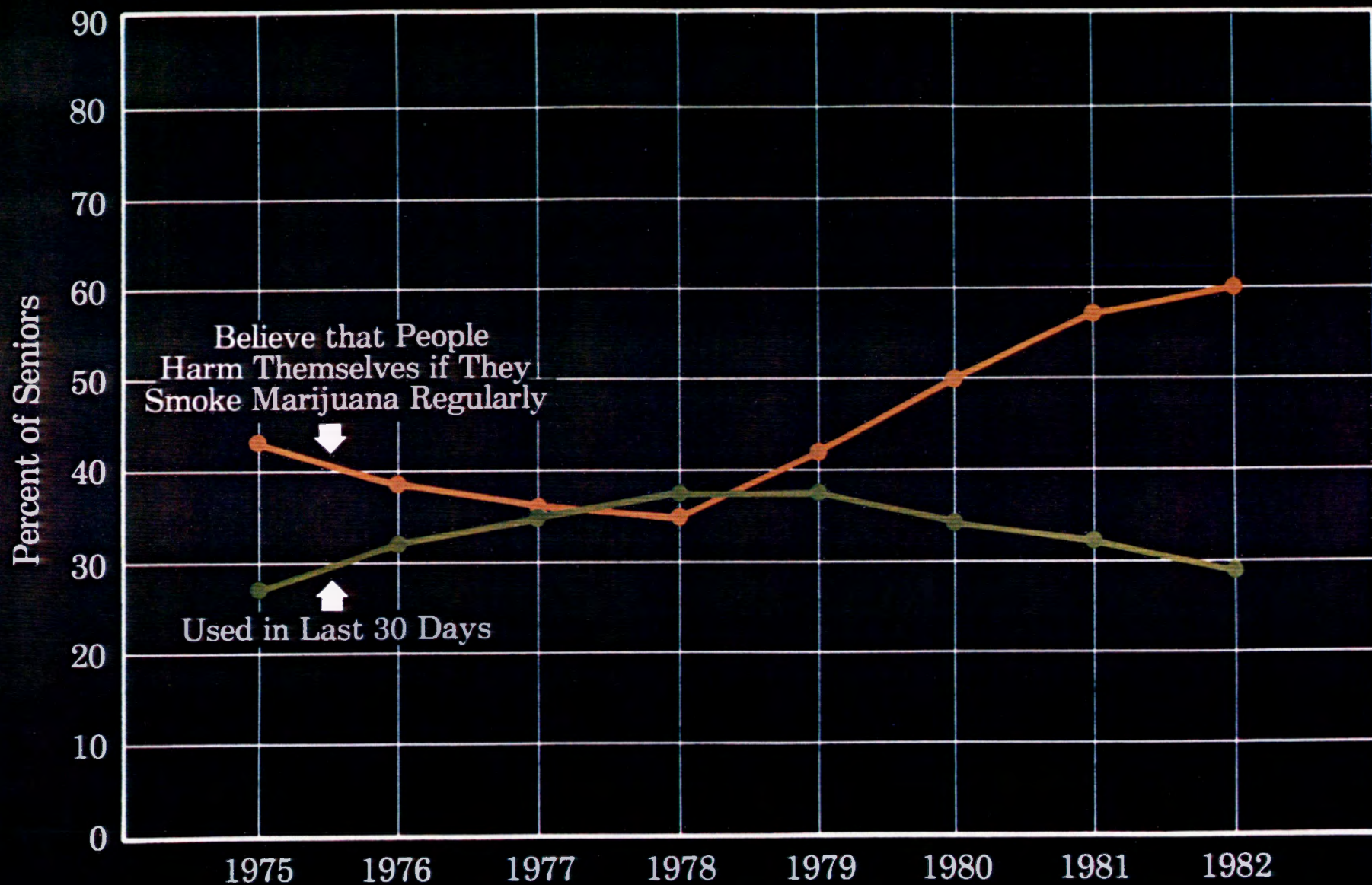
Source: National Institute on Drug Abuse, data from the Monitoring the Future study, 1982.

Daily Marijuana Use, U.S. High School Seniors, 1975-1982



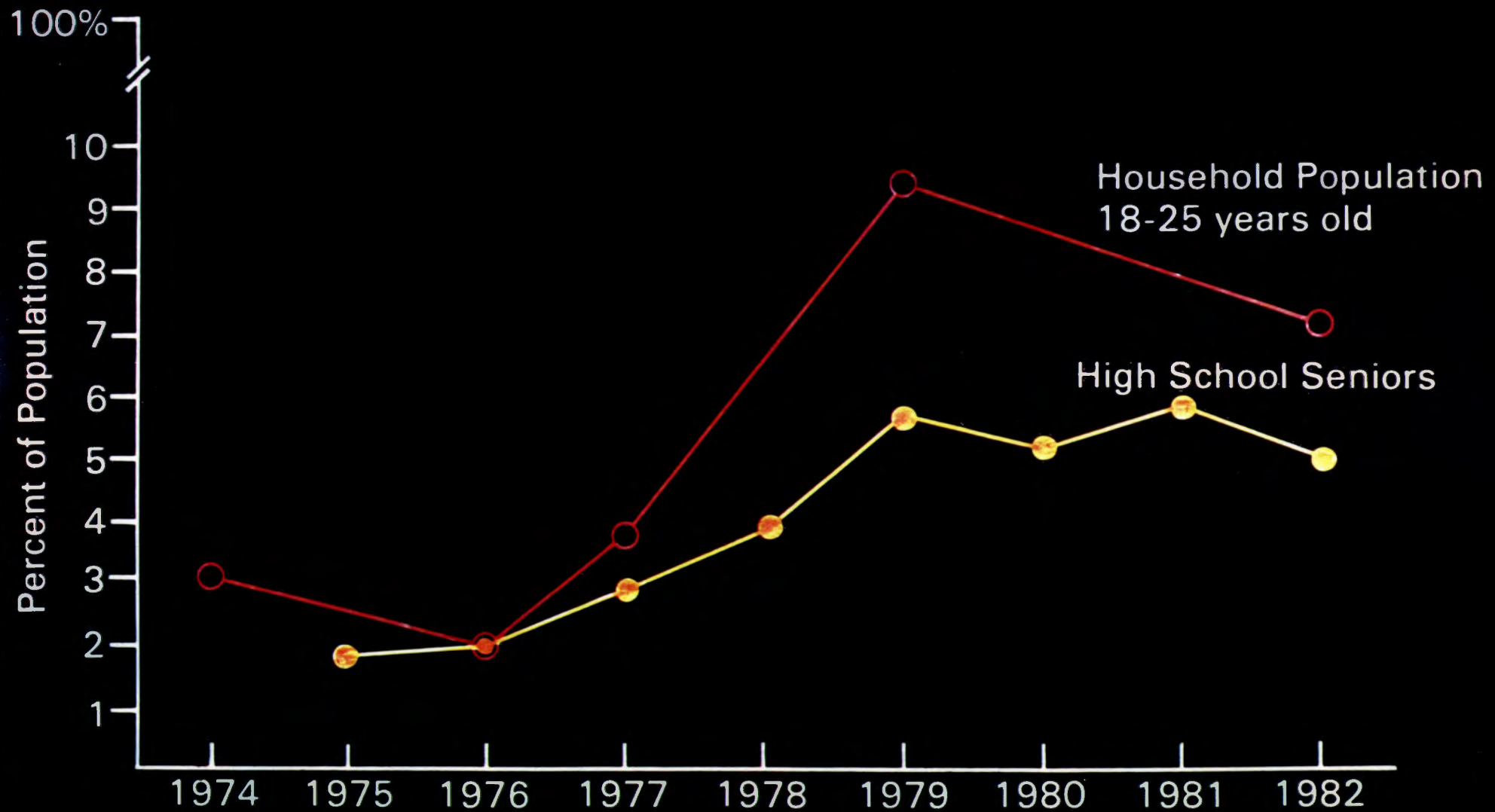
Source: National Institute on Drug Abuse, data from *Student Drug Use in America*, 1982.

Trends in Marijuana Use and Perceived Harmfulness Among High School Seniors: 1975-1982



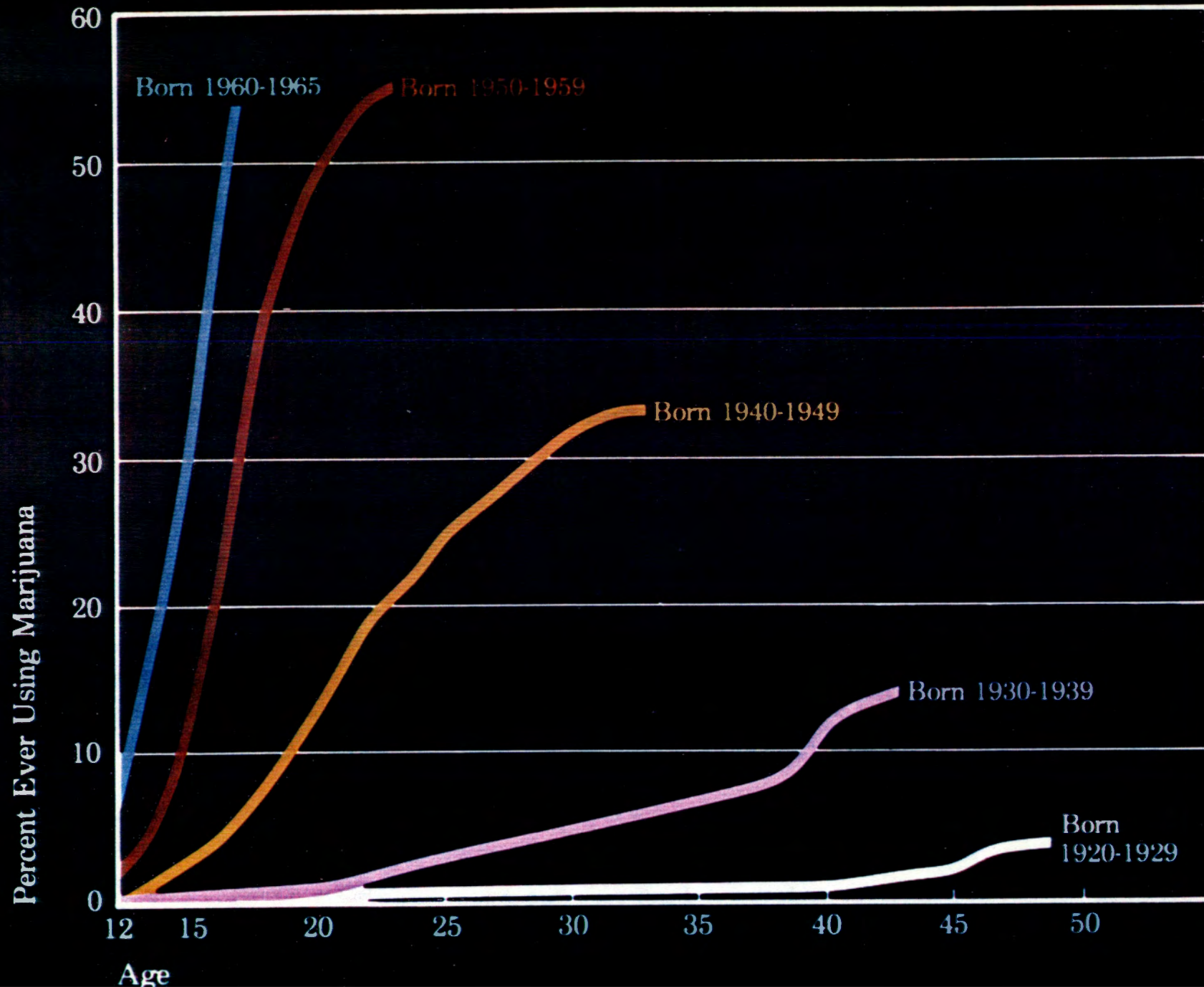
Source: National Institute on Drug Abuse, data from the Monitoring the Future study, 1982.

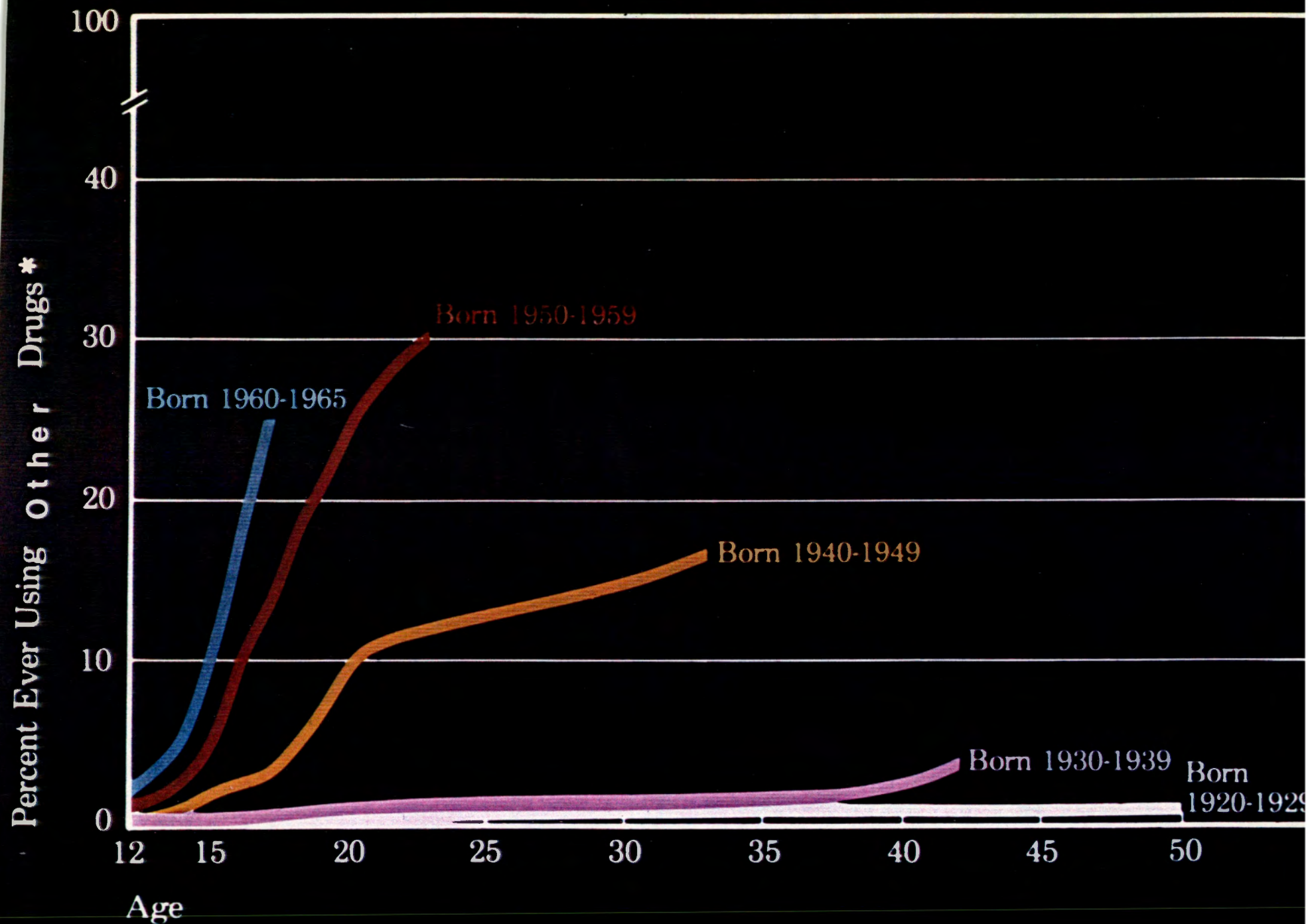
Current Cocaine Use, U.S. Household Population and High School Seniors, 1974-1982



Source: National Institute on Drug Abuse, data from the *National Survey on Drug Abuse and Student Drug Use in America*, 1982.

Lifetime Experience with Marijuana and OTHER Drugs for Selected Birth Cohorts



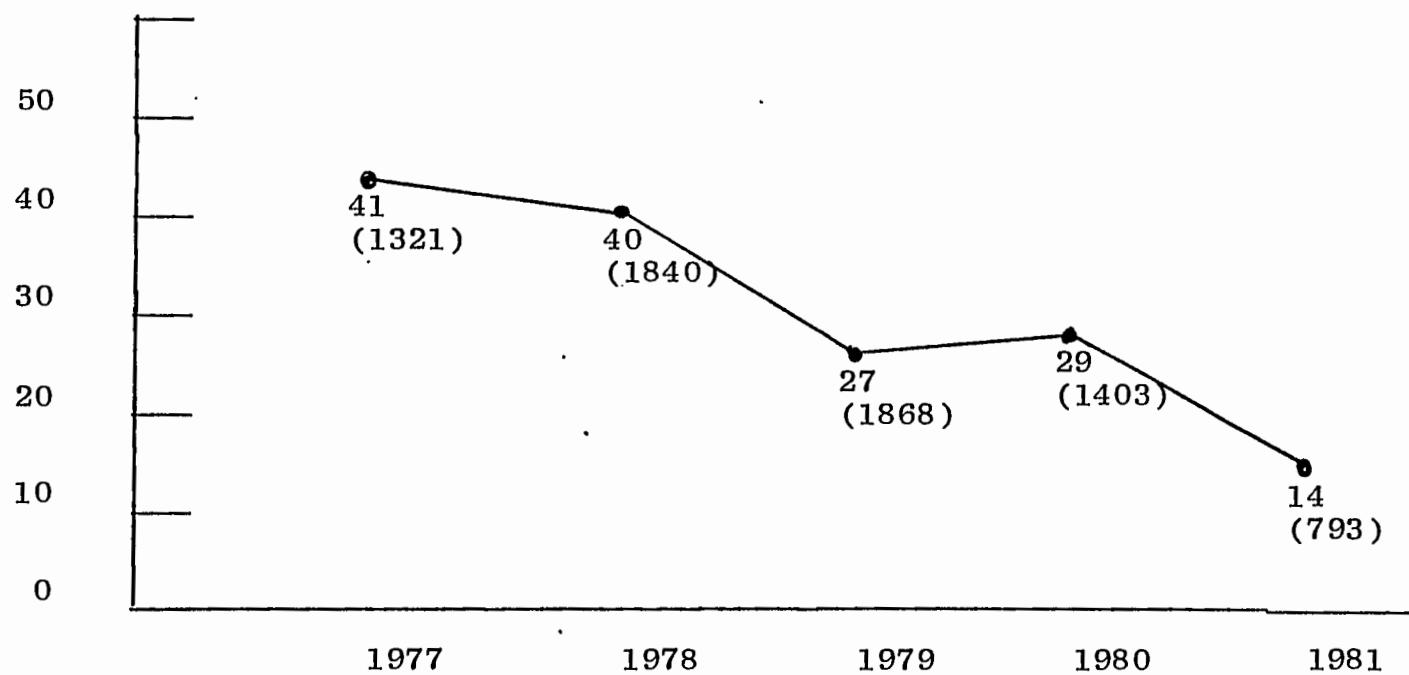


* Includes non-medical Rx, cocaine, hallucinogens, heroin

PERCENT OF E-1 — E-5 USING MARIJUANA PAST 30 DAYS

TOTAL E-1 — E-5		ARMY		NAVY		MARINE CORP		AIR FORCE	
1980	1982	1980	1982	1980	1982	1980	1982	1980	1982
37	22.3	40	31.3	47	17.4	47	20.8	20	14.8

MILITARY PERSONNEL OPIATE USE
(RATE PER 10,000 URINE TESTS)



WEEKLY READER

Editorial Offices: 245 Long Hill Road, Middletown, Connecticut 06457 Tel:(203)347-7251

For Release:

April 25, 1983

PRESSURE TO TRY DRUGS, ALCOHOL

STARTS IN EARLY GRADES, SURVEY SHOWS

MIDDLETOWN, Conn., April 25--Grade school children report substantial peer pressure to try drugs and alcohol as early as fourth grade, according to a survey of U.S. schoolchildren by the classroom publication Weekly Reader.

The readership poll, said to be the first major national survey of young children on the subject of drugs and alcohol, was distributed to 3.7 million students in grades four through twelve. Five hundred thousand children responded.

A random sample representing about 100,000 students was selected from the responses, analyzed, and then weighted to adjust for the U.S. population distribution.

The results show that in grades four and five children receive their education about the dangers of drugs and drinking about equally from family and movies/television. Not until grade six does school become an equal source of information, and not until grade seven does school become the major source.

And yet, as early as fourth grade about 25 percent say that children in their age-group feel "some" to "a lot" of peer pressure to try beer, wine, liquor, or marijuana. By the time they are in seventh grade, about 60 percent feel pressure to try alcohol; and about 50 percent, to try marijuana.

The motivation for trying drugs and liquor in the lower grades appeared to be a desire to "feel older"; and then as the children progressed through the middle grades, to "fit in with other kids"; and finally in grades nine through twelve, "to have a good time."

(More)

April 25, 1983

About 75 percent of children in fourth grade saw "some" or "great" risk posed to children their age who had one alcoholic drink or smoked one marijuana cigarette daily, while about 20 percent saw "no risk." The percentage seeing "some" or "great" risk for daily use of alcohol or marijuana rose slightly from fourth to seventh grade, and then dropped slightly in high school.

Another significant finding was the schoolchildren's beliefs concerning experiments with hard drugs by their peers. In grade four, about 50 percent of the students estimated that no "kids your age" in "your town or city" had tried cocaine, and about 60 percent said that no students had tried angel dust or LSD.

Dr. Terry Borton, editor in chief of Weekly Reader periodicals, stressed that "students are reporting on what they believe to be happening generally and not on their own behavior. Other studies have shown that actual use of these drugs is not this high, even among high school seniors. But the fact that young students think drug use is so common is in itself cause for concern, since our survey also shows that many kids use drugs to 'fit in.'"

The Weekly Reader survey was done in cooperation with:

The White House Office of Policy Development, Drug Abuse Policy Office;

The Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration;

The Johnson Institute;

The National Federation of Parents for Drug-Free Youth; and

The National Institute of Drug Abuse.

Weekly Reader periodicals are published by Xerox Education Publications, a unit of Xerox Corporation.

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