



## Marijuana Use Before, During, and After Pregnancy New Hampshire PRAMS 2016-2017

The New Hampshire Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (NH PRAMS) collects data on a variety of topics related to maternal health. This report is based on data which is weighted to represent the experiences of all New Hampshire women who had a live birth in 2016 and 2017

The prevalence of marijuana use in the U.S. as well as the chemical potency of marijuana have risen in recent years at the same time that public support for legalization has grown. As increasing numbers of states are legalizing medical and recreational use of marijuana, the stigma, cultural norms, and beliefs around the effects of marijuana use are evolving.<sup>1,2</sup> Women of childbearing age are a population of particular concern in this changing landscape, as these cultural and legal changes may lead some to believe that marijuana is safe to use during pregnancy.

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) recommends against the use of marijuana during pregnancy and lactation due to evidence regarding marijuana's effect on fetal neurodevelopment and the effects of marijuana on breastfed infants. While more research is needed, there is evidence that the use of marijuana in pregnancy is associated with learning and behavioral problems later in childhood.<sup>3</sup>

### NH PRAMS Q.67. During any of the following time periods, did you use marijuana or hash in any form?

During the 12 months before I got pregnant.....	16.7%
During my most recent pregnancy.....	5.5%
Since my new baby was born.....	6.6%

Self-reported data regarding marijuana use in general have been shown to be significantly underreported when compared to laboratory tests. The degree of underreporting can be influenced by many factors such as social norms, perceptions, and regulations that differ by demographic and geographic groupings.<sup>4</sup> While these data likely do not show the full extent of marijuana use during pregnancy, readers may reasonably conclude that marijuana is being used by some women during pregnancy at a rate likely greater than that shown here.

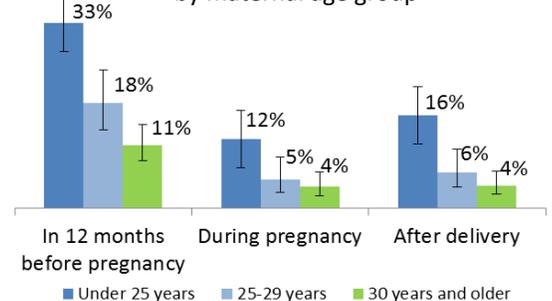
### Marijuana Use and Pregnancy Intention\* By Age

- Women under 25 years of age use marijuana during the 12 months before pregnancy at significantly higher rates than those 25 years or older.
- Among women under 25 years of age, 57% had an unintended pregnancy while 23% of those 25-29 years of age and 21% of those 30 and older had an unintended pregnancy.

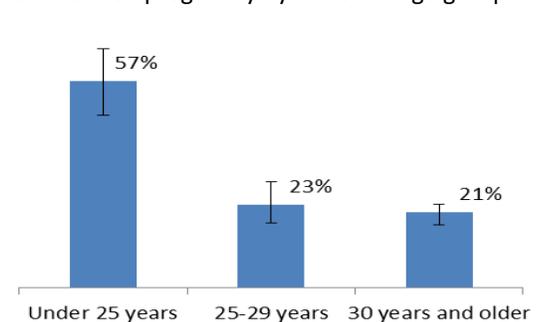
Many women do not know they are pregnant until well into their first trimester, especially if their pregnancy is unintended. Women who use marijuana prior to pregnancy may be at greater risk of exposing their developing fetus to marijuana before they know they are pregnant.

\* An intended pregnancy is one that was wanted then or sooner. An unintended pregnancy is one that was wanted later, not at all, or the mother was not sure what she wanted.

Marijuana use before, during, and after pregnancy by maternal age group



Unintended pregnancy by maternal age group



1. ElSohly MA, Mehmecic Z, Foster S, Gon C, Chandra S, Church JC. Changes in Cannabis Potency over the Last Two Decades (1995-2014) - Analysis of Current Data in the United States. *Biological psychiatry*. 2016;79(7):613-619. doi:10.1016/j.biopsych.2016.01.004.

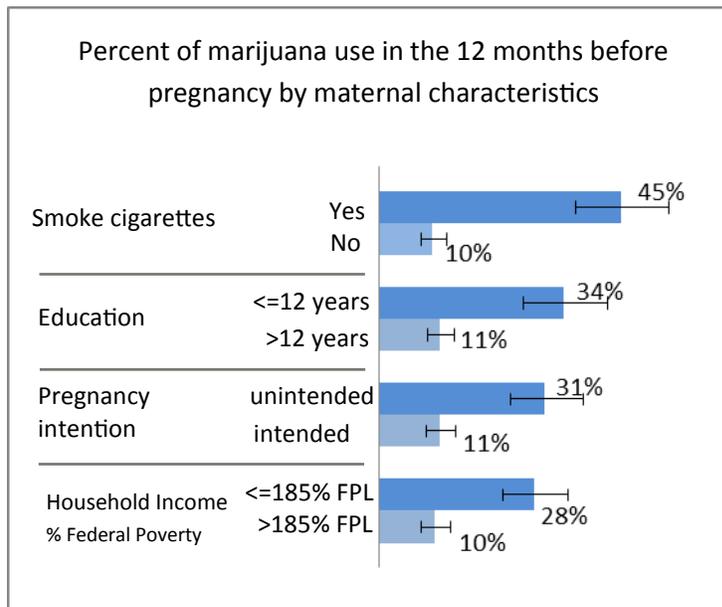
2 <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2013/04/17/marijuana-use-increased-over-the-last-decade/>

3. <https://www.acog.org/Clinical-Guidance-and-Publications/Committee-Opinions/Committee-on-Obstetric-Practice/Marijuana-Use-During-Pregnancy-and-Lactation>

4 Maria Cuellar (2018) Trends in Self-Reporting of Marijuana Consumption in the United States, *Statistics and Public Policy*, 5:1. 1-10, DOI:10.1080/2330443X.2018.1513346

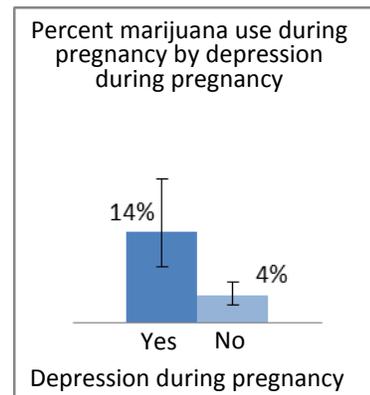
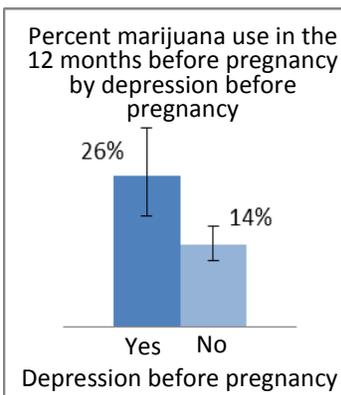
## Marijuana Use by Maternal Characteristics

- Women who smoke cigarettes before pregnancy use marijuana before pregnancy at significantly higher rates than those who do not smoke cigarettes (45% vs. 10%).
- Marijuana use before pregnancy is significantly higher among women with 12 years or less of education than those with more than 12 years of education (34% vs. 11%).
- Women with unintended pregnancies used marijuana during the 12 months before pregnancy at significantly higher rates than those whose pregnancies were intended (31% vs. 11%).
- 28% of women whose household income is less than or equal to 185% of the federal poverty level use marijuana before pregnancy compared to 10% of those whose household income is greater than 185% of the federal poverty level.



## Marijuana Use and Depression

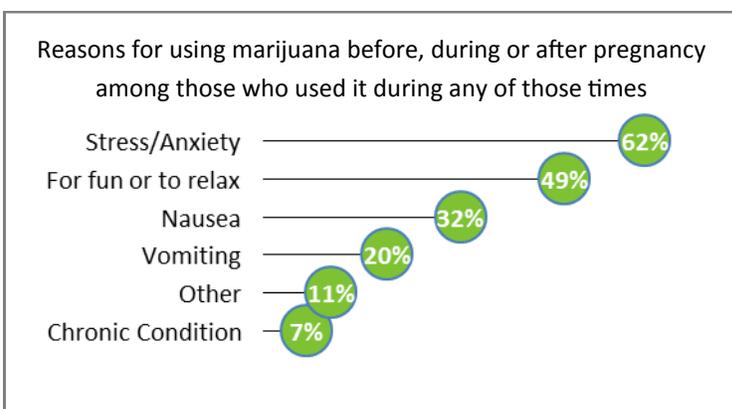
- Of women who had depression before pregnancy, 26% used marijuana before pregnancy while 14% of those not reporting depression during pregnancy used marijuana, a significant difference.
- Of women who had depression during pregnancy 14% used marijuana during pregnancy while 4% of those who did not have depression used marijuana during pregnancy, a significant difference.



## Reasons for Using Marijuana

PRAMS asks respondents who use marijuana before, during, or after pregnancy why they used it during any of those time periods. Respondents may choose more than one answer. The most frequently stated reason is for stress or anxiety at 62% of those who used it at any time.

Among the "Other" reasons reported for use are for pain relief, insomnia, help with appetite, and chronic conditions.



## About NH PRAMS

The Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System, PRAMS, is an ongoing population based surveillance project of the CDC and state departments of health, with the goals of reducing infant mortality and low birth weight and improving the overall health of mothers and infants. New Hampshire PRAMS was funded in 2011 by the CDC and began collecting data in 2013. Funding for NH PRAMS was provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention under grant #U01DP003156. Contents of this publication do not necessarily represent the official views of the CDC.

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