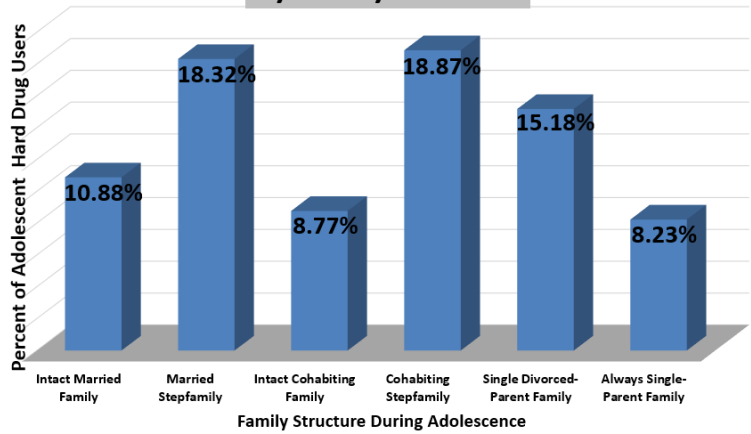


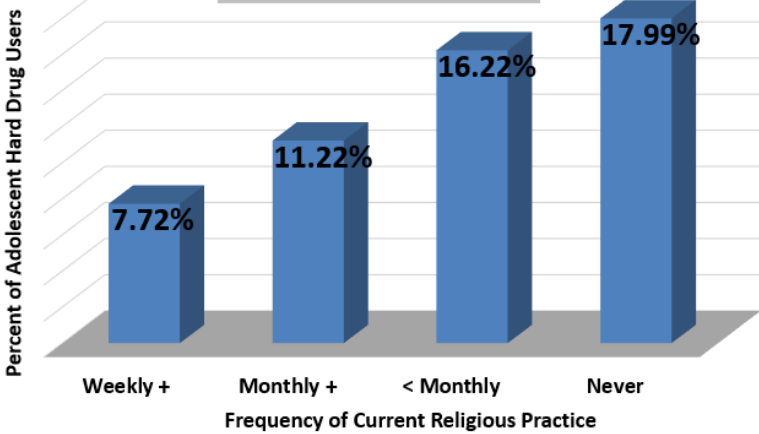
Adolescent Hard Drug Use By Family Structure and Religious Practice

Adolescent Hard Drug Use
By Family Structure



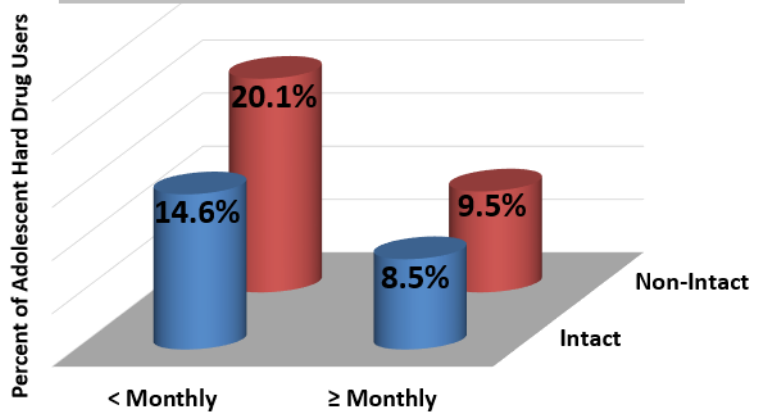
Source: National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Wave I. Adolescents Grades 7-12.

Adolescent Hard Drug Use
By Religious Practice



Source: National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Wave I. Adolescents Grades 7-12.

Adolescent Hard Drug Use
By Family Structure and Religious Practice



Source: National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Wave I. Adolescents Grades 7-12.

This chart groups the data in four categories: frequency of religious attendance (monthly or more/less than monthly) and family structure (intact/non-intact).

The intact category comprises families with both biological parents, married or unmarried, raising their children. The non-intact category comprises families without both biological parents, including married stepfamilies, cohabiting stepfamilies, divorced single-parent families, and always single-parent families.

The resultant four categories are 1) intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; 2) intact family with less than monthly religious attendance; 3) non-intact family with monthly or more religious attendance; and 4) non-intact family with less than monthly religious attendance.

These charts depict the percentage of adolescents in Grades 7-12 who have ever tried hard drugs when correlated with religious attendance and family structure.

These charts draw on a large national sample (16,000) from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. This work was done by the author in cooperation with former colleagues at The Heritage Foundation, Washington, D.C.

Adolescent Hard Drug Use by Family Structure and Religious Practice

Family Structure: According to the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health Wave I, children who lived with both biological parents were less inclined to try hard drugs (8.77 percent of adolescents with cohabiting biological parents and 10.88 percent of adolescents with married parents).¹ More than 15 percent of adolescents whose parents were divorced had used hard drugs. Just 8.23 percent of adolescents whose parents never married admitted to ever using hard drugs.

Religious Practice: Only 7.72 percent of students in Grades 7-12 who worshipped at least weekly had ever used hard drugs, whereas 17.99 percent of those who never worshipped admitted to using hard drugs. In between were those who attended worship service one to three times a month (11.22 percent) and less than once a month (16.22 percent). The data were taken from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Waves I.

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: Only 8.5 percent of adolescent students who lived with both biological parents and worshipped at least monthly had ever tried hard drugs. By contrast, over 20 percent of adolescent students who worshipped less than monthly and came from broken or reconstituted families had used hard drugs. In between were those in non-intact families who worshipped at least monthly (9.5 percent) and those who lived in intact families but worshipped less than monthly (14.6 percent). The data were taken from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health.

Related Insights from Other Studies: Several other studies corroborate the direction of these findings. Jerry Trusty of Texas A&M University found that students who attend religious activities are more likely to have involved parents and less likely to use drugs.²

Jo Anne Grunbaum of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and colleagues found that increased church attendance and family involvement are significantly associated with decreased cocaine use among students in high school recovery/dropout prevention programs.³

Analyzing data from a random set of 13,250 adolescents in Utah in 1994, Stephen Bahr of Brigham Young University and colleagues reported that while good father-adolescent relationships, as well as good mother-adolescent relationships, have an effect on deterring drug use, a much more significant deterrent to drug use is a student's religiosity.⁴

¹ There is no statistical difference between these two data sets.

² Jerry Trusty, "Relationship of High School Seniors' Religious Perceptions and Behavior to Educational, Career, and Leisure Variables," *Counseling and Values* 44.1 (1999): 30-40. This finding is from www.familyfacts.org.

³ J. A. Grunbaum, S. Tortolero, N. Weller, and P. Gingiss, "Cultural, Social, and Intrapersonal Factors Associated with Substance Use among Alternative High Schools," *Addictive Behaviors* 25 (2000): 145-151.

⁴ Stephen J. Bahr, Suzanne L. Maughan, Anastasios C. Marcos, and Bingdao Li, "Family, Religiosity, and the Risk of Adolescent Drug Use," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 60 (1998): 979-992.

Ray Merrill of Brigham Young University and colleagues found that students at Brigham Young University were less likely to have used drugs if their parents were involved in church and had frequent discussions with their children about appropriate conduct. By contrast, those students whose parents had a neutral or dismissive attitude toward religion were more likely to have used drugs.⁵

While religious attendance appears to be even more protective than intact marriage, the intact married family that worships frequently is the most protective. The two great loves, of spouse and of God, make a difference to adolescents.

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⁵ R. M. Merrill, R. D. Salazar, and N. W. Gardner, "Relationship between Family Religiosity and Drug Use Behavior among Youth," *Social Behavior and Personality* 29 (2001): 347-357.