

Some of the Drugs America Takes

I. STATISTICS:

Drug	Number of People in America Who Used the Drug in the Past Month ¹ (Millions)	# of Past Month Users Per 1000 People in America ²	1990	
			# of U.S. Deaths ³	Estimated Deaths per 100,000 Users ⁴
1. Heroin	.2	1	2,806	1,403
2. Amphetamines	.8	3	280	35
3. Cocaine/Crack	1.5	6	3,526	235
4. Marijuana	10.0	38	296	3
5. Nicotine	61.0	230	400,000	656
6. Alcohol	110.0	414	100,000	91
7. Caffeine	130.0	490	76	0.06

¹ *TIME*, May 5, 1997, "Addicted" by J. Madeleine Nash, pp. 69-72.

² The numbers were obtained by dividing the number of person in the U.S. who used each drug in the past month by the total U.S. population of 265,283,783 as of July 1, 1996 and multiplying the total by 1,000. Population figures are from Population Division, U.S. Bureau of Census, Washington D.C.; numbers are rounded to the nearest whole number.

³ Deaths figures taken from "Marijuana's Contribution to Preventable Deaths in the U.S. in 1990" report published by Steven C. Markoff. Note the drug categories for death figures are similar to but not exactly the same as those listed in source report. For example, figures for marijuana also include hashish, amphetamines include methamphetamine and speed, cocaine figures also include crack and nicotine figures are taken from amounts listed as tobacco.

⁴ Numbers obtained by dividing the number of U.S. deaths associated with each drug by the number of past month users of each drug as reported in the *TIME* article "Addicted" by J. Madeleine Nash (see footnote 1 above) and multiplying the total by 100,000.

—Compiled & Published

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II. CONCLUSION

Given the quantity of drugs taken by Americans and the apparent inconsistencies in our drug policies (i.e. allowing nicotine smoking that kills 656 out of 100,000 smokers a year while criminalizing marijuana smoking that kills less than 3 out of 100,000 smokers a year), a drug policy backed up by available facts and/or statistics should be set out so that interested citizens can understand why some drug use is deemed acceptable, while substantial punitive measures are taken against users of other drugs.

—SCM

Steven C. Markoff is a Santa Monica, California businessman interested in US Drug Policy.

This report is one of a series that looks at various facts related to our nation's drug policy.

Other reports include:

- #1 *"State-By-State Marijuana Laws (As of December 31, 1996)"*
- #2 *"Addictiveness of Marijuana vs. Five Commonly Used Drugs"*
- #3 *"Marijuana's Contribution to Preventable Deaths in the United States in 1990"*

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