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EDITORS AND NEWS DIRECTORS: Detailed information on the study may be obtained from Dr. Jerald G. Bachman, Institute for Social Research, U-M, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48109, telephone (313) 763-5043.

ANN ARBOR---What kinds of young people are most likely to smoke, drink, use marijuana, and take other illicit drugs?

The University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research (ISR) reports that each of these forms of drug use occurs most often among youth who spend the least time in institutions supervised by adults--the school, the home, and the church.

In an article published in the January issue of the American Journal of Public Health, U-M social psychologists Jerald G. Bachman, Lloyd D. Johnston, and Patrick M. O'Malley examine a number of background, educational, occupational, and life-style factors which are related to drug use among American youth.

Each year since 1975 these researchers have surveyed about 17,000 high school seniors nationwide as part of an ongoing ISR study titled "Monitoring the Future."

One key finding to emerge from their study is that the same pattern of background and behaviors associated with cigarette and alcohol use also is associated with the use of marijuana and other illicit drugs.

"There always seem to be some individuals especially disposed toward deviant or problem behavior, but the particular forms of behavior chosen may vary over different periods," the researchers state. "In the 1960s and 1970s, illicit drug use emerged as an increasingly popular form of defiance. So instead of simply smoking cigarettes and using alcohol, many of today's teenagers also use marijuana, and some use other illicit drugs."

The young people who most exhibit such problem behavior show a pattern of poor adaptation or low involvement in settings where adults are in control, the report indicates. The most important of these settings is

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the school, where the youth with poor grades and frequent truancy is the one most likely to use drugs.

Another important setting is the home. The U-M researchers say drug use occurs more often among youth who spend most of their evenings "out for fun and recreation" rather than at home.

The research shows that drug use is below average among youth who rate religion as important in their lives and who frequently attend services. It is also below average among those who describe themselves as politically conservative, although there is no clear link to party preference.

Young women report less use of alcohol, marijuana, and other illicit drugs than young men, but that is not true to cigarette smoking.

Commenting on the sex differences in the study, Bachman says "if one considers that females tend to have higher grades, higher religious commitment, and less truancy compared with males, one would predict their lower use of alcohol and illicit drugs. But one would also predict less use of cigarettes, which is not what has been happening in recent years.

"Females can be described as 'overachievers' when it comes to cigarette smoking---they do more than would be predicted based on their other characteristics. Furthermore, the degree of female 'overachievement' in smoking (compared with males) rose steadily between 1975 and 1979."

The U-M study found a tendency for high school seniors who worked more hours on part-time jobs to show higher levels of drug use. While this may partly reflect greater income and buying power, the researchers suggest that "an additional explanation may be that many---perhaps most---of the jobs high school students hold do not, in fact, immerse them in a predominantly adult environment; instead, many students find themselves surrounded by other young workers, including some slightly older and thus more experienced in the use of drugs."

Bachman states that the present research, consistent with other studies, shows that factors which predict drug use have remained much the same in recent years, even though drug use itself has changed significantly. He points to cocaine use as a good example: "In 1975 cocaine was not used by many high school students. By 1979 usage rates were higher, but the factors predicting use were the familiar ones consistently in evidence for alcohol, marijuana, and other illicit drugs. In other words, the kinds of young people most at risk tend to remain much the same, while the kinds and amounts of substances used shift somewhat from year to year."

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