

O'Malley, P. M., & Johnston, L. D. (2003). Unsafe driving by high school seniors: National trends from 1976 to 2001 in tickets and accidents after use of alcohol, marijuana and other illegal drugs. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol, 64*, 305-312.

Abstract

Objective. This study reports trends from 1976 to 2001 in the number of tickets or warnings that high school seniors receive, the number of vehicle accidents in which they are drivers and the number of these events that occur after use of alcohol, marijuana or other illegal drugs.

Method. The data come from the Monitoring the Future study, in which nationally representative samples of high school seniors have been surveyed annually since 1976.

Results. Results demonstrate that the problem of unsafe or inappropriate driving among American youth is of considerable magnitude, although there has been a downward trend when adjusted for number of miles driven. The frequency of tickets received and vehicle accidents that occurred after use of alcohol has diminished markedly compared to the incidence of tickets and accidents after use of marijuana over the interval from 1976 to 2001.

Conclusions: Despite the decline in the number of vehicle accidents occurring and tickets received after drinking or using illicit drugs, aggressive policies are still needed to deter youth from engaging in such risky behaviors.