

News and Information Services

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December 18, 1998 (11)
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Smoking among American teens declines some.

EDITORS: Results of this survey are scheduled to be announced at a news conference in Washington, D.C. Among those participating in the release of results will be Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna E. Shalala, Director of the Office on National Drug Control Policy General Barry R. McCaffrey, and the principal investigator of the Monitoring the Future Study, Lloyd D. Johnston. For further information on the study, contact Johnston at (734) 763-5043.

ANN ARBOR---After a long and steady increase in smoking among American teens, which began in the early 90s, smoking rates among secondary school students have started to turn downward, according to the latest results from the Monitoring the Future Study, which has been tracking national smoking rates among American high school seniors annually since 1975, and among eighth- and 10th-grade students each year since 1991.

"Early indications of a turnaround were evident last year," notes Lloyd D. Johnston, the principal investigator of the study and a research scientist at the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research. "In 1997, eighth- and 10th-grade students began to show very slight improvements, even though use among 12th-graders was still rising. This year all three grade levels, encompassing young people aged 13 to 18, show some drop in smoking." (The one-year decline for eighth-graders' daily cigarette use is

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not statistically significant, but the two-year decline since 1996 is.)

Johnston and his collaborators, Jerald G. Bachman and Patrick M. O'Malley, observe that the tobacco settlement efforts, along with Administration and Congressional efforts to bring about tobacco control legislation, stimulated a tremendous amount of publicity about smoking and its adverse consequences; and that publicity may have helped change young people's views about smoking. "If that is the case," Johnston observes, "then there is a real question about whether teen smoking will continue to decline in the absence of an intense public debate."

The proportion of students at all three grade levels who see smoking as dangerous has been increasing gradually since 1995, and the proportion who disapprove of smoking has risen a bit since 1996. "While these attitudes and beliefs have not always been good predictors of changes in overall usage levels for cigarettes---even though they are for a number of other drugs---they may be contributing to the downturn in smoking we are seeing now," adds Johnston

The Monitoring the Future study has been sponsored since its inception in 1975 by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, one of the National Institutes of Health in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This year, nearly 50,000 students in 422 secondary schools nationwide participated in the survey.

The proportion of students indicating that they smoked at all during the 30 days preceding the survey has fallen by 1.9 percentage points over the past two years among the eighth-graders (to 19.1%) and by 2.8 percentage points among the 10th-graders (to 27.6%) over the same interval. Among 12th-graders, the decline has been smaller: a 1.4 percentage point drop this year to 35.1 percent.

Commenting on the present levels of use, Johnston says: "Despite these modest improvements, there still remain very high rates of smoking among American teens. Nearly one in five eighth-graders smokes, more than one in four 10th-graders. Indeed,

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over one-third of American students smoke by the time they leave high school. We still have a long way to go just to get back to the unacceptably high rates of smoking that existed at the beginning of the 1990s."

The investigators are particularly concerned that the younger students, who are at the age when smoking often is initiated, are the least likely to appreciate how dangerous smoking can be. Only a little more than half of the eighth-graders (54%) see "great risk" of harm associated with being a pack-a-day smoker. "That's virtually a question with a right-or-wrong answer, and nearly half of these 13- and 14-year-olds get it wrong," according to Johnston. "By 12th-grade, 71 percent of the students see 'great risk' in pack-a-day smoking, but by then the horse may already be out of the barn---many are already smoking."

Subgroup differences. The investigators report that the turnaround in smoking can be seen among male and female students, in all four major regions of the country, at nearly all socioeconomic levels.

College-bound students have shown evidence of a decline in smoking at all three grade levels, whereas those not planning to attend college show more of a leveling, so far, rather than a decline. The improvements also have been concentrated among those whose parents are well-educated, and among those living in more urban areas.

The *availability* of cigarettes to minors remained high in 1998, according to both eighth- and 10th-graders. (Twelfth-graders are not asked the question, since availability for them is assumed to be nearly universal.) Nearly three out of every four eighth-graders (73.6 percent), and nine of every ten 10th-graders (88.1 percent) say that cigarettes would be "fairly easy" or "very easy" to get if they wanted some. As high as these rates are, they actually reflect some decline from even higher levels two years ago. Cigarette availability has declined by 3.3 percentage points among eighth-graders and 3.2 percentage points among 10th-graders since 1996.

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The study, titled "Monitoring the Future," began in 1975 at the University of Michigan's Survey Research Center with annual surveys of American high school seniors. Beginning in 1991, similar surveys of nationally representative samples of eighth- and 10th-graders have been conducted annually. At each grade level the students are drawn to be representative of all students in public and private secondary schools nationwide. They complete self-administered questionnaires given to them in their classrooms in the spring of the year, by U-M personnel. The 1998 eighth-grade sample about 18,700 students in 149 schools, the 10th-grade sample about 15,400 students in 129 schools, and the 12th-grade sample contained about 15,800 students in 144 schools. In all, nearly 50,000 students in 422 public and private secondary schools were surveyed in 1998.

Methodological note. For the first time in 1998, in half of the eighth- and 10th-grade schools surveyed, the questionnaires administered were made fully anonymous (as opposed to confidential, but with some identifying information being gathered on a tear-off card). Specifically, the matched half-sample of schools beginning their two-year participation in Monitoring the Future in 1998 received the anonymous questionnaires, while the half-sample participating in the study for their second and final year continued to get the confidential questionnaires. A careful examination of the 1998 results based on the two equivalent half-samples at grade 8 and at grade 10, revealed no effect of this methodological change among 10th-graders, and only a very modest difference in the self-reported rates of alcohol and marijuana use among the eighth-graders (with prevalence rates slightly higher in the anonymous condition). For cigarettes, this change in method appeared to have no effect on self-reported rates of daily use or half-pack per day use, and to have had only a very small effect on 30-day prevalence. Thus, for example, the 30-day prevalence of cigarette use among eighth-graders is shown to have fallen by 0.3 percentage points between 1997-1998; however, the half-sample of eighth-grade schools receiving exactly the same type of questionnaire that was used in 1997 showed a slightly greater decline of 0.6 percentage points. Finally, lifetime cigarette prevalence is shown as falling by 1.6 percentage points between 1997 and 1998, but in the half-sample of schools with a constant methodology, it fell by 2.6 percentage points.

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[98cigds]

TABLE 1
Long-Term Trends in Prevalence of Cigarettes for Eighth, Tenth, and Twelfth Graders

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	'97-'98 change	
Lifetime																										
8th Grade																										
10th Grade																	44.0	45.2	45.3	46.1	46.4	49.2	47.3	45.7	-1.6	
12th Grade	73.6	75.4	75.7	75.3	74.0	71.0	71.0	70.1	70.6	69.7	68.8	67.6	67.2	66.4	65.7	64.4	63.1	61.8	61.9	62.0	64.2	63.5	65.4	65.3	-0.1	
Thirty-Day																										
8th Grade																										
10th Grade																	14.3	15.5	16.7	18.6	19.1	21.0	19.4	19.1	-0.3	
12th Grade	36.7	38.8	38.4	36.7	34.4	30.5	29.4	30.0	30.3	29.3	30.1	29.6	29.4	28.7	28.6	29.4	20.8	21.5	24.7	25.4	27.9	30.4	29.8	27.6	-2.2 _{ss}	
Daily																										
8th Grade																										
10th Grade																	7.2	7.0	8.3	8.8	9.3	10.4	9.0	8.8	-0.2	
12th Grade	26.9	28.8	28.8	27.5	25.4	21.3	20.3	21.1	21.2	18.7	19.5	18.7	18.7	18.1	18.9	19.1	12.6	12.3	14.2	14.6	16.3	18.3	18.0	15.8	-2.2 _{ss}	
1/2 pack+ per day																										
8th Grade																										
10th Grade																	3.1	2.9	3.5	3.6	3.4	4.3	3.5	3.6	+0.1	
12th Grade	17.9	19.2	19.4	18.8	16.5	14.3	13.5	14.2	13.8	12.3	12.5	11.4	11.4	10.6	11.2	11.3	6.5	6.0	7.0	7.6	8.3	9.4	8.6	7.9	-0.7	
Approx. Ns																										
8th Grade																										
10th Grade																		17500	18600	18300	17300	17500	17800	18600	18100	
12th Grade	9400	15400	17100	17800	15500	15900	17500	17700	16300	15900	16000	15200	16300	16300	16700	15200	14800	14800	15300	15800	17000	15600	15500	15000		
																		15000	15800	16300	15400	15400	14300	15400	15200	

NOTE: Level of significance of difference between the two years indicated: s = .05, ss = .01, sss = .001.
 SOURCE: The Monitoring the Future Study, The University of Michigan.

TABLE 2

Cigarettes: Trends in Thirty-Day Prevalence of Use by Subgroups for Eighth and Tenth Graders

	Percent who used in last thirty days																		
	8th Grade									10th Grade									
	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	'97-'98 change	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	'97-'98 change	
	Approx. N = 17500 18600 18300 17300 17500 17800 18600 18100									14800 14800 15300 15800 17000 15600 15500 15000									
Total	14.3	15.5	16.7	18.6	19.1	21.0	19.4	19.1	-0.3	20.8	21.5	24.7	25.4	27.9	30.4	29.8	27.6	-2.2s	
Sex:																			
Male	15.5	14.9	17.2	19.3	18.8	20.6	19.1	18.0	-1.1	20.8	20.6	24.6	26.6	27.7	30.1	28.2	26.2	-2.0	
Female	13.1	15.9	16.3	17.9	19.0	21.1	19.5	19.8	+0.3	20.7	22.2	24.5	23.9	27.9	30.8	31.1	29.1	-2.0	
College Plans:																			
None or under 4 yrs.	29.2	31.9	34.1	36.6	36.5	39.2	40.0	40.1	+0.1	36.5	35.0	41.9	42.2	46.3	46.2	47.2	45.2	-2.0	
Complete 4 yrs.	11.8	13.1	14.3	16.1	16.8	18.2	16.9	16.5	-0.4	17.3	18.6	21.0	21.7	24.7	27.8	26.8	24.5	-2.3s	
Region:																			
Northeast	13.7	14.4	15.0	17.8	18.6	22.1	18.0	15.6	-2.4	22.4	21.9	27.1	24.5	27.8	31.7	29.3	30.1	+0.8	
North Central	15.5	16.5	16.3	18.5	20.9	23.2	20.0	22.3	+2.3	22.9	24.3	26.0	28.8	30.1	32.5	31.7	29.5	-2.2	
South	15.7	17.0	18.2	19.5	19.4	21.1	21.0	21.1	+0.1	21.2	19.8	24.0	25.7	30.8	33.4	32.2	29.8	-2.4	
West	10.0	12.2	16.4	18.0	16.5	17.1	17.1	15.1	-2.0	16.7	20.2	21.2	20.1	19.6	20.8	23.2	19.6	-3.6	
Population Density:																			
Large MSA	12.8	15.0	14.1	15.5	16.5	19.4	15.8	16.4	+0.6	19.7	21.6	22.5	22.3	23.3	26.2	26.6	22.5	-4.1s	
Other MSA	14.9	15.3	17.8	20.7	19.4	21.4	19.7	17.7	-2.0	20.3	20.3	23.8	26.3	28.9	31.1	28.9	26.6	-2.3	
Non-MSA	14.8	16.4	17.9	17.8	21.5	22.1	22.8	24.8	+2.0	22.7	23.7	28.2	26.7	31.3	33.9	34.9	35.7	+0.8	
Parental Education: ^a																			
1.0-2.0 (Low)	26.2	24.1	23.3	26.1	25.3	26.5	26.9	26.7	-0.2	23.5	28.4	29.5	26.4	30.9	28.7	28.2	28.0	-0.2	
2.5-3.0	16.4	16.9	19.8	20.6	22.7	24.4	22.4	23.9	+1.5	24.1	23.3	28.0	29.1	33.2	33.8	33.2	33.0	-0.2	
3.5-4.0	13.9	14.9	17.4	20.1	20.8	21.4	20.9	21.4	+0.5	20.4	20.6	24.8	26.0	27.8	31.6	30.9	27.3	-3.6s	
4.5-5.0	10.1	13.3	12.5	14.9	14.9	18.4	16.2	14.2	-2.0	18.5	19.5	20.1	22.6	25.9	28.7	28.5	25.7	-2.8	
5.5-6.0 (High)	11.3	11.5	13.3	15.1	14.5	17.3	15.3	13.8	-1.5	18.5	18.9	21.4	20.7	21.8	27.8	24.6	22.5	-2.1	
Race (2-year average): ^b																			
White	—	16.2	17.8	18.9	20.7	22.7	22.8	21.5	-1.3	—	24.1	26.0	27.8	29.7	32.9	34.4	33.2	-1.2	
Black	—	5.3	6.6	8.7	8.9	9.6	10.9	10.6	-0.3	—	6.6	7.5	9.8	11.5	12.2	12.8	13.7	+0.9	
Hispanic	—	16.7	18.3	21.3	21.6	19.6	19.1	20.1	+1.0	—	18.3	20.5	19.4	21.4	23.7	23.0	21.3	-1.7	

NOTES: Level of significance of difference between the two most recent classes: s = .05, ss = .01, sss = .001.
 — indicates data not available.

See Table D-43 for the number of subgroup cases.
 See Appendix B for definition of variables in table.

SOURCE: The Monitoring the Future Study, the University of Michigan.

^aParental education is an average score of mother's education and father's education. See Appendix B for details.

^bTo derive percentages for each racial subgroup, data for the specified year *and* the previous year have been combined to increase subgroup sample sizes and thus provide more stable estimates.

TABLE 3

Cigarettes: Trends in Thirty-Day Prevalence of Use by Subgroups for Twelfth Graders

	Percent who used in last thirty days																									'97-'98 change
	Class of 1975	Class of 1976	Class of 1977	Class of 1978	Class of 1979	Class of 1980	Class of 1981	Class of 1982	Class of 1983	Class of 1984	Class of 1985	Class of 1986	Class of 1987	Class of 1988	Class of 1989	Class of 1990	Class of 1991	Class of 1992	Class of 1993	Class of 1994	Class of 1995	Class of 1996	Class of 1997	Class of 1998		
Apprx. N =	9400	15400	17100	17800	15500	15900	17500	17700	16300	15900	16000	15200	16300	16300	16700	15200	15000	15800	16300	15400	15400	14300	15400	15200		
Total	36.7	38.8	38.4	36.7	34.4	30.5	29.4	30.0	30.3	29.3	30.1	29.6	29.4	28.7	28.6	29.4	28.3	27.8	29.9	31.2	33.5	34.0	36.5	35.1	-1.4	
Sex:																										
Male	37.2	37.7	36.6	34.5	31.2	26.8	26.5	26.8	28.0	25.9	28.2	27.9	27.0	28.0	27.7	29.1	29.0	29.2	30.7	32.9	34.5	34.9	37.3	36.3	-1.0	
Female	35.9	39.1	39.6	38.1	37.1	33.4	31.6	32.6	31.6	31.9	31.4	30.6	31.4	28.9	29.0	29.2	27.5	26.1	28.7	29.2	32.0	32.4	35.2	33.3	-1.9	
College Plans:																										
None or < 4 yrs.	—	46.3	46.2	44.6	43.0	39.6	38.1	38.7	38.0	37.9	40.5	38.5	39.7	37.5	38.0	37.5	38.1	38.6	37.3	40.9	43.5	45.0	45.7	46.7	+1.0	
Complete 4 yrs.	—	29.8	29.4	27.4	26.0	22.3	22.3	22.1	23.3	22.7	22.8	24.0	24.3	24.4	24.1	25.4	24.2	23.8	27.3	28.0	29.9	30.8	33.1	31.3	-1.8	
Region:																										
Northeast	40.1	41.8	43.0	40.6	37.0	34.1	31.5	32.1	34.6	33.5	34.2	35.2	34.1	31.2	29.4	31.9	30.5	29.6	34.2	33.2	34.4	38.5	40.6	35.9	-4.7	
North																										
Central	39.5	41.3	40.5	39.0	36.6	31.5	32.4	33.5	33.2	31.4	34.1	32.5	31.7	31.1	34.9	34.0	34.6	31.7	33.2	36.2	37.8	37.7	39.3	40.0	+0.7	
South	36.2	39.1	37.6	35.7	35.4	31.8	28.9	29.4	28.7	28.6	25.6	26.1	26.0	28.0	26.4	26.1	25.4	26.4	29.0	30.7	33.5	33.2	35.0	34.3	-0.7	
West	26.3	28.3	27.7	27.3	24.8	21.2	21.8	20.4	21.8	22.9	26.3	23.3	26.6	23.9	22.7	25.1	23.2	22.8	22.9	24.0	26.5	24.4	30.5	29.1	-1.4	
Population Density:																										
Large																										
MSA	39.7	40.4	40.9	37.5	33.4	31.2	30.6	32.1	30.8	31.3	31.9	30.8	29.3	26.9	25.9	27.9	26.2	25.6	29.5	29.0	33.9	32.1	34.9	32.9	-2.0	
Other																										
MSA	35.1	35.9	36.1	34.3	33.5	29.7	27.4	27.8	29.1	28.2	28.5	28.0	28.2	28.3	28.2	29.6	29.3	26.9	29.8	31.1	31.7	32.6	35.7	34.2	-1.5	
Non-MSA	36.7	40.9	39.2	39.4	36.4	30.9	30.9	31.2	31.5	29.3	30.8	31.0	31.8	31.4	32.2	30.4	28.6	31.5	30.3	33.8	36.2	38.2	40.0	39.7	-0.3	
Parental Education:																										
1.0-2.0 (Low)	37.2	43.2	39.6	38.1	38.1	32.7	32.5	32.6	32.7	33.6	32.3	28.6	28.8	28.1	25.4	26.3	31.3	27.1	26.5	26.2	31.2	31.5	31.2	32.3	+1.1	
2.5-3.0	37.0	41.2	40.8	39.3	35.9	34.2	31.7	32.0	32.2	31.8	32.3	32.3	31.4	29.9	30.8	30.8	28.7	30.3	30.4	32.8	35.0	35.5	36.5	36.0	-0.5	
3.5-4.0	31.9	35.3	37.3	34.0	33.3	28.0	28.2	29.0	28.0	28.1	29.7	29.7	28.8	27.8	29.4	29.3	28.4	27.8	29.9	31.4	33.2	33.2	35.6	36.7	+1.1	
4.5-5.0	32.3	35.0	33.0	32.6	30.1	25.7	26.0	25.5	27.8	25.2	27.7	26.4	27.6	28.6	27.0	29.1	26.9	25.8	30.1	32.0	32.6	34.5	37.5	34.2	-3.3s	
5.5-6.0 (High)	26.8	30.8	32.8	31.9	29.6	24.0	22.5	25.1	25.5	23.7	22.6	26.7	29.3	27.8	26.3	28.6	27.1	25.5	30.5	30.4	34.0	32.9	38.5	33.1	-5.4s	
Race (2-year average): ^a																										
White	—	—	38.3	37.6	36.0	33.0	30.5	30.7	31.3	31.2	31.3	31.9	32.1	32.2	32.2	32.3	32.2	31.8	33.2	35.2	36.6	38.1	40.7	41.7	+1.0	
Black	—	—	36.7	32.7	30.2	26.8	23.7	21.8	21.2	19.3	18.1	16.9	14.2	13.3	12.6	12.2	10.6	8.7	9.5	10.9	12.9	14.2	14.3	14.9	+0.6	
Hispanic	—	—	35.7	32.8	26.8	22.6	23.2	24.7	24.7	25.3	25.5	23.7	22.7	21.9	20.6	21.7	24.0	25.0	24.2	23.6	25.1	25.4	25.9	26.6	+0.7	

NOTES: Level of significance of difference between the two most recent classes: s = .05, ss = .01, sss = .001. '—' indicates data not available.

See Table D-44 for the number of subgroup cases. See Appendix B for definition of variables in table.

SOURCE: The Monitoring the Future Study, the University of Michigan.

^aTo derive percentages for each racial subgroup, data for the specified year and the previous year have been combined to increase subgroup sample sizes and thus provide more stable estimates.

TABLE 4

Trends in Availability and Attitudes about Smoking One or More Packs of Cigarettes per Day, for Eighth, Tenth, and Twelfth Graders

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	'97-'98 change	
Perceived Risk^a																										
8th Grade																										
10th Grade																	51.6	50.8	52.7	50.8	49.8	50.4	52.6	54.3	+1.7	
12th Grade	51.3	56.4	58.4	59.0	63.0	63.7	63.3	60.5	61.2	63.8	66.5	66.0	68.6	68.0	67.2	68.2	69.4	69.2	69.5	67.6	65.6	68.2	68.7	70.8	+2.0	
Disapproval^b																										
8th Grade																										
10th Grade																	82.8	82.3	80.6	78.4	78.6	77.3	80.3	80.0	-0.3	
12th Grade	67.5	65.9	66.4	67.0	70.3	70.8	69.9	69.4	70.8	73.0	72.3	75.4	74.3	73.1	72.4	72.8	79.4	77.8	76.5	73.9	73.2	71.6	73.8	75.3	+1.5	
																	71.4	73.5	70.6	69.8	68.2	67.2	67.1	68.8	+1.7	
Availability^{c,d}																										
8th Grade																			77.8	75.5	76.1	76.4	76.9	76.0	73.6	-2.4 _{sss}
10th Grade																			89.1	89.4	90.3	90.7	91.3	89.6	88.1	-1.5 _{ss}
12th Grade																										
Approx. Ns:																										
8th Grade																										
10th Grade																										
12th Grade	2800	2900	3100	3800	3300	3200	3600	3600	3300	3300	3300	3000	3300	3300	2800	2600	2500	2700	2800	2600	2600	2400	2600	2500		

NOTE: Level of significance of difference between the two years indicated: s = .05, ss = .01, sss = .001.
 SOURCE: The Monitoring the Future Study, The University of Michigan.

^aThe question text was: How much do you think people risk harming themselves (physically or in other ways) if they smoke one or more packs of cigarettes per day? Answer alternatives were: (1) No risk, (2) Slight risk, (3) Moderate risk, (4) Great risk, and (5) Can't say, drug unfamiliar. The percentage saying "great risk" is shown.

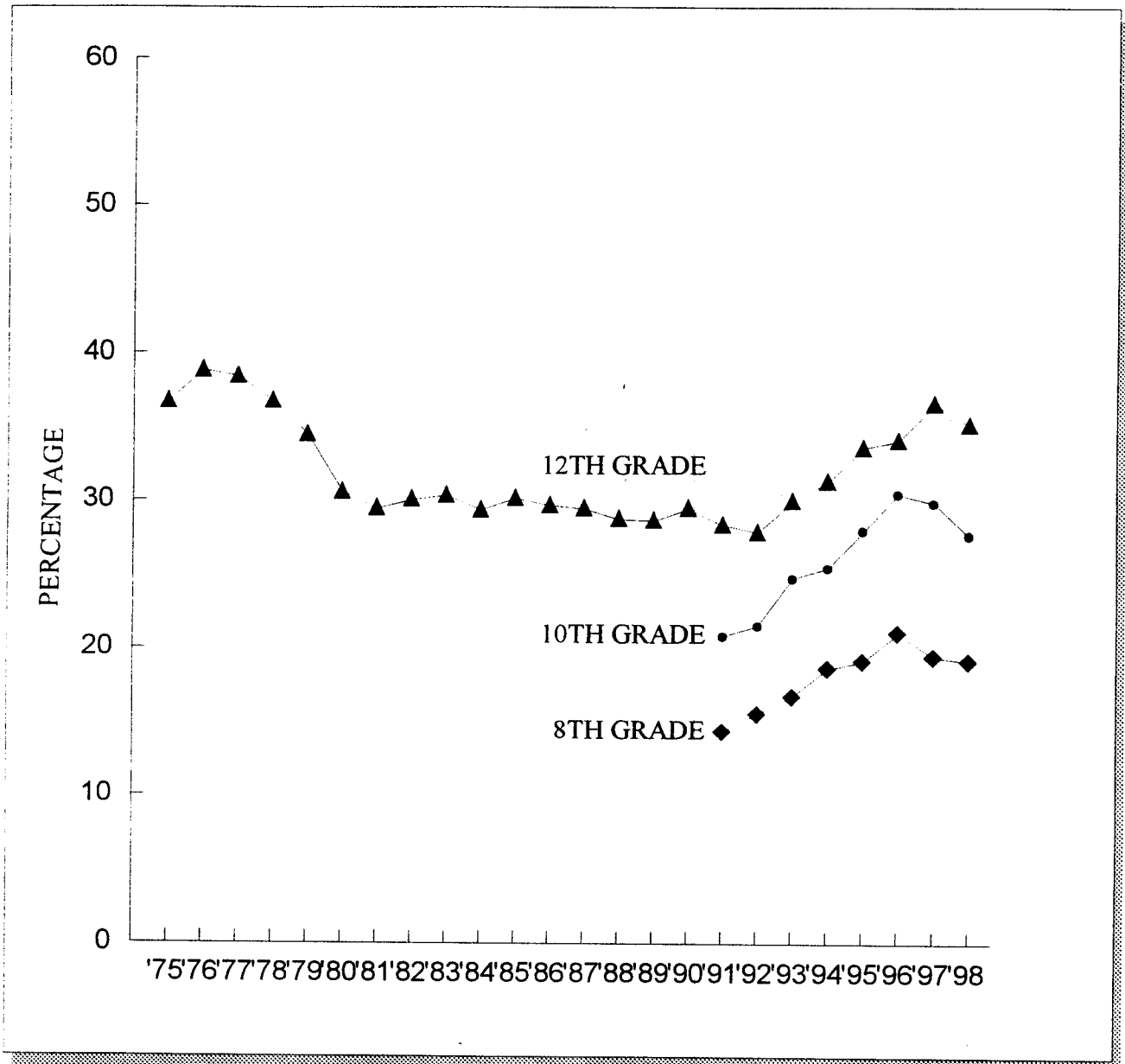
^bThe question text was: Do you disapprove of people smoking one or more packs of cigarettes per day? For 12th graders, the question asked about people who are "18 or older." Answer alternatives were: (1) Don't disapprove, (2) Disapprove, and (3) Strongly disapprove. For 8th and 10th graders, there was another category—"Can't say, drug unfamiliar"—which was included in the calculation of these percentages. The percentage saying they "disapprove" or "strongly disapprove" is shown.

^cThe question text was: How difficult do you think it would be for you to get cigarettes, if you wanted some? Answer alternatives were: (1) Probably impossible, (2) Very difficult, (3) Fairly difficult, (4) Fairly easy, (5) Very easy, (8) Can't say, drug unfamiliar (included in the calculation of these percentages). The percentage saying cigarettes are "fairly easy" or "very easy" to get is shown. In 1992 only, availability data based on one of two forms; N is one-half of N indicated. The question was not asked of the 12th graders.

^dData in 1992 based on one of two forms; N is one-half of N indicated.

FIGURE 1

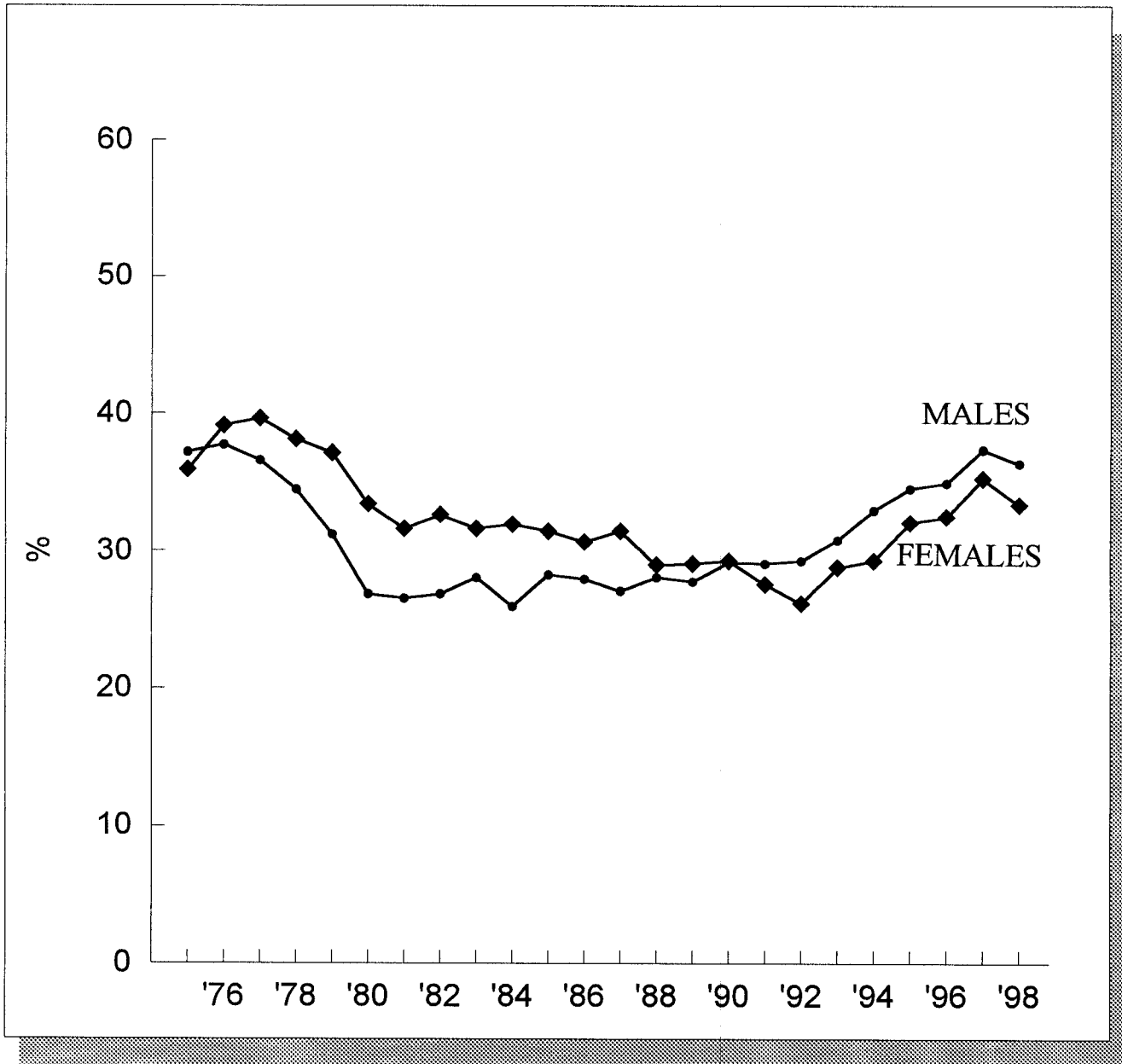
**Trends in Thirty-Day Prevalence of Cigarette Smoking
for Eighth, Tenth, and Twelfth Graders**



Source: The Monitoring the Future Study, The University of Michigan. See Table 1 for exact numbers.

FIGURE 2

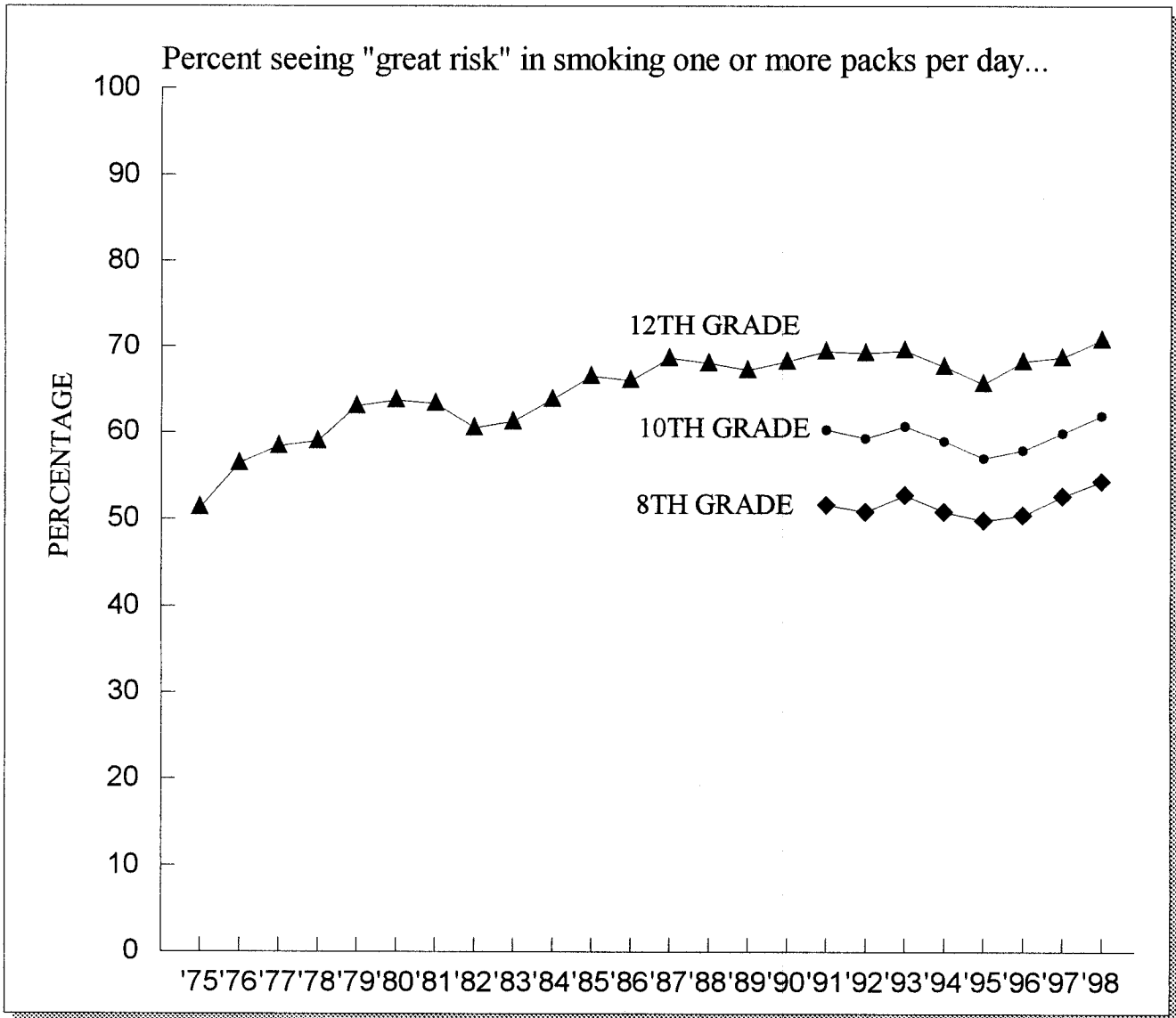
**Trends in Thirty-Day Prevalence of Cigarette Use,
by Gender Twelfth Graders**



Source: The Monitoring the Future Study, The University of Michigan. See Table 3 for exact numbers for selected years.

FIGURE 3

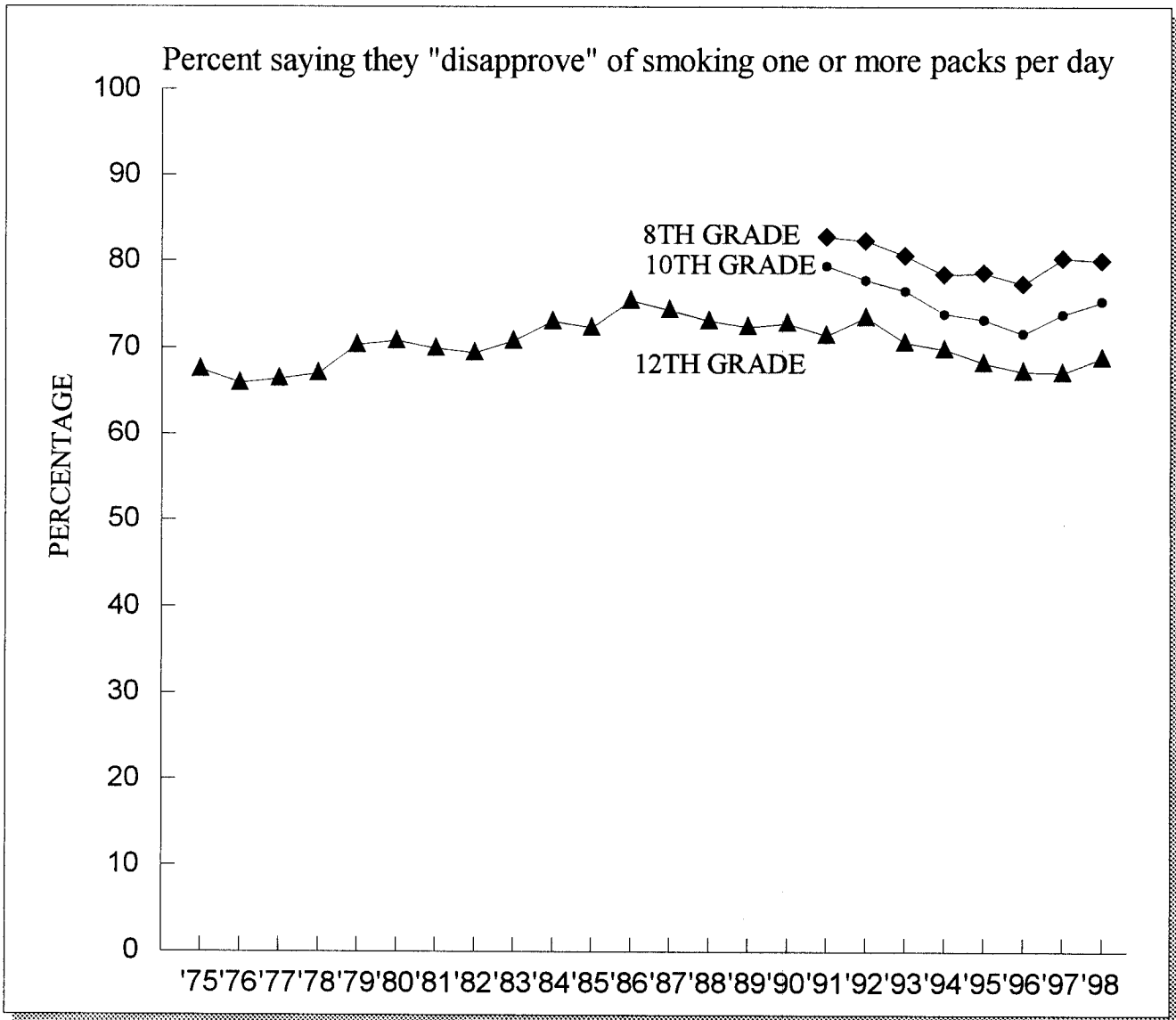
**Trends in Perceived Harmfulness of Smoking
for Eighth, Tenth, and Twelfth Graders**



Source: The Monitoring the Future Study, The University of Michigan. See Table 4 for exact numbers.

FIGURE 4

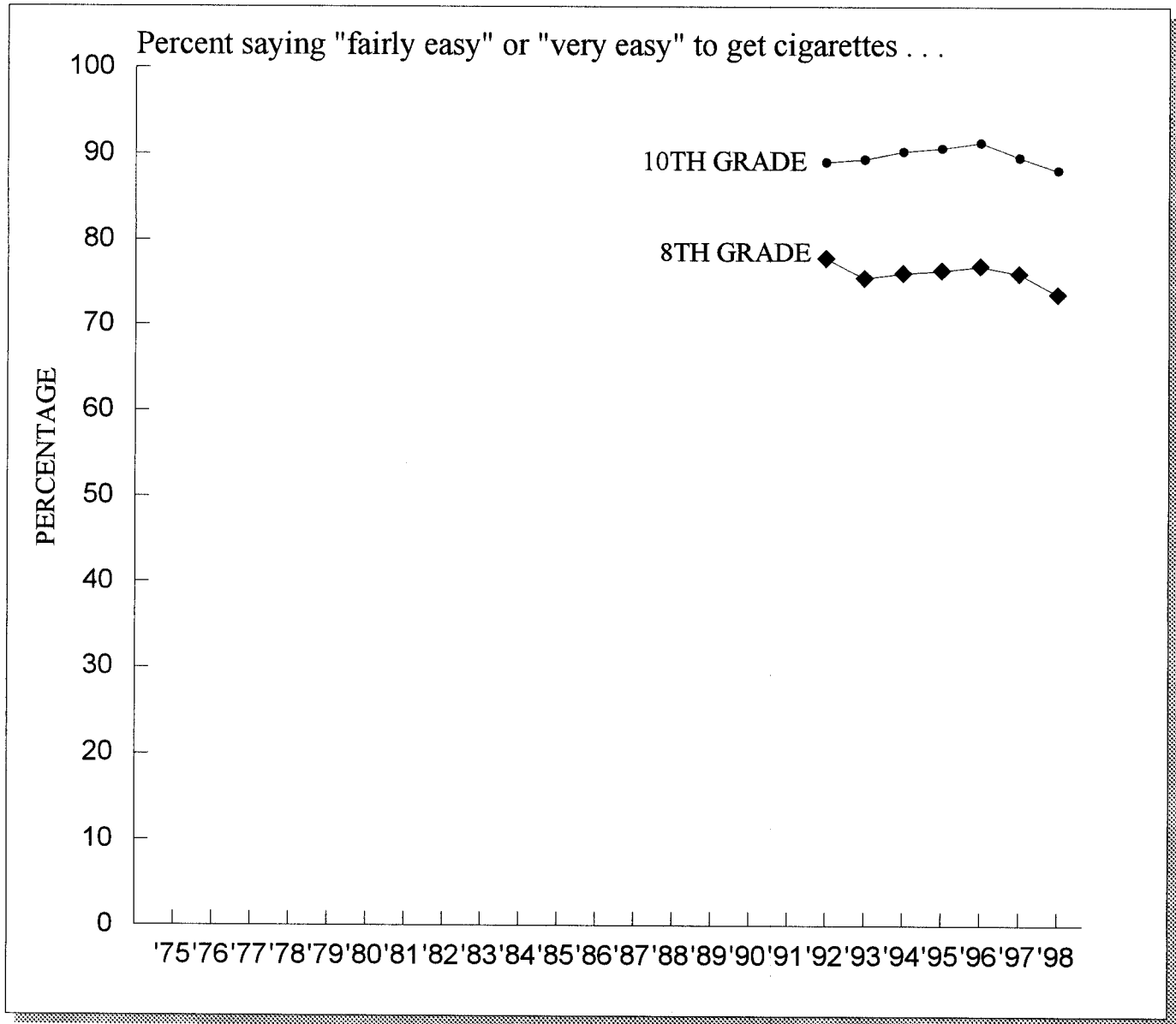
**Trends in Disapproval of Smoking
for Eighth, Tenth, and Twelfth Graders**



Source: The Monitoring the Future Study, The University of Michigan. See Table 4 for exact numbers.

FIGURE 5

Trends in Perceived Availability of Cigarettes for Eighth and Tenth Graders



Source: The Monitoring the Future Study, The University of Michigan. See Table 4 for exact numbers.