



# Patterns of marijuana use among university students in Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru



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## Background

Youth between 18 and 25 years old show the highest prevalence of marijuana use in Latin America. This study analyzes patterns of use, and signs of abuse or dependence on marijuana among university students in the Andean Community (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru).

## Methods

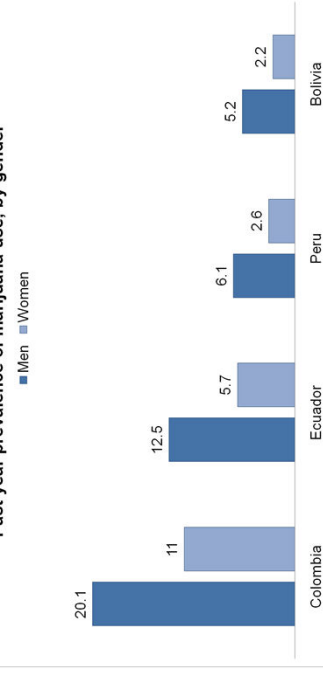
Data were collected in 2012 through a representative two-stage sample of 48 universities and 22,389 students in the Andean Community. An online survey was administered using a standardized questionnaire. Prevalence was calculated for *lifetime*, *past year*, and *past month*. *Signs of abuse* was calculated using the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, DSM-IV. *Signs of dependence* was calculated based on the World Health Organization's CIE-10.

## Results

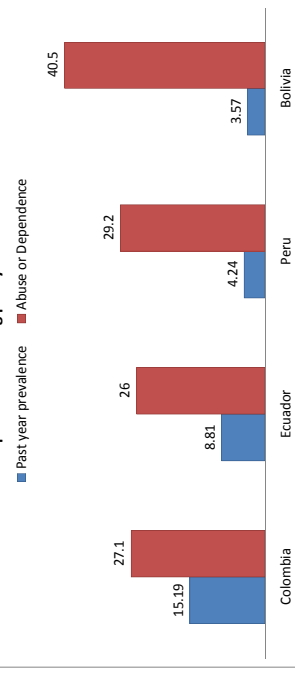
Marijuana was the most widely used illicit substance used among university students, with a past year prevalence of 15.2% in Colombia (20.1% for men and 11.0% for women), 8.8% in Ecuador (12.5% for men and 5.7% for women), 4.2% in Peru (6.1% for men and 2.6% for women), and 3.6% in Bolivia (5.2% for men and 2.2% for women). Age of onset averaged 18.6 in Bolivia and Peru, 18.5 in Ecuador, and 18.1 in Colombia. Percentages of signs of abuse or dependence among past year users was 40.5% in Bolivia, 29.2% in Peru, 27.1% in Colombia, and 26.0% in Ecuador.

Prevalence	Bolivia	Colombia	Ecuador	Peru
Lifetime	11.73	32.10	21.26	11.78
Past year	3.57	15.19	8.81	4.24
Past month	1.51	7.26	3.52	1.57

Past year prevalence of marijuana use, by gender



Past year prevalence of marijuana use and percentage of abuse or dependence among past year users



Age of onset	Bolivia	Colombia	Ecuador	Peru
Age of onset	18.6	18.1	18.5	18.6

## Conclusions

Among university students in the Andean Community, countries with higher percentages of marijuana users with signs of abuse or dependence were the countries with the lowest past year prevalence. This study highlights the importance of early detection and monitoring high risk patterns of marijuana use in populations with lower prevalence.

## References

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