

American Drug Stats



Which drug is used the most by Americans?

I. Alcohol

Alcohol Use in the United States:

- **Prevalence of Drinking:** According to the 2015 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), 86.4 percent of people ages 18 or older reported that they drank alcohol at some point in their lifetime; 70.1 percent reported that they drank in the past year; 56.0 percent reported that they drank in the past month.¹
- **Prevalence of Binge Drinking and Heavy Alcohol Use:** In 2015, 26.9 percent of people ages 18 or older reported that they engaged in binge drinking in the past month; 7.0 percent reported that they engaged in heavy alcohol use in the past month.² (See "Definitions" below for definitions of binge drinking and heavy alcohol use.)

Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) in the United States:

- **Adults (ages 18+):** According to the 2015 NSDUH, 15.1 million adults ages 18 and older³ (6.2 percent of this age group⁴) had AUD. This includes 9.8 million men³ (8.4 percent of men in this age group⁴) and 5.3 million women³ (4.2 percent of women in this age group⁴).
 - About 6.7 percent of adults who had AUD in the past year received treatment. This includes 7.4 percent of males and 5.4 percent of females with AUD in this age group.⁵
- **Youth (ages 12–17):** According to the 2015 NSDUH, an estimated 623,000 adolescents ages 12–17⁶ (2.5 percent of this age group⁷) had AUD. This number includes 298,000 males⁶ (2.3 percent of males in this age group⁷) and 325,000 females⁶ (2.7 percent of females in this age group⁷).

Adult US
Population =
240 million

This means:

134 million
adult
drinkers per
month

ALCOHOL STATISTICS



15.1 million American adults suffered from alcoholism in 2015



There are around 88,000 alcohol-related deaths in the US each year



It is the fourth leading cause of preventable death in America



Alcohol sales generated \$25.2 billion dollars in the US in 2016

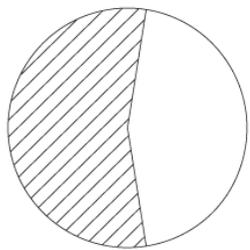
Which drug is the
second most used by
Americans?

2. Prescription Drugs

Adult US
Population =
240 million

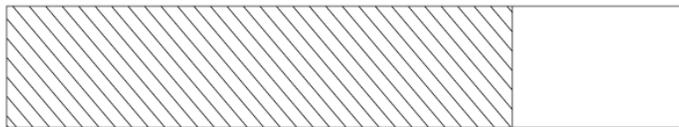
This means:

132 million
adult
prescription
drug users



55%

of Americans regularly take prescription medication—four, on average.



75%

of them also take at least one over-the-counter drug regularly.

Source: Consumer Reports National Research Center's nationally representative survey of 1,947 adults, conducted in April 2017.

ABOUT 7 MILLION

Americans Reported Past-Month Use of Prescription
Drugs for Nonmedical Purposes in 2010

1.1



STIMULANTS

2.6



SEDATIVES AND
TRANQUILIZERS

5.1



PAIN
RELIEVERS

*Numbers in Millions of Americans

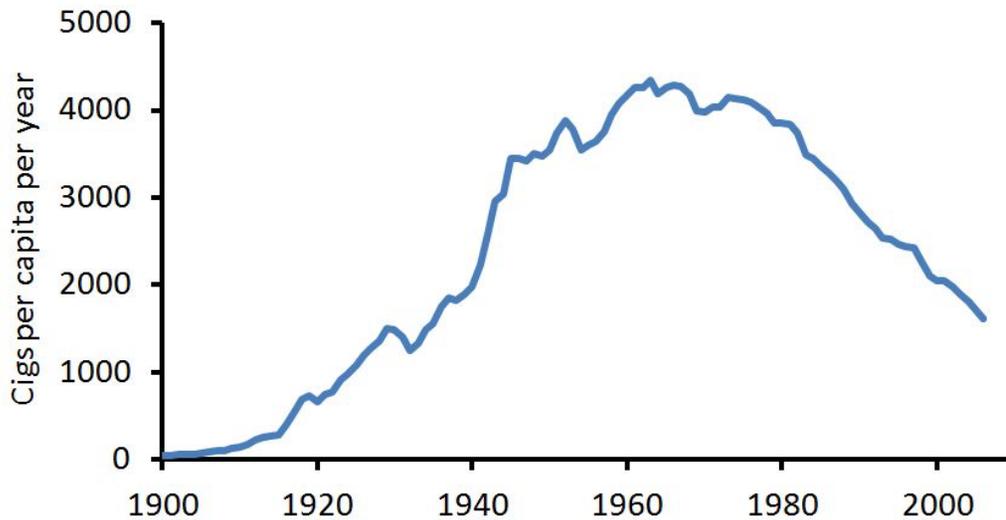
Source: Centers for Disease Control and
Prevention. Unintentional Drug Poisoning in
the United States (July 2010).

Which drug is the third
most used by
Americans?

3. Cigarettes/Tobacco

Stats on US cigarette/tobacco use

US Cigarette Consumption, 1900-2006

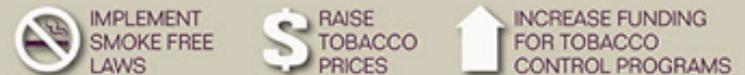


CIGARETTE SMOKING OVERALL AMONG ADULTS IN THE U.S. IS DOWN.

YET CIGARETTE SMOKING REMAINS HIGH AMONG CERTAIN POPULATIONS.



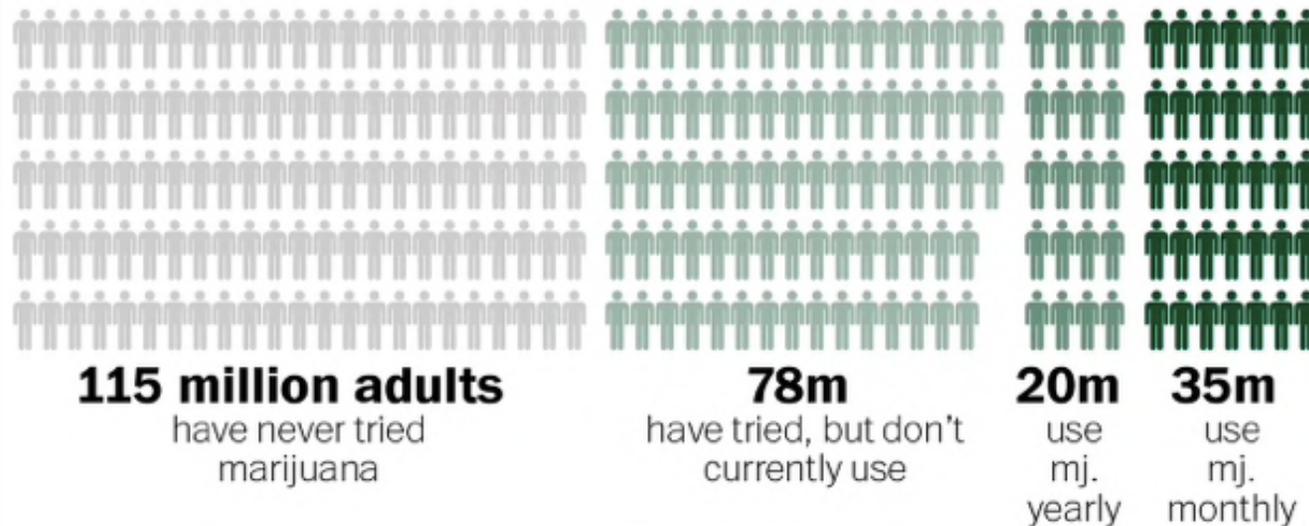
WE CAN PUT AN END TO TOBACCO USE.



Which illegal drug is
used most by
Americans?

Canabis

1. Nearly 55 million adults currently use marijuana



WAPO.ST/WONKBLOG

Source: Yahoo News/Marist survey

More than half of American adults have tried marijuana at least once in their lives, according to the survey. Nearly 55 million of them, or 22 percent, currently use it – the survey defines “current use” as having used marijuana at least once or twice in the past year. Close to 35 million are what the survey calls “regular users,” or people who use marijuana at least once or twice a month.

Which drug do Americans “abuse” the most, or most “dependent” on?

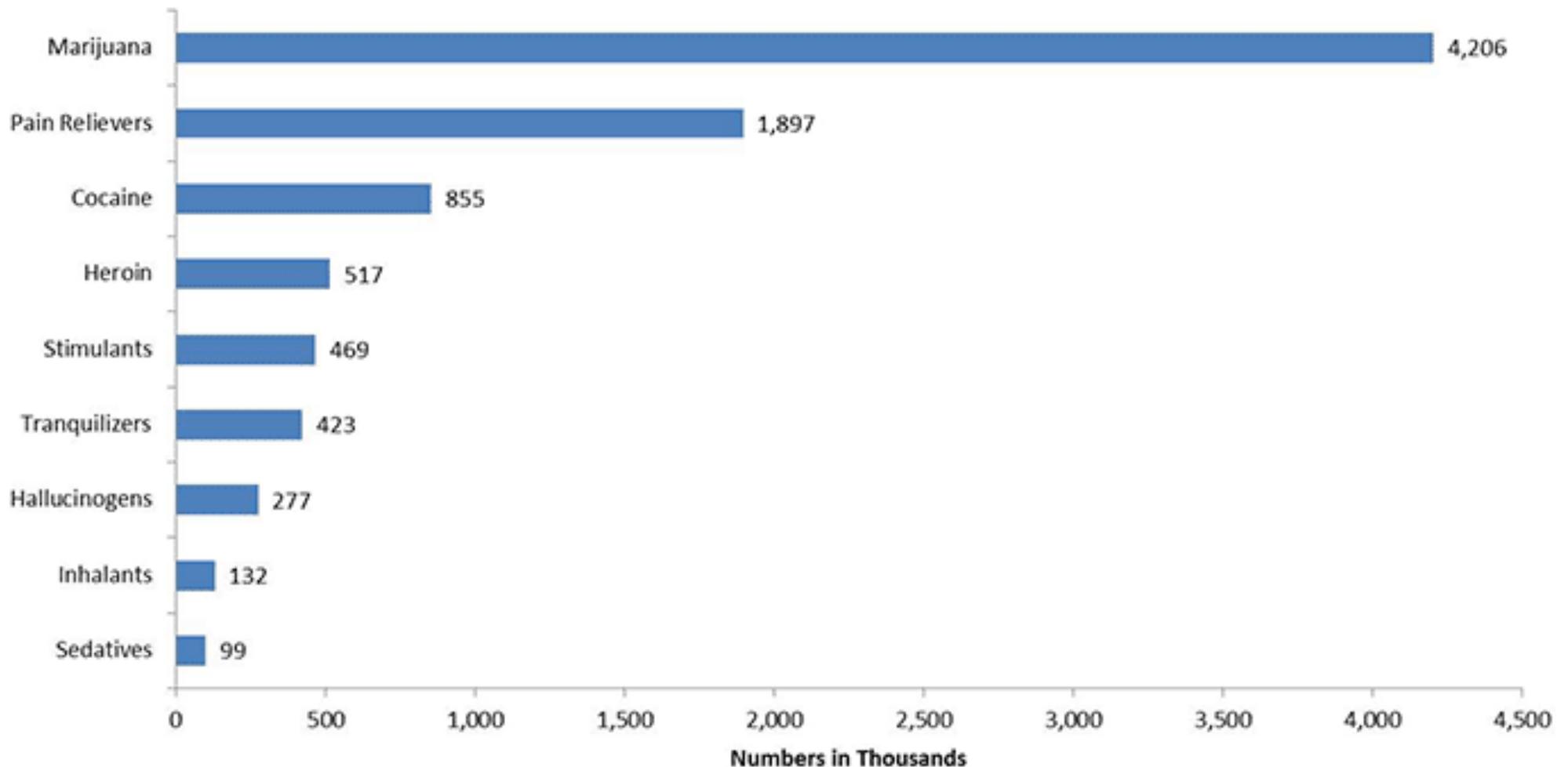
A **drug addiction**, a distinct concept from **substance dependence**, is defined as compulsive, out-of-control **drug use**, despite negative consequences.

In medical terms, dependence specifically refers to a physical condition in which the body has adapted to the presence of a drug. If an individual with drug dependence stops taking that drug suddenly, that person will experience predictable and measurable symptoms, known as a withdrawal syndrome.

Substance abuse, also known as **drug abuse**, is a patterned use of a **drug** in which the user consumes the **substance** in amounts or with methods which are harmful to themselves or others

Still Cannabis...

Specific Illicit Drug Dependence or Abuse in the Past Year 2013



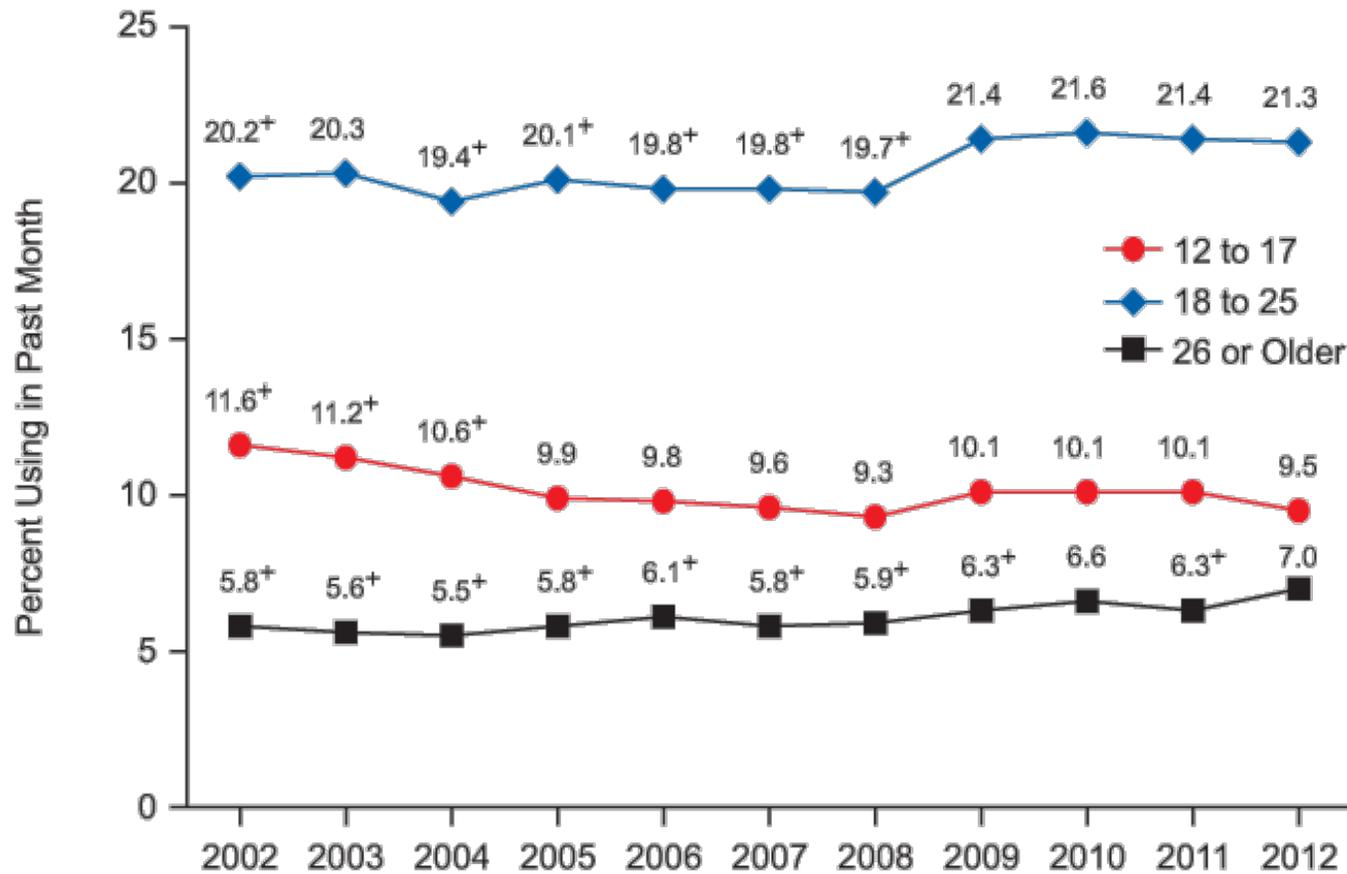
Which age group uses
drugs the most?

12-17

18-25

26-older

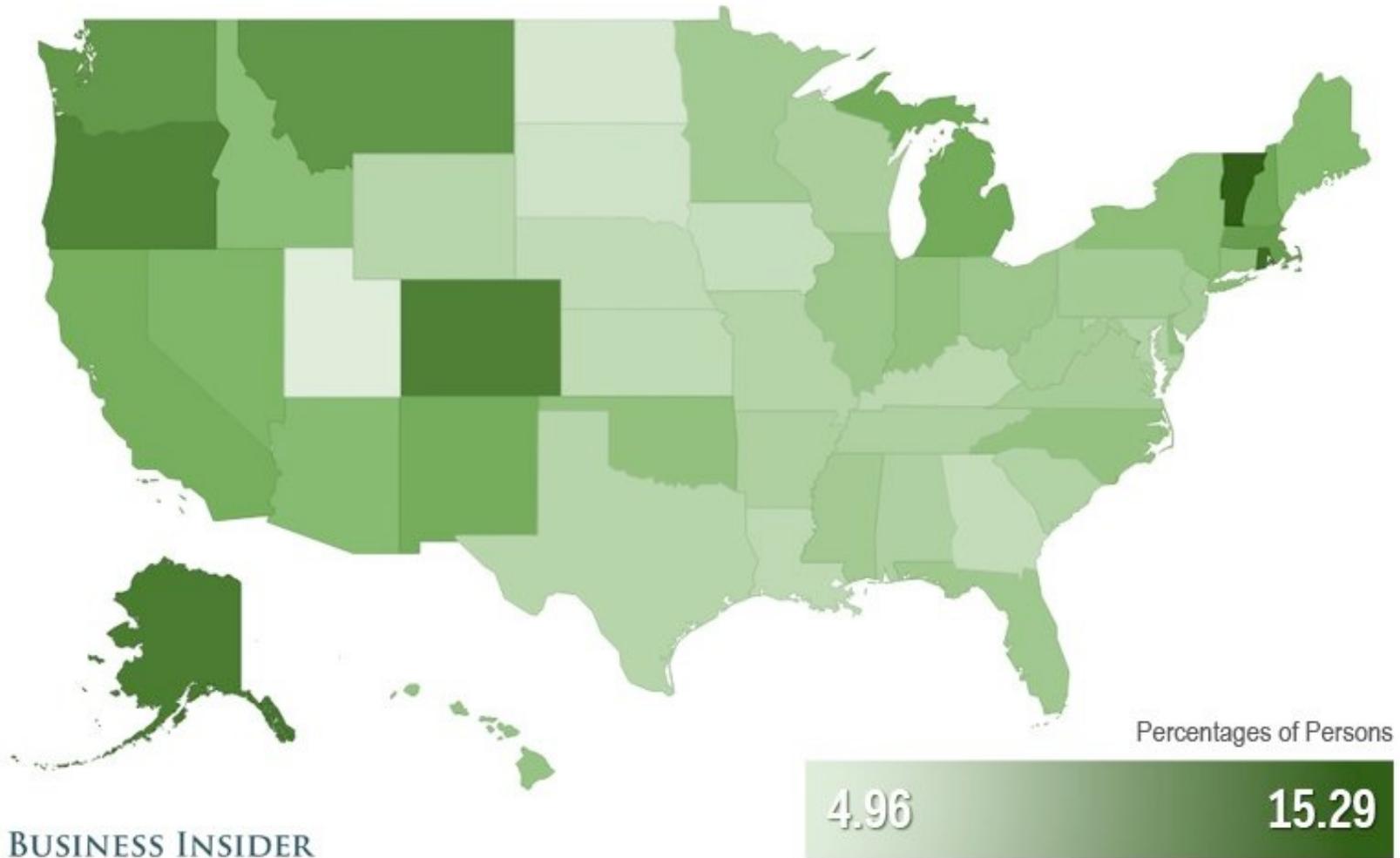
Drug Use by Age Group



Top five states for drug
use?

Drug Use by State

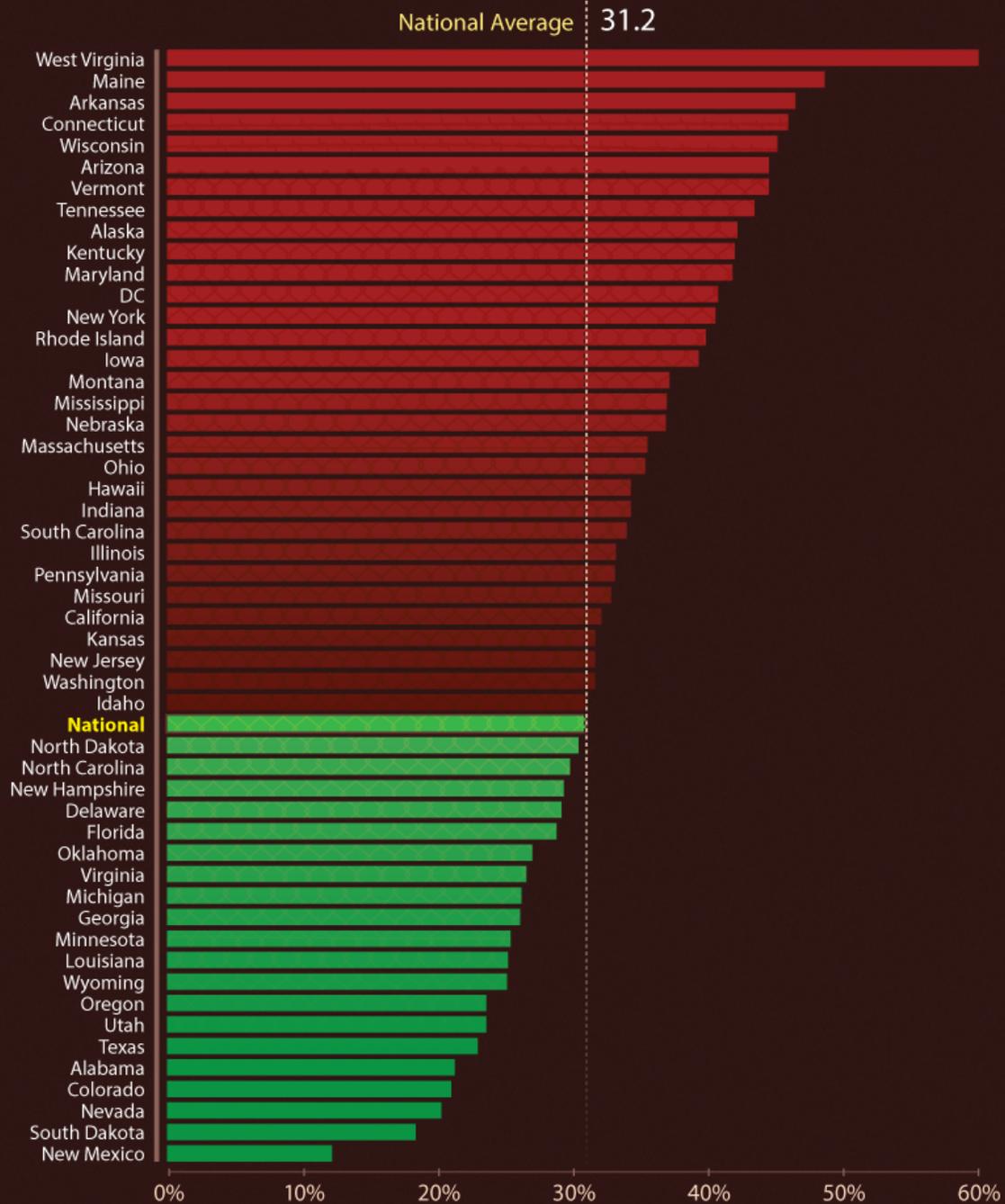
Illicit Drug Use In The Past Month Among Persons Aged 12 Or Older



Which drug is the
responsible for the largest
percentage of drug arrests in
21/50 states?

In which state are drug arrests the highest percent of all arrests? Which state is #2?

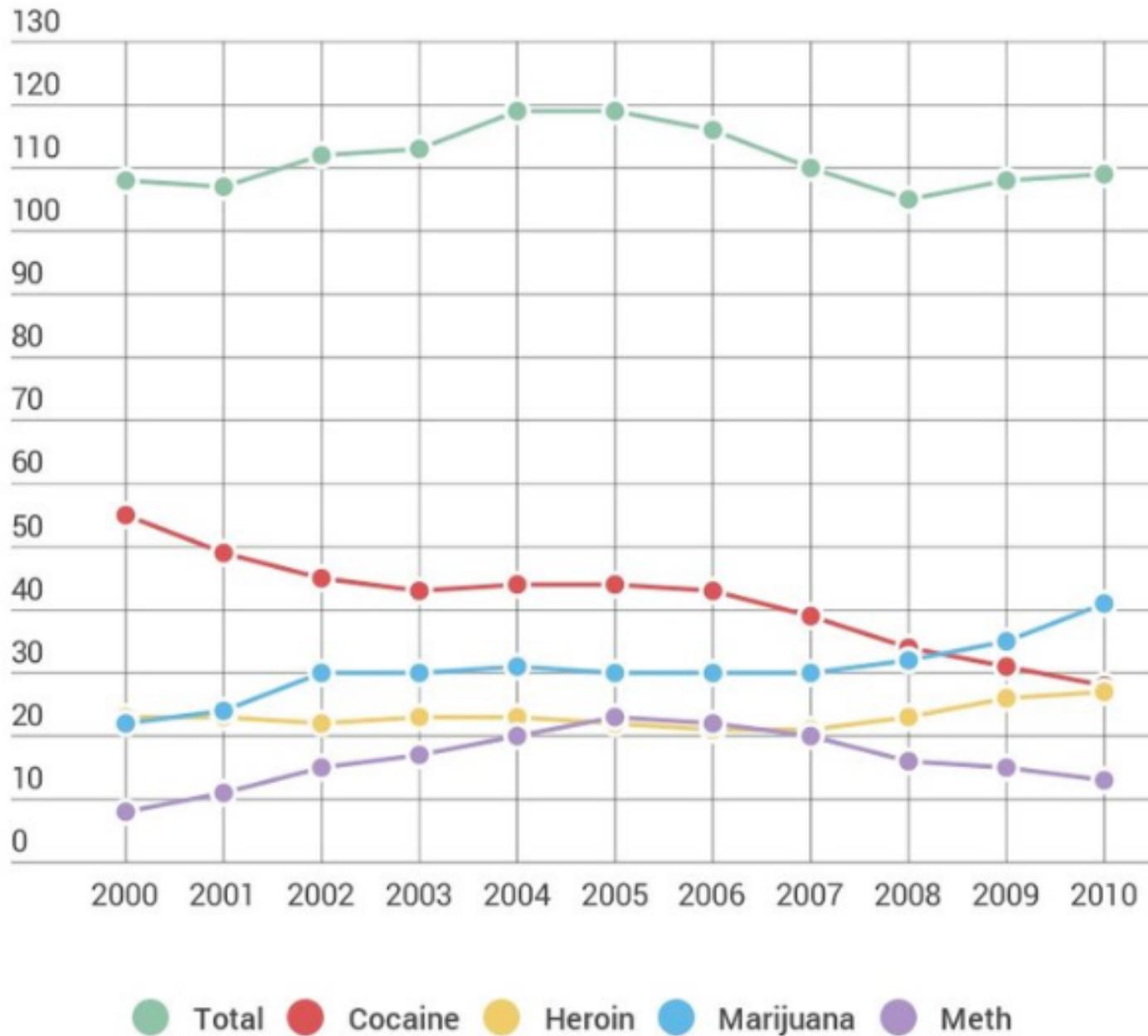
% OF DRUG SENTENCES PER STATE VS. NATIONAL AVERAGE



About how much money do
Americans spend per year
on illegal drugs?

Bonus: which drug do
Americans spend the most
on?

US spending on illegal drugs, in billions



Rank from deadliest to
least deadly:

alcohol

cocaine

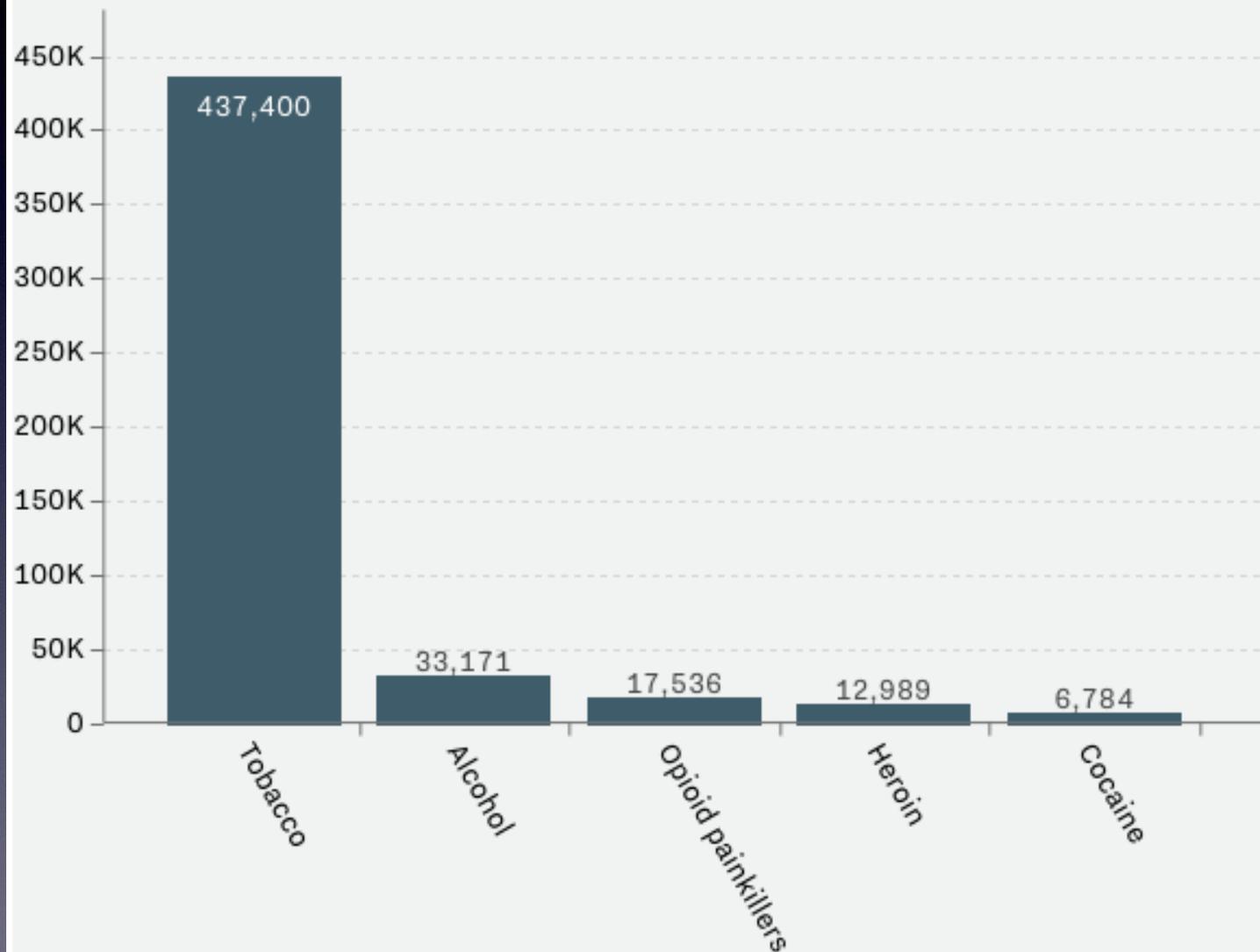
tobacco

heroin

prescription pain killers

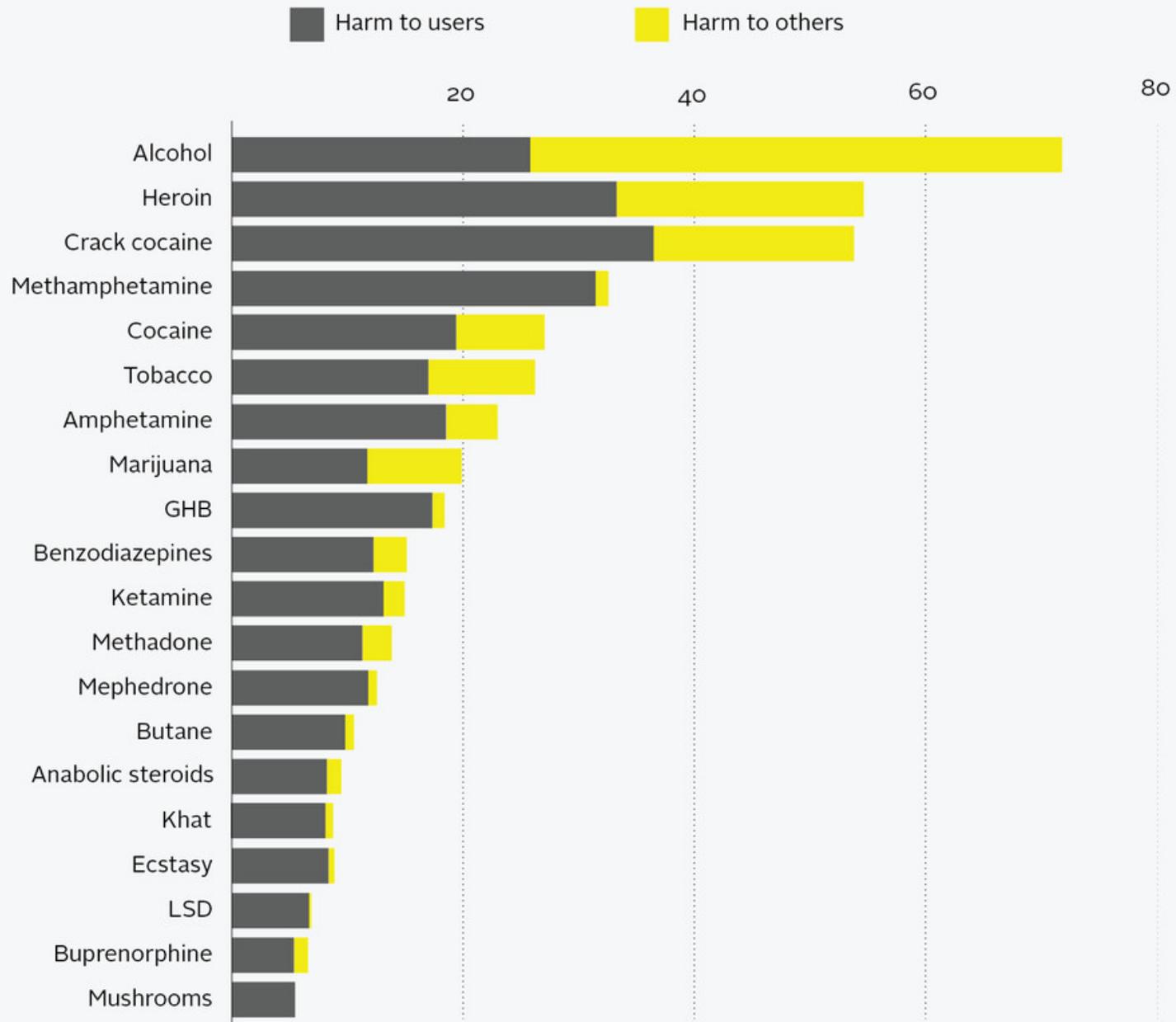
America's 3 deadliest drugs are legal

Underlying cause of death in America in 2015, by drug



The most dangerous drugs

Ranked by drug experts on damage to user, impact on crime, and socioeconomic effects



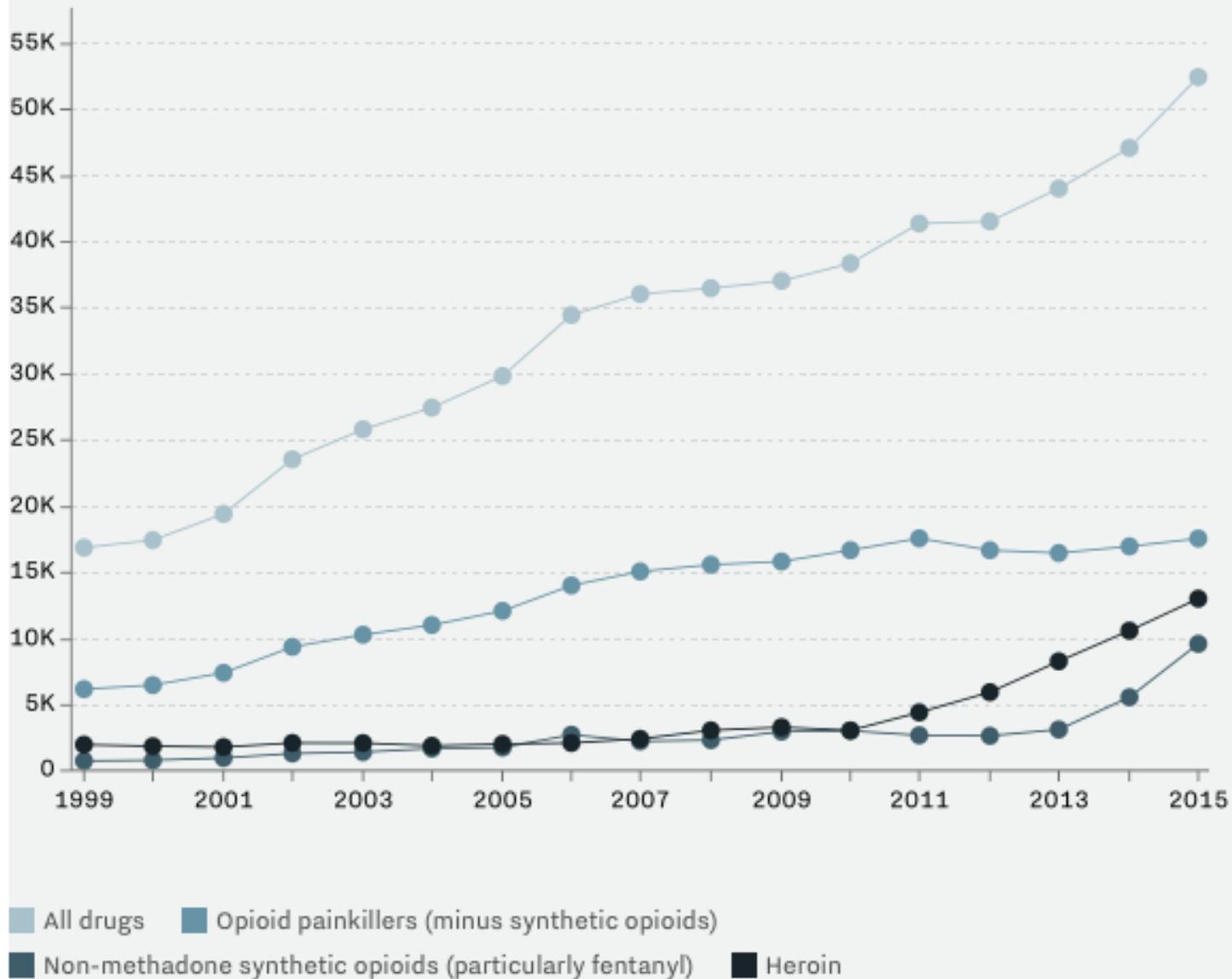
SOURCE: Independent Scientific Committee on Drugs, based on analysis of UK drug use, *The Lancet*, 2010



Drug overdose deaths in America



Note: Some deaths on this chart may overlap if they involve multiple drugs.



Source: [National Institute on Drug Abuse](#)

Were overall rates of drug use higher in 1978 or 2011 for total population?

Long Term Trends in Drug Use

Illegal Drug Use in America 1979-2011

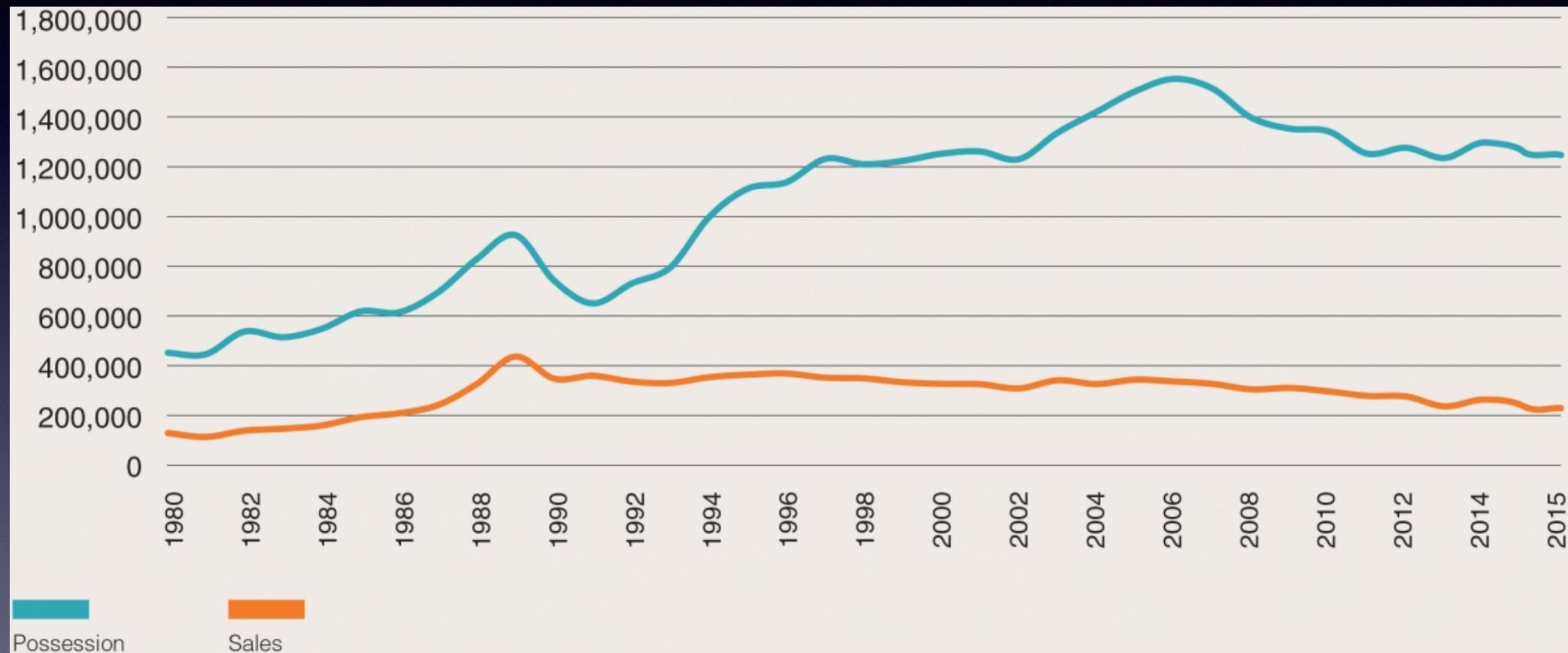
Rate of Overall Drug Use Has Declined by roughly 30% over Past Three Decades



Source: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. *National Survey on Drug Use and Health* (formerly the *National Household Survey on Drug Abuse*) for the years 1979 to 2011. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Ages 12 and older.

Were there more drug
arrests in 1980 or
2015?

Drug Related Arrests



Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Reports.⁹

Compared to 1970, the number of Americans jailed in state and federal prison has:

a. decreased by 10%

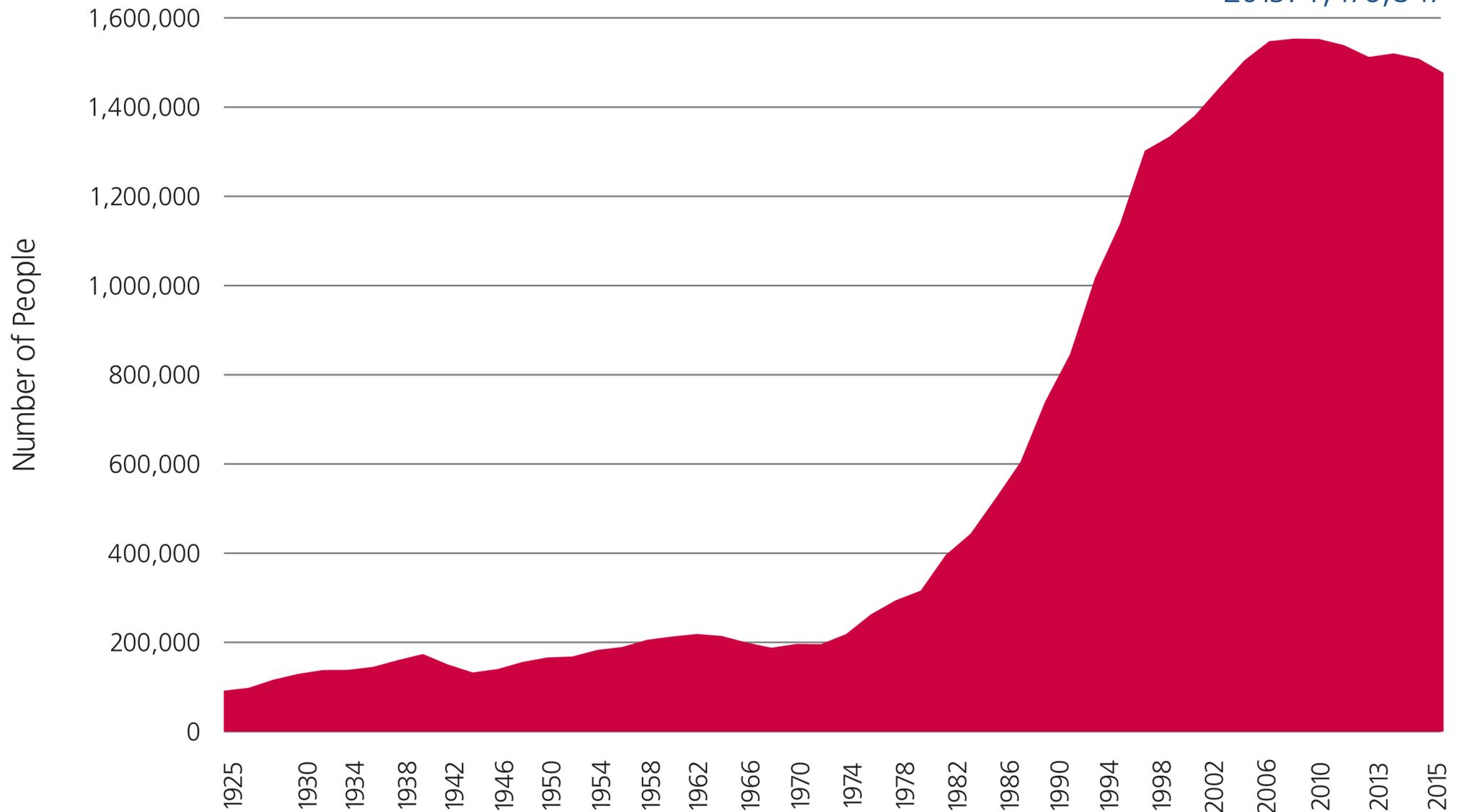
b. doubled

c. increased by more than 450%

d. increased by more than 700%

U.S. State and Federal Prison Population, 1925-2015

2015: 1,476,847



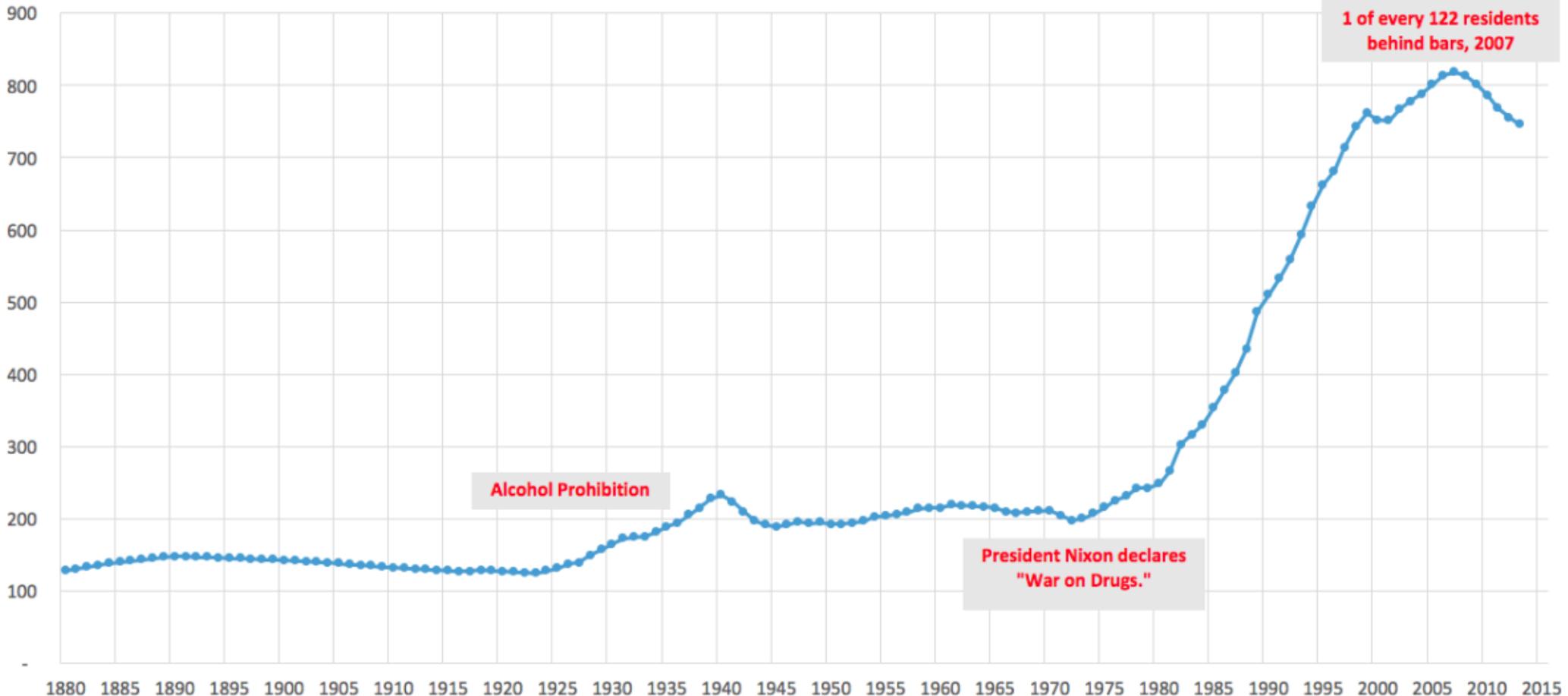
Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics *Prisoners Series*.

In which decade did the US incarceration rate begin its most rapid rise in American history:

- a. 1930s
- b. 1970s
- c. 1980s
- d. 1990s

U.S. imprisonment rate, 1880-2013

(per 100,000 residents)

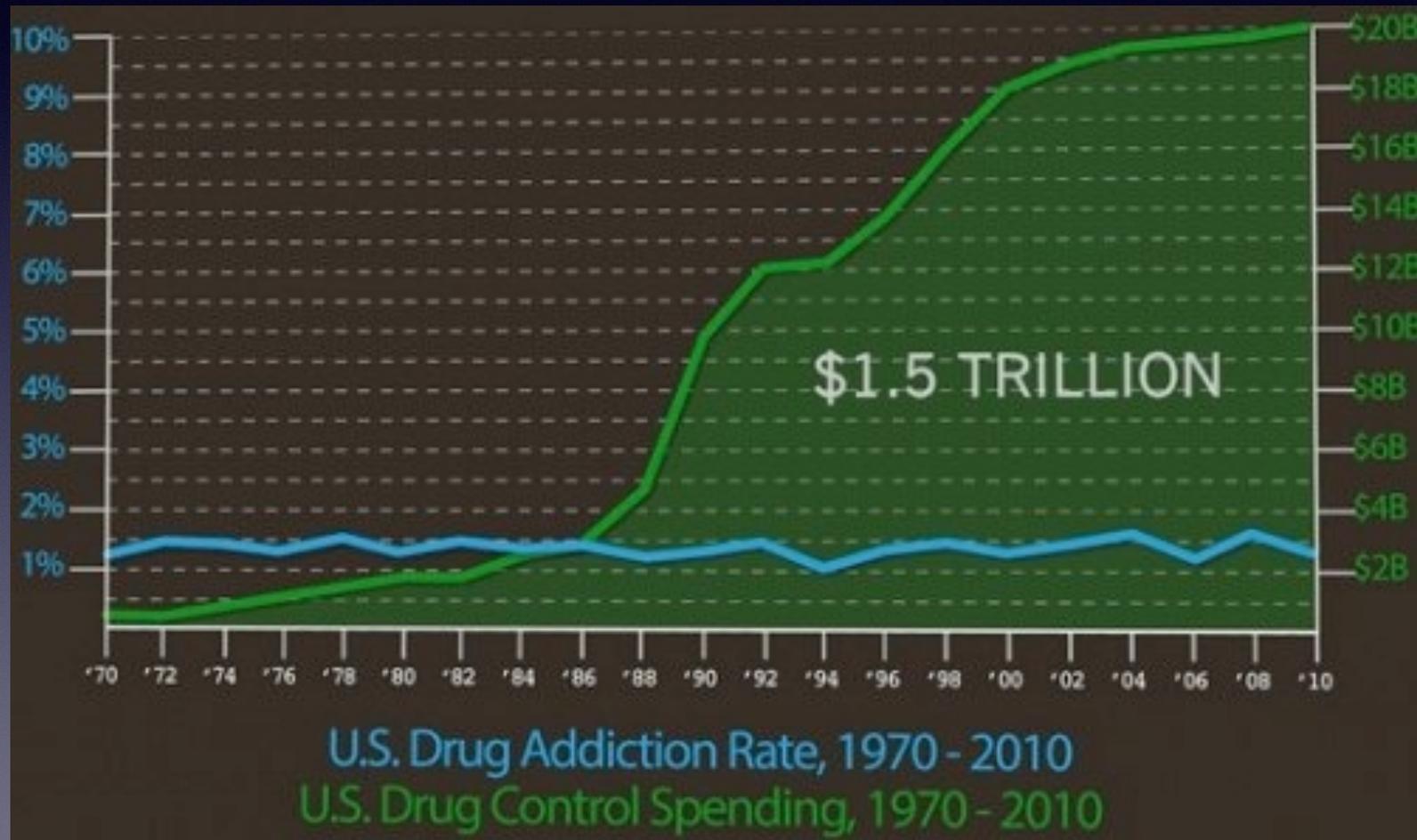


Source: clemencyreport.org

How much money has the US gov. spent fighting the “War on Drugs” between 1970 and 2010?

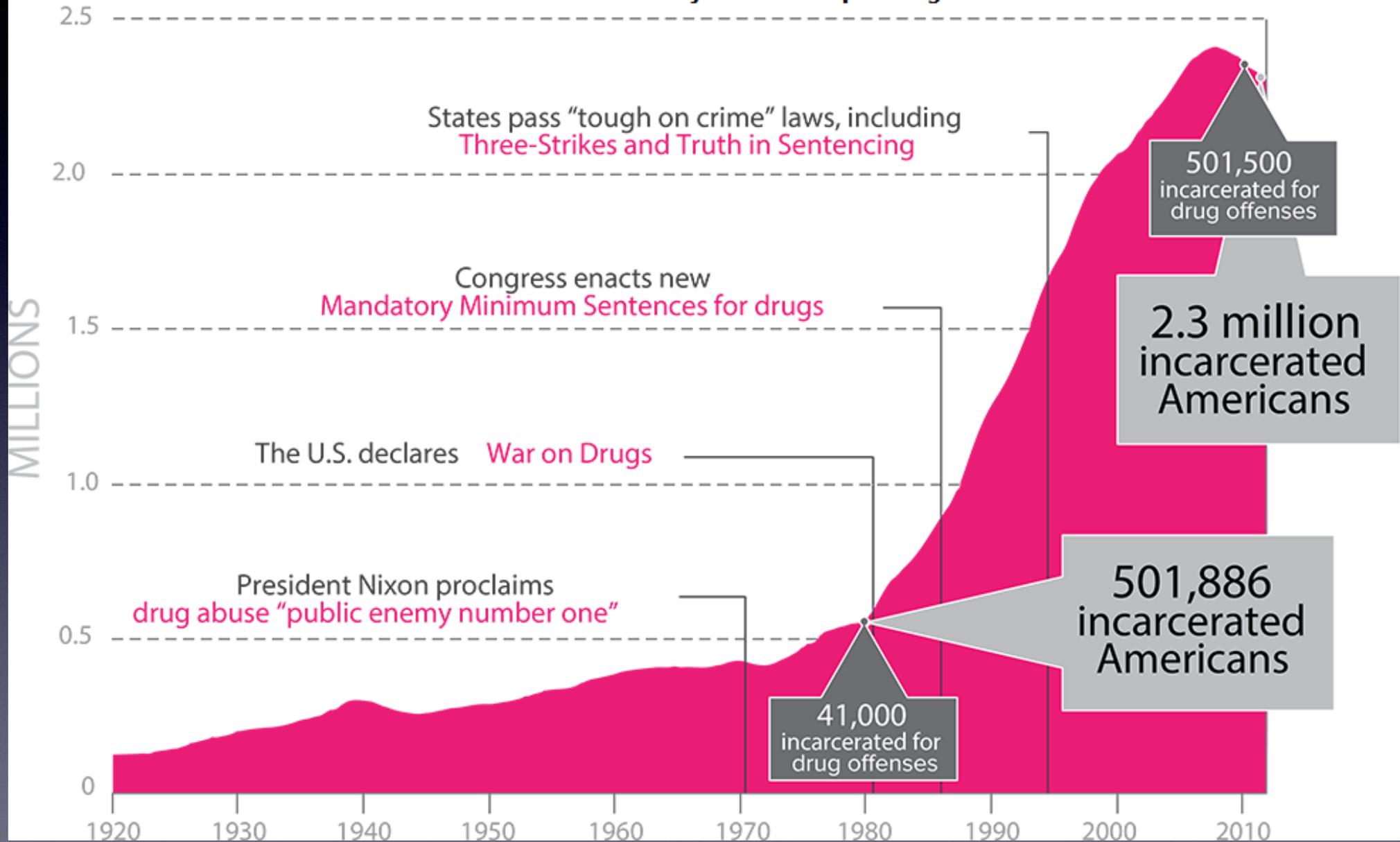
Was the drug addiction rate higher in 1970 or 2010?

The Effectiveness of the “War on Drugs”?

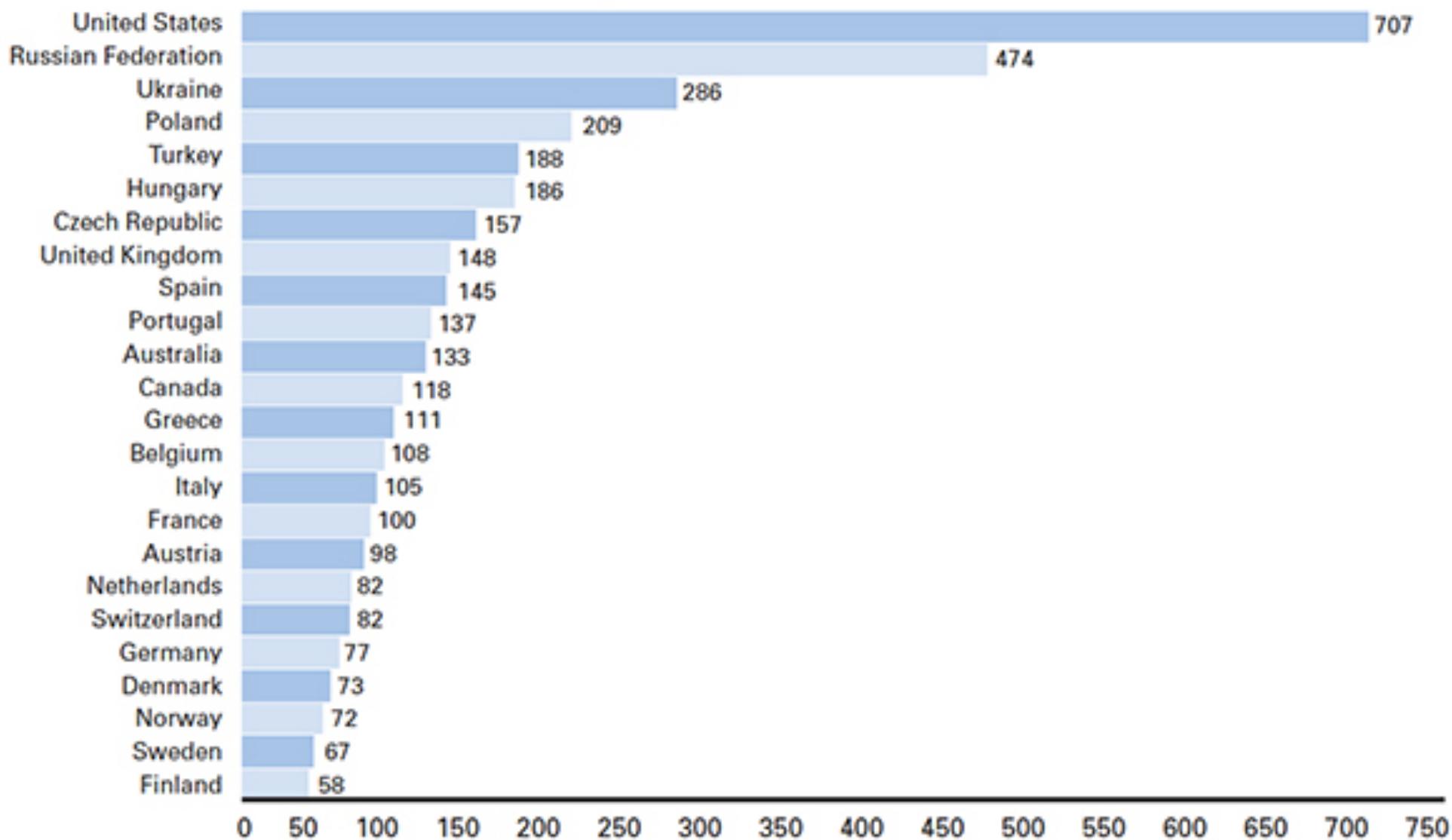


INCARCERATED AMERICANS (1920-2013)

Source: www.justleadershipusa.org

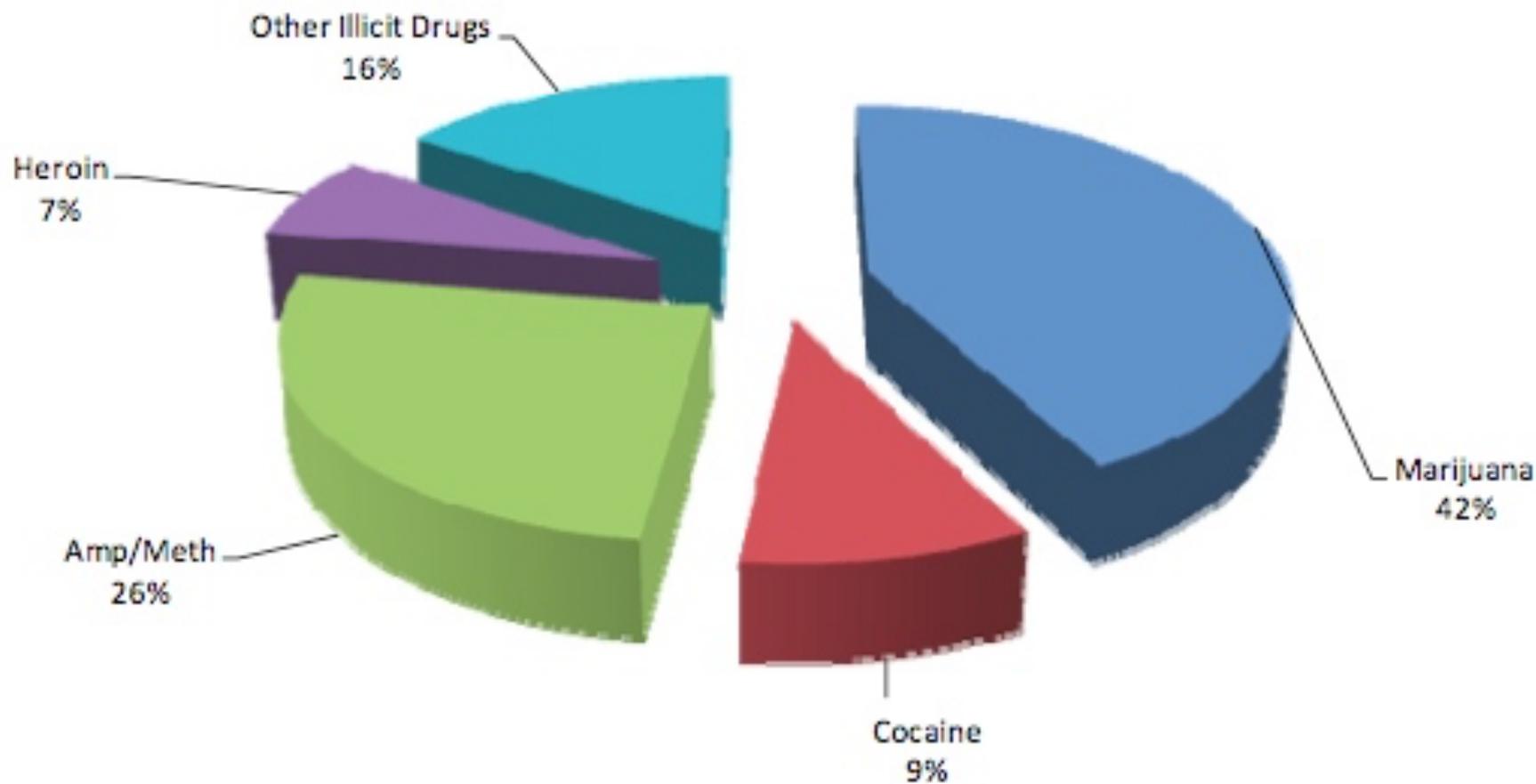


Incarceration rates per 100,000



Which drug leads to
the most arrests in
America?

Arrests By Drug Type FY 2013

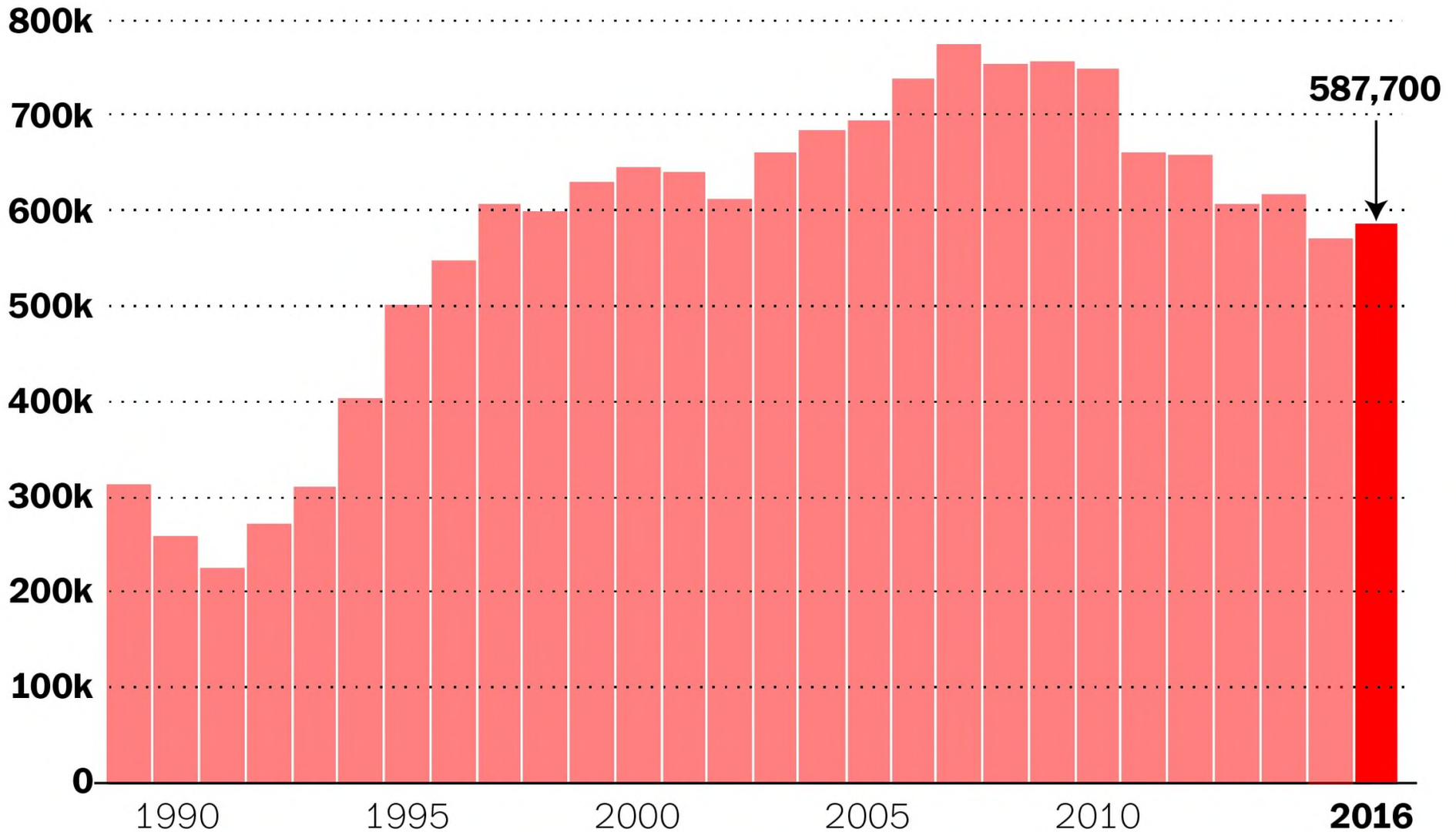


About how many
arrests for marijuana in
2016?

- a. 600,000
- b. 1 million
- c. 200,000
- d. 5 million

Marijuana arrests hold steady in 2016

Estimated arrests for simple marijuana possession, 1989-2016



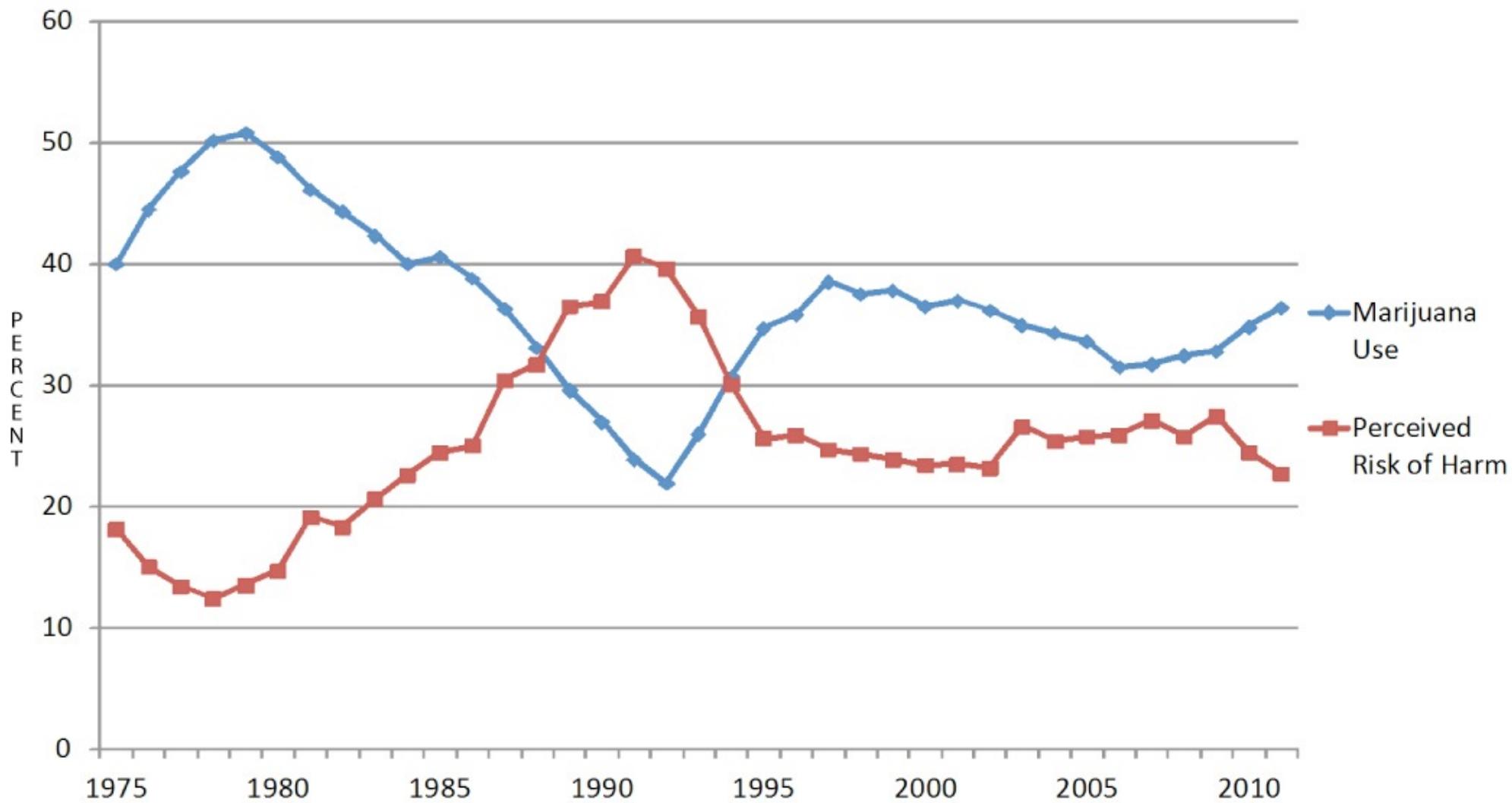
In which decade was
marijuana perceived as
the most harmful

a. 1970s

b. 1980s

c. 1990s

d. 2000s



Which age group uses
marijuana the most:

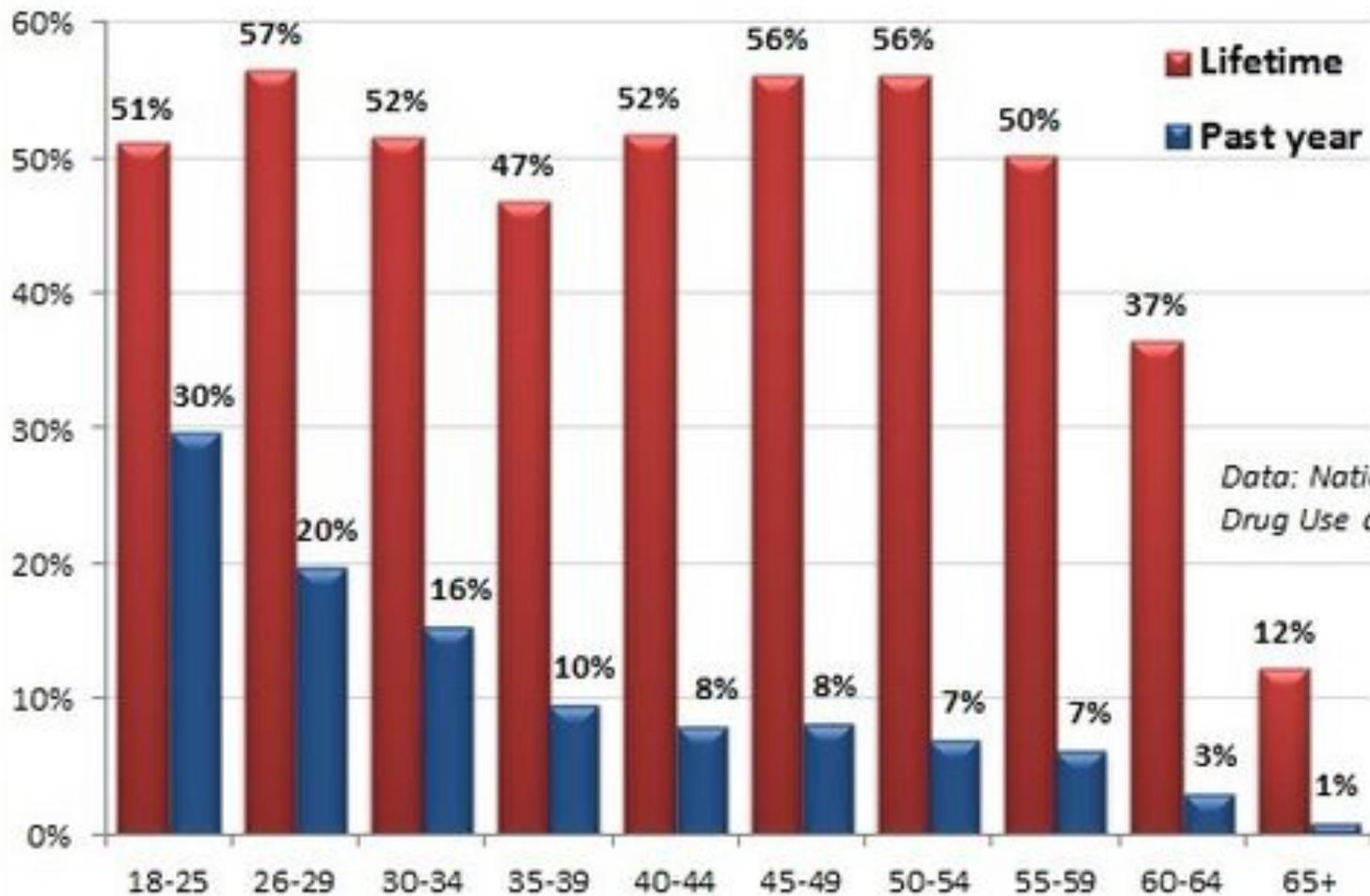
18-25

26-29

30-34

35-39

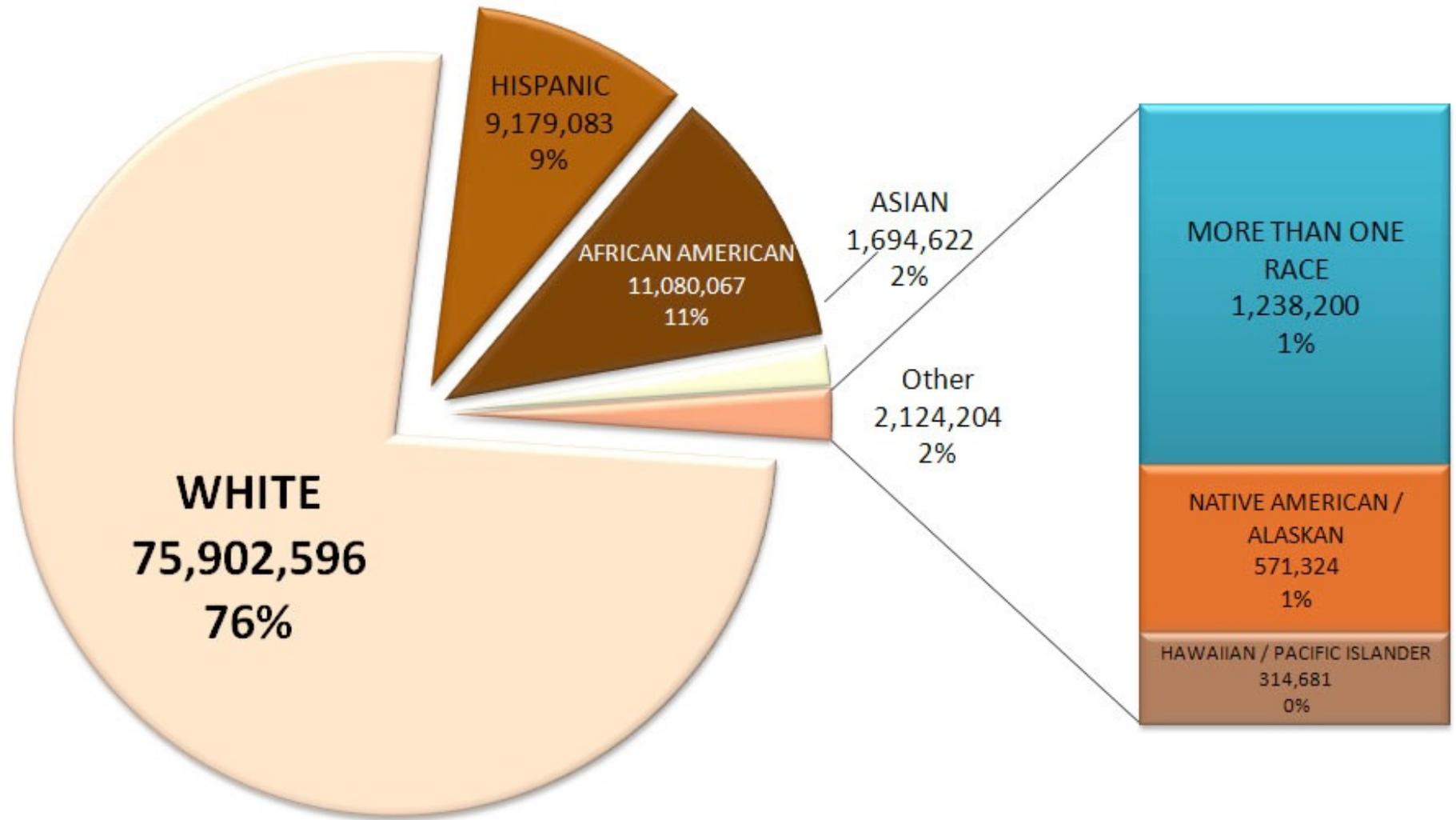
Marijuana Use by Age



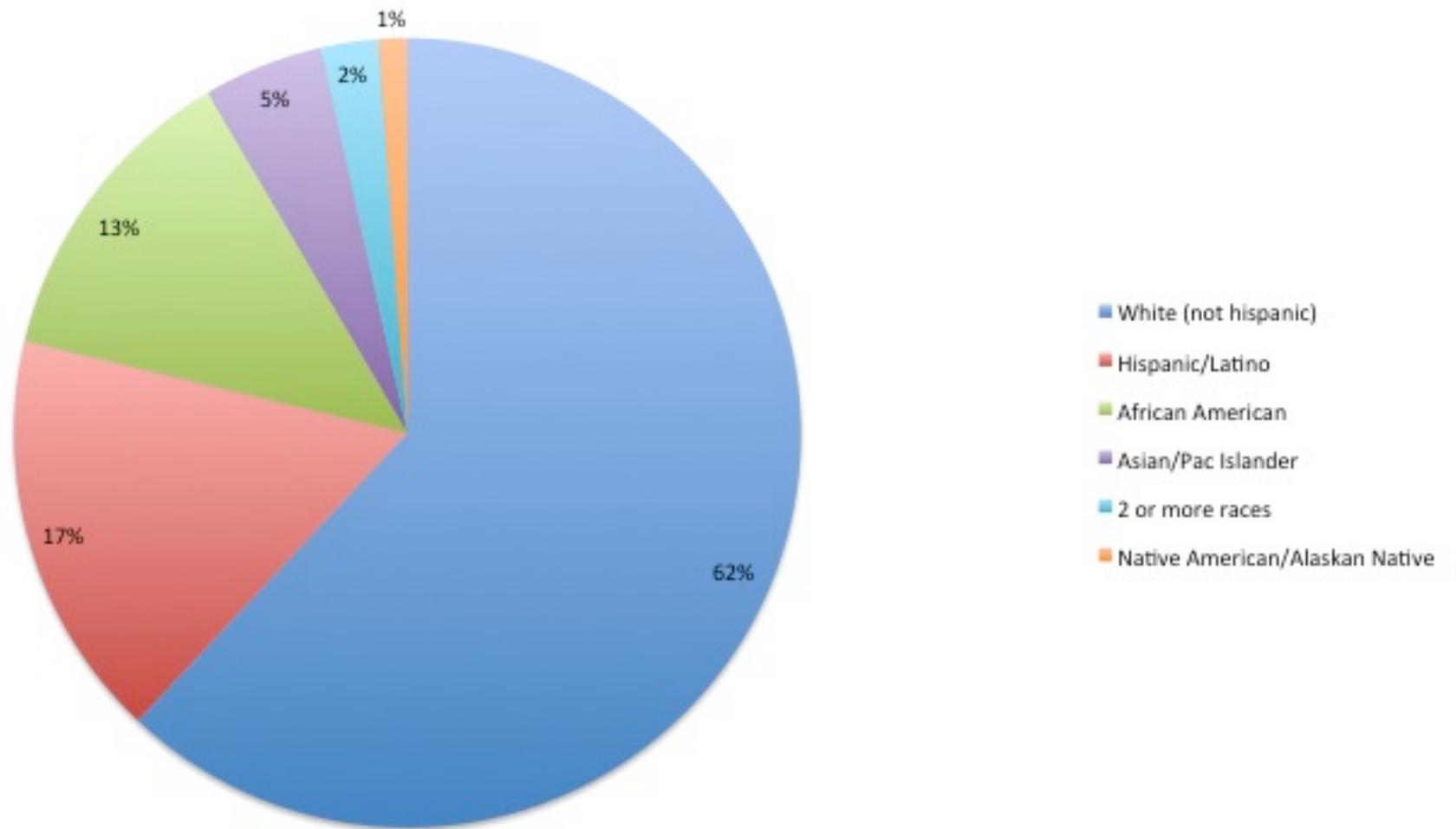
Data: National Survey on Drug Use and Health

Most of the marijuana
in the US is consumed
by which race?

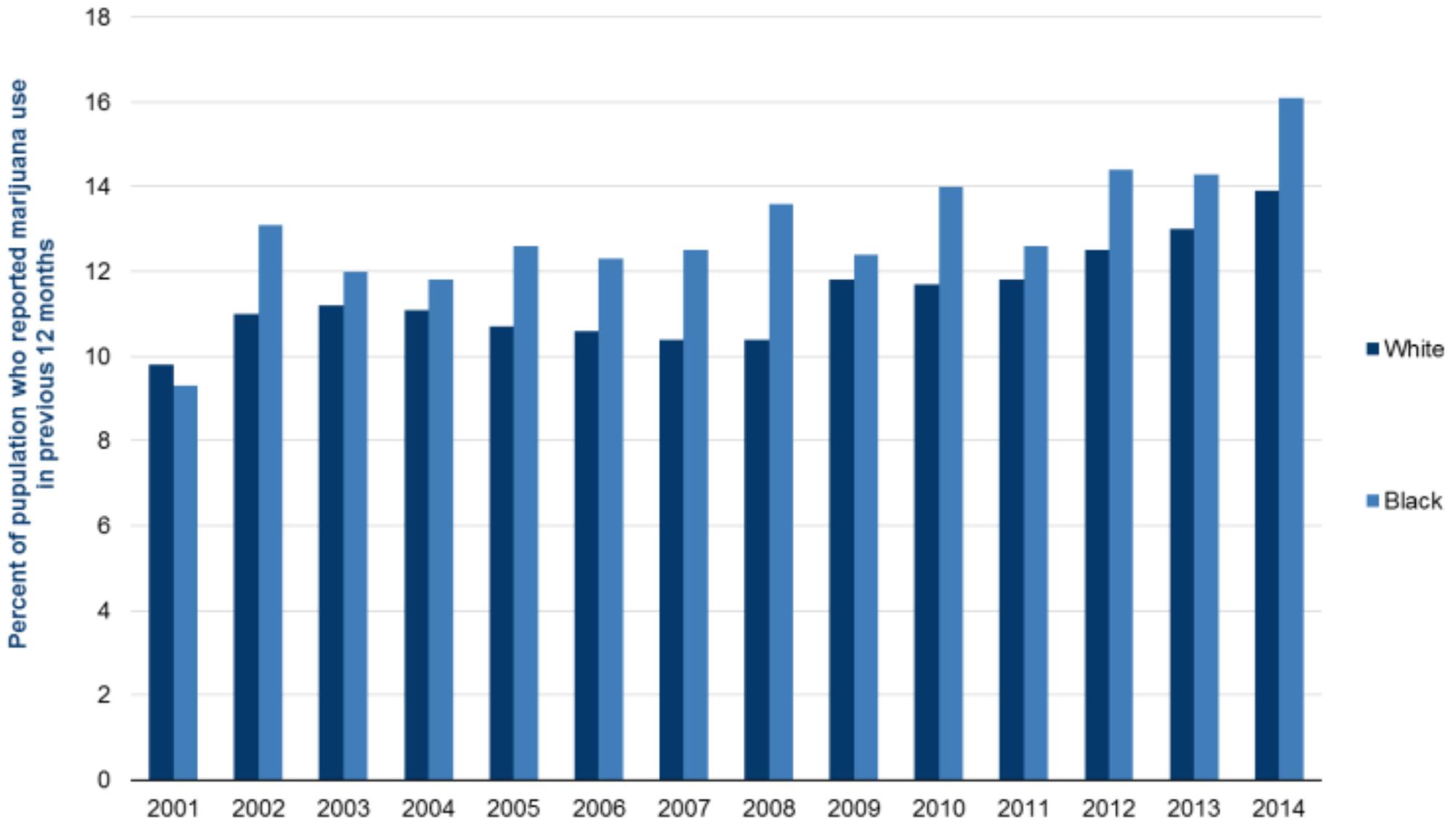
Adults Who Have Ever Used Cannabis by Race/Ethnicity



US Population 2013



Annual marijuana use prevalence, by race



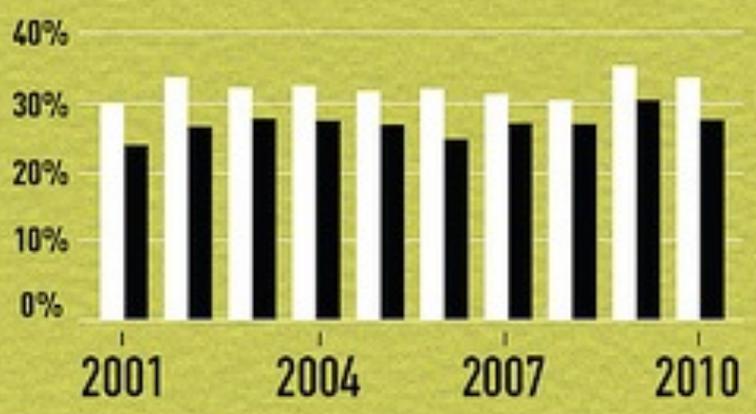
Source: *Uniform Crime Reporting Program, U.S. Census Bureau*
Data provided by Jon Gettman, Shenandoah University

BROOKINGS

▶ WHO SMOKES MORE POT?

MARIJUANA USE
18- TO 25-YEAR-OLDS

Whites Blacks



BLACKS AND WHITES USE POT AT
ABOUT THE SAME RATE.

BUT THESE BUSTS AREN'T
HAPPENING ON EVERY BLOCK...

Which race gets
arrested the most for
marijuana use?

➤ TARGETING COMMUNITIES OF COLOR

ACLU

BLACKS HAVE BEEN NEARLY
FOUR TIMES
MORE LIKELY THAN WHITES
TO BE ARRESTED FOR
MARIJUANA POSSESSION

