



Synthetic marijuana was the third-most abused substance by U.S. high school students last year, behind alcohol and marijuana, according to the Center for Substance Abuse Research (CESAR) at the University of Maryland, College Park.

The report found 57 percent of high school students reported using alcohol, compared with 39 percent for marijuana and 12 percent for synthetic marijuana.

"In reality, youth who report using synthetic marijuana likely have no idea what specific synthetic cannabinoid they are using or what the effects will be," the report notes. Eric Wish, Director of CESAR, told *The Baltimore Sun* the federal government has had difficulty cracking down on synthetic marijuana.

Makers of the drug continually change the formula to evade laws designed to ban synthetic marijuana and other designer drugs.

In July 2012, President Obama signed legislation to ban synthetic drugs. The law outlaws harmful chemicals in synthetic drugs such as those used to make synthetic marijuana and bath salts.

Synthetic drugs are readily available online. The law outlaws sales of synthetic drugs by both retail stores and online retailers.