



**ICPSR**  
**Inter-university Consortium for**  
**Political and Social Research**

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**ABC News “Nightline” Drugs and Alcohol  
Poll, August 1988**

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ABC News

ICPSR 9180

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ABC NEWS "NIGHTLINE" DRUGS AND ALCOHOL POLL, AUGUST 1988  
(ICPSR 9180)

Principal Investigator

ABC News

First ICPSR Release  
May 1990

Inter-university Consortium for  
Political and Social Research  
P.O. Box 1248  
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## DATA COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

ABC News

ABC NEWS "NIGHTLINE" DRUGS AND ALCOHOL POLL, AUGUST 1988 (ICPSR 9180)

**SUMMARY:** Focusing on drug and alcohol abuse, this survey solicited respondents' opinions on the most important problem facing the country, government prohibition of alcohol in the 1920s, the use of drugs or alcohol for enjoyment, the relative severity of drug and alcohol abuse in the respondent's community, federal spending on drug abuse, and the relative effectiveness in controlling the use of drugs of strategies such as stopping illegal importation, arresting drug sellers, arresting drug users, and educating the public. In addition, respondents were asked if various substances (e.g., marijuana, LSD, alcohol, and cigarettes) were dangerous to their health, which caused the most trouble in society, and if substances such as cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana and heroin should be legal or illegal for an adult to buy. They also were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the following statements: (1) Drug abuse wouldn't stop because people continue to want drugs, (2) People should be allowed to take drugs as long as they don't hurt someone else, (3) Current fears about an illegal drug crisis were inflated, and (4) Illegal drug use had become a central part of American society. Other topics covered include the possible outcomes of legalization of various drugs. Background information on respondents includes education, age, race, sex, and state/region of residence. CLASS IV

**UNIVERSE:** Adults aged 18 and over living in households with telephones in the 48 contiguous United States.

**SAMPLING:** Random digit dialing.

**NOTE:** The data contain blanks and alphabetic characters. A weight variable is included that must be used in any analysis.

**EXTENT OF COLLECTION:** 1 data file

**DATA FORMAT:** Card Image

**File Structure:** rectangular

**Cases:** 509

**Variables:** 59

**Record Length:** 80

**Records Per Case:** 2



N. Gullone 88.2  
N. Gullone 88.2

MAR - 2 1989  
RLS

9180

Chilton Research Services  
Radnor, Pennsylvania

CRS Study #7769  
August, 1988

ABC NEWS AUGUST 1988 NIGHTLINE POLL

Hello, I'm \_\_\_\_\_ calling from Chilton Research Services. We are doing a short survey for ABC News on some current events.

Our research experts have randomly selected the person in your household I should speak to, so that all types of people will be represented in our survey. Thinking of all the male/female adults 18 years of age and older, living in this household, currently at home . . . .may I please speak to the one who last had a birthday? (IF NO MALE/FEMALE IN THE HOUSEHOLD, ASK: Then may I please speak to the female/male who last had a birthday?) (REPEAT INTRODUCTION IF NEEDED)

1. In your opinion, what do you think is the most important problem facing this country today?

2(06-07)

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~  
~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

- 1 Unemployment 01
- 2 Federal Budget Deficit 02
- 3 Other economic reason 03
- 4 Taxes 04
- 5 Inflation 05
- 6 High interest rates 06
- 7 Crime 07
- 8 Moral decline 08
- 9 Drugs 09
- 10 Race relations/civil rights/problems of blacks 10
- 11 Quality of education 11
- 12 Health care/health care system 12
- 13 Iran/Contra scandal 13
- 14 Nuclear war/threat of war 14
- 15 International problems/foreign policy/relations with other nations 15
- 16 Communism/Soviet Union 16
- 17 Problems in the Middle East 17
- 18 Reagan 18
- 19 Terrorism 19
- 20 Poverty/hunger/homelessness 20
- 21 Dissatisfaction with government 21
- 22 Illegal immigrants 22
- 23 Environment/pollution 23
- 24 Energy 24
- 25 Teen pregnancy 25
- 26 Alcohol 26
- 27 AIDS 27
- 28 Trade deficit 28
- 29 Leadership 29
- 30 Process of selecting presidents 30
- 31 Other social/health problem 31
- 32 Other International problem 32
- Other (specify) 97
- Don't know/No opinion 98
- NA/Refused 99

RESPONDENT ID ALL DECKS (1-5)  
CARD # ALL DECKS (80)

2. Do you think it was a good idea or a bad idea for the U.S government to totally ban the drinking of alcohol back in the 1920s?

2(08)

Yes, it was a good idea	1
No, it was NOT a good idea	2
DK/No opinion	8
NA/Refused	9

3. Do you think using alcohol for enjoyment is generally a good thing or generally a bad thing?

2(09)

Generally a good thing	1
Generally a bad thing	2
DK/No opinion	8
NA/Refused	9

4. Do you think using drugs for enjoyment is generally a good thing or generally a bad thing?

2(10)

Generally a good thing	1
Generally a bad thing	2
DK/No Opinion	8
NA/Refused	9

5. How would you compare alcohol abuse to drug abuse in the community where you live: Which would you say is more of a problem?

2(11)

Alcohol more of a problem	1
Drugs more of a problem	2
(VOL.) Equal	3
(VOL.) Neither	4
DK/No Opinion	8
NA/Refused	9

6. Has alcohol abuse ever been a cause of trouble in your family?

2(14)

Yes	1
No	2
DK/No Opinion	8
NA/Refused	9

7. Has drug abuse ever been a cause of trouble in your family?

2(15)

Yes	1
No	2
DK/No Opinion	8
NA/Refused	9

8. Just your best guess, do you think the drug problem in this country is a bigger problem today than it was say five years ago, a smaller problem or is it about the same sized problem as five years ago?

2(16)

Bigger problem today	1
Smaller problem today	2
About the same sized problem	3
DK/No Opinion	8
NA/Refused	9

9. Do you think federal government spending for preventing drug abuse should be increased, decreased or kept about the same?

2(17)

Increased	1
Decreased	2
Kept about the same	3
DK/No Opinion	8
NA/Refused	9

10. I'm going to mention four general actions the government could take to control the use of drugs. I'd like you to rate the effectiveness of the four possible actions one by one. First, would a big government push to (READ HIGHLIGHTED ITEM) be very effective in controlling drugs, only somewhat effective, or not very effective at all?

	Very	Somewhat	Not very	DK	NA/ Ref
		Effective			
(RANDOM START)					
a. stop the illegal importation of drugs from other countries	2(18)1	2	3	8	9
b. arrest people who sell illegal drugs in this country	2(19)1	2	3	8	9
c. arrest drug users in this country	2(20)1	2	3	8	9
d. educate Americans about the dangers of using illegal drugs?	2(21)1	2	3	8	9

11. Now, thinking of all four items, please tell me which one you think would be the most effective of the four (REPEAT LIST IF NECESSARY):

A big government push to stop the illegal importation of drugs from other countries	1	2(22)
A big government push to arrest people who sell illegal drugs in this country	2	
A big government push to arrest drug users in this country	3	
A big government push to educate Americans about the dangers of using illegal drugs?	4	
DK/No Opinion	8	
NA/Refused	9	

12. I'm going to mention some thing and ask you after each to tell whether you think it is very dangerous to your health to use regularly, somewhat dangerous to your health to use regularly or not very dangerous to your health? First, what about (BEGIN WITH HIGHLIGHTED ITEM). Do you think it is very dangerous to your health to use it regularly, somewhat dangerous to your health to use it regularly or not very dangerous to your health?

	Very	Some- what Dangerous	Not Very	DK	NA/ Ref
(RANDOM START)					
a. Marijuana	1	2	3	8	9 2(23)
b. Cocaine	1	2	3	8	9 2(24)
c. Crack	1	2	3	8	9 2(25)
d. Heroin	1	2	3	8	9 2(26)
e. LSD	1	2	3	8	9 2(27)
f. Sleeping pills	1	2	3	8	9 2(28)
g. Alcohol	1	2	3	8	9 2(29)
h. Amphetamines	1	2	3	8	9 2(30)
i. Cigarettes	1	2	3	8	9 2(31)

13. And which drug on the list would you say causes the most trouble in society as a whole?

2(32-33)

Marijuana	01
Cocaine	02
Crack	03
Heroin	04
LSD	05
Sleeping pills	06
Alcohol	07
Amphetamines	08
Cigarettes	09
(VOL.)All are about the same	10
(VOL.)None	11
DK/No Opinion	88
NA/Refused	99

14. Do you think it should be legal or illegal for a adult to buy cigarettes?

2(34)

Legal	1
Illegal	2
DK/No opinion	8
NA/Refused	9

15. Do you think it should be legal or illegal for a adult to buy alcohol?

2(35)

Legal	1
Illegal	2
DK/No opinion	8
NA/Refused	9

16. Do you think it should be legal or illegal for a adult to buy marijuana?

2(36)

Legal	1
Illegal	2
DK/No opinion	8
NA/Refused	9

17. Do you think it should be legal or illegal for a adult to buy cocaine?

2(37)

Legal	1
Illegal	2
DK/No opinion	8
NA/Refused	9

18. Do you think it should be legal or illegal for a adult to buy heroin?

2(38)

Legal	1
Illegal	2
DK/No opinion	8
NA/Refused	9

19. For each of the following statements, please tell me if you agree or disagree -- all drugs should be made legal. (IF NEEDED; "Do you agree or disagree?")

2(39)

Agree	1
Disagree	2
DK/No Opinion	8
NA/Refused	9

20. Drug abuse will never be stopped because a large number of Americans will continue to want drugs and be willing to pay lots of money for them. (IF NEEDED: "Do you agree or disagree?")

2(40)

Agree	1
Disagree	2
DK/No Opinion	8
NA/Refused	9

21. People should be allowed to take any drug they want so long as they don't hurt someone else.

2(41)

Agree	1
Disagree	2
DK/No Opinion	8
NA/Refused	9

22. The current fears of an illegal drug crisis are bigger than the crisis itself.

2(42)

Agree	1
Disagree	2
DK/No Opinion	8
NA/Refused	9

23. Illegal drug use has become a central part of American society

2(43)

Agree	1
Disagree	2
DK/No Opinion	8
NA/Refused	9

24. If the U.S government were to make it legal to use illicit drugs such as marijuana and cocaine, do you think that would lead to an increase or a decrease in the number of people who use drugs or wouldn't it make much difference one way or the other?

2(44)

Increase	1
Decrease	2(SKIP TO Q.26)
Won't make much difference	3(SKIP TO Q.26)
DK/No opinion	8(SKIP TO Q.26)
NA/Refused	9(SKIP TO Q.26)

25. Would drug use increase a lot or just somewhat?

2(45)

Increase a lot	1
Increase just somewhat	2
DK/No opinion	8
NA/Refused	9

26. Do you think the legalization of drugs would lead to more crime, less crime, or wouldn't it change the crime rate much?

2(46)

More crime	1
Less crime	2
Wouldn't change crime rate much	3
DK/No opinion	8
NA/Refused	9

27. Would you be more likely to use drugs if they were legalized than you are now?

2(47)

Yes, would be more likely	1
No, would NOT be more likely	2
DK/No opinion	8
NA/Refused	9



290. I'm going to mention several things that some people say would happen if drugs were legalized. Regardless of how you yourself feel about legalizing drugs, for each of these statements please tell me if you think it would happen if drugs were legalized:  
(ROTATE Q.28-Q.31)

28. The government would spend less on drug law enforcement and that money could be spent on drug education and treatment programs.

Would happen	1	2(48)
Would NOT happen	2	
DK/No opinion	8	
NA/Refused	9	

29. Organized crime would be put out of the drug business.

Would happen	1	2(49)
Would NOT happen	2	
DK/No opinion	8	
NA/Refused	9	

30. The government would collect taxes on drug sales and that money could be used on drug education and treatment programs.

Would happen	1	2(50)
Would NOT happen	2	
DK/No opinion	8	
NA/Refused	9	

31. The government would control the quality of drugs sold and make them less dangerous to the consumer.

Would happen	1	2(51)
Would NOT happen	2	
DK/No opinion	8	
NA/Refused	9	

32. Now that you've heard some of the arguments in favor of legalizing drugs, are you yourself more likely to support the legalization of drugs, less likely, or hasn't your opinion been changed?

More likely	1	2(58)
Less likely	2	
Hasn't changed opinion	3	
DK/No opinion	8	
NA/Refused	9	

33. Now just a few more questions to help classify your answers. What was the last grade of school you completed?

- |                       |   |   |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| 8th grade or less     | 1 | 2(52)   |
| Some high school      | 2 |   |
| Graduated high school | 3 |   |
| Some college          | 4 | 4 (ASK IF SCHOOL WAS A TECHNICAL SCHOOL<br>IF IT WAS, CIRCLE CODE 3, FOR HIGH SCHOOL) |
| Graduated college     | 5 |   |
| Post-graduate         | 6 |   |
| DK/No opinion         | 8 |   |
| NA/Refused            | 9 |   |

34. In what year were you born?

- |               |      |          |
|---------------|------|----------|
| DK/No opinion | 9998 | 2(53)56) |
| NA/Refused    | 9999 |          |

recode 1(78)

35. Are you of Hispanic origin or background?  
(IF "YES," ASK:) Are you White Hispanic or Black Hispanic?

(IF "NO," ASK:) Are you white, black, or some other race?

- |                          |   |       |
|--------------------------|---|-------|
| White                    | 1 | 2(57) |
| Black                    | 2 |       |
| White Hispanic           | 3 |       |
| Black Hispanic           | 4 |       |
| Hispanic (no race given) | 5 |       |
| Other Race               | 6 |       |
| NA/Refused               | 9 |       |

36. RESPONDENT'S SEX:

- |        |   |       |
|--------|---|-------|
| Male   | 1 | 1(59) |
| Female | 2 |       |

VERIFY PHONE #

-----  
Area Code    Exch.    Number (    )

RESPONDENT SEX		1 (59)	
Male	1		
Female	2		
CHILTON STATE		1 (60-61)	
CHILTON REGION		1 (62-63)	
ABC STATE		1 (64-65)	
ABC REGION		1 (66-67)	
ABC 3-LETTER STATE		1 (68-70)	[ALPHA]
JULIAN DATE		1 (71-75)	
SELECT SEX (B-DAY)		1 (76)	
SELECT SEX		1 (77)	
RECODED AGE		1 (78)	
18-30	1		
31-44	2		
45-60	3		
61+	4		
Refused	9		
DK/NA	blank		

WEIGHT

1(41-47) 2 implied decimals



CHILTON STATE CODES

(NO POLLING DONE IN ALASKA OR HAWAII)

01 Maine	25 West Virginia
02 New Hampshire	26 Virginia
03 Vermont	27 North Carolina
04 Massachusetts	28 South Carolina
05 Connecticut	29 Georgia
06 Rhode Island	30 Florida
07 New York	31 Mississippi
08 New Jersey	32 Alabama
09 Pennsylvania	33 Tennessee
10 Ohio	34 Kentucky
11 Indiana	35 Arkansas
12 Illinois	36 Louisiana
13 Michigan	37 Texas
14 Wisconsin	38 Oklahoma
15 Minnesota	39 New Mexico
16 Iowa	40 Arizona
17 Missouri	41 Nevada
18 Kansas	42 Utah
19 Nebraska	43 Colorado
20 South Dakota	44 Wyoming
21 North Dakota	45 Montana
22 Delaware	46 Idaho
23 Maryland	47 Washington
24 District of Columbia	48 Oregon
	49 California



CHILTON REGION CODES

1	NEW ENGLAND	Connecticut Maine Massachusetts	New Hampshire Rhode Island Vermont
2	MIDDLE ATLANTIC	New Jersey New York Pennsylvania	
3	EAST NORTH CENTRAL	Illinois Indiana Michigan	Ohio Wisconsin
4	WEST NORTH CENTRAL	Iowa Kansas Minnesota Missouri	Nebraska North Dakota South Dakota
5	SOUTH ATLANTIC	Delaware District of Columbia Florida Georgia Maryland	North Carolina South Carolina Virginia West Virginia
6	EAST SOUTH CENTRAL	Alabama Kentucky	Mississippi Tennessee
7	WEST SOUTH CENTRAL	Arkansas Louisiana	Oklahoma Texas
8	MOUNTAIN	Arizona Colorado Idaho Montana	Nevada New Mexico Utah Wyoming
9	PACIFIC	Alaska California Hawaii	Oregon Washington





ABC NEWS STATE CODES

- 01 Alabama
- 02 Alaska
- 03 Arizona
- 04 Arkansas
- 05 California
- 06 Colorado
- 07 Connecticut
- 08 Delaware
- 09 District of Columbia
- 10 Florida
- 11 Georgia
- 12 Hawaii
- 13 Idaho
- 14 Illinois
- 15 Indiana
- 16 Iowa
- 17 Kansas
- 18 Kentucky
- 19 Louisiana
- 20 Maine
- 21 Maryland
- 22 Massachusetts
- 23 Michigan
- 24 Minnesota
- 25 Mississippi
- 26 Missouri
- 27 Montana
- 28 Nebraska
- 29 Nevada
- 30 New Hampshire
- 31 New Jersey
- 32 New Mexico
- 33 New York
- 34 North Carolina
- 35 North Dakota
- 36 Ohio
- 37 Oklahoma
- 38 Oregon
- 39 Pennsylvania
- 40 Rhode Island
- 41 South Carolina
- 42 South Dakota
- 43 Tennessee
- 44 Texas
- 45 Utah
- 46 Vermont
- 47 Virginia
- 48 Washington
- 49 West Virginia
- 50 Wisconsin
- 51 Wyoming



ABC NEWS REGION CODES

1   NORTHEAST

Connecticut  
Maine  
Massachusetts  
New Hampshire  
New Jersey  
New York  
Pennsylvania  
Rhode Island  
Vermont

2   NORTHCENTRAL

Illinois  
Indiana  
Iowa  
Kansas  
Michigan  
Minnesota  
Missouri  
Nebraska  
North Dakota  
Ohio  
South Dakota  
Wisconsin

3   SOUTH

Alabama  
Arkansas  
Delaware  
District of Columbia  
Florida  
Georgia  
Kentucky  
Louisiana  
Maryland  
Mississippi  
North Carolina  
Oklahoma  
South Carolina  
Tennessee  
Texas  
Virginia  
West Virginia

4   WEST

Alaska  
Arizona  
California  
Colorado  
Hawaii  
Idaho  
Montana  
Nevada  
New Mexico  
Oregon  
Utah  
Washington  
Wyoming