Quick Facts: Problem Drug Use (June 2016)

Public Health Monitoring of Risk Factors in Ontario (PMO)
A Collaboration with Durham Region Health Department and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health


Notes:
Results are weighted and sex-by-grade adjusted to the Ontario 2012-13 student enrollment. “Problem Drug Use” is defined as a score of two or more on the six-item CRAFFT screen in the last 12 months. A total CRAFFT score of two or more identifies problem drug use other than alcohol that may lead to adverse consequences, abuse or dependency, and may require assessment and treatment.

Error bars represent the 95% confidence intervals around the percentage. The true or actual percentage falls within the range of values, 95 out of 100 times.

C- Interpret with caution as the coefficient of variation (CV) is between 16.6% and 33.3%, inclusive. The C can be removed in the summary section as it is depicted in the table above.

NR- Unreliable and not releasable as the CV is greater than 33.3%.

Summary

Approximately one in six (17%) Durham Region secondary school students in grades 9 – 12 reported two or more problems on the CRAFFT screener indicating problem drug use that may lead to adverse consequences, abuse or dependency, and may require further assessment and treatment. The three most frequently reported problems were being a passenger in a vehicle with a driver who was using drugs (20%), using drugs to relax, to feel better about oneself, or to fit in (15%), and using drugs alone (13%). The frequency and ranking of these behaviours were similar to Ontario’s rates.

Question

In the last 12 months, how often did you ride in a vehicle driven by someone who had been using drugs (other than alcohol)? (Response options: never, once, 2 times, 3 times, 4 times, 5 times, 6 times, 7 times, 8 or more times, not sure). In the last 12 months, [did you use drugs to relax, feel better about yourself, or to fit in?], [did you use drugs while you were by yourself?], [did you forget things you did while using drugs?], [did you get into trouble while you were using drugs?], [did your family or friends tell you that you should cut down on your drug use?] (Response options: yes, no, did not use drugs in the last 12 months, did not use drugs in lifetime).

Survey Methods

The Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey (OSDUHS) targets students, grades 7 to 12, enrolled in the public and Catholic regular school system. The OSDUHS uses a two-stage (school, class) stratified (region and school type) cluster sample design, and oversampling in PMO-participating public health units. The survey is self-administered in the classroom, taking, on average, 35 minutes to complete. Participation is voluntary and anonymous. Students, 17 years old and younger, absent or without signed consent forms on the day of the survey do not participate.

This survey excluded groups, such as street youth and dropouts, in which health behaviours such as healthy eating, physical activity, drug use, etc. may be underestimated. In addition, self-reporting may result in under-reporting whether from social desirability or recall bias.

For a detailed description of the OSDUHS, visit the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health website.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS 23 Complex samples. For 2014-15, the analysis was based on a design of 21 strata (10 geographical strata for elementary schools and 11 for secondary schools), 220 schools, 750 classes and 10,523 students. Variables accounting for the probability of selection, stratification and clustering are used when analyzing the data. The final sampling weight was based on each regional stratum’s sex-by-grade structure according to the provincial population structure.

Differences in two percentages may be clinically important. However, when error bars overlap, the difference cannot necessarily be interpreted as real or ‘statistically significant’.

Acknowledgement

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For more information, contact Durham Region Health Department at 1-800-841-2729, by fax at 905-666-6241 or by visiting the Durham Region website.