

# The 2007 OSDUHS Drug Report Executive Summary

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health's Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey (OSDUHS), is the longest ongoing school survey of adolescents in Canada (formerly called the "OSDUS"). The study, which now spans 30 years, is based on 16 surveys conducted every two years since 1977. In the 2006-2007 school year, 6,323 students (68% of selected students) in grades 7 to 12 from 43 school boards, 119 schools and 385 classes participated in the survey administered by the Institute for Social

Research, York University. This report describes drug use in 2007 and changes since 1977. Results are provided for two groups of students: those in grades 7 to 12, and those in grades 7, 9, and 11 only. The first group is used to assess current drug use and **short-term trends** (1999-2007), and the second is used to assess **long-term trends** (1977-2007). All data are based on self-reports derived from anonymous questionnaires administered in classrooms.

## Past Year Drug Use (%) by Total, Sex, and Grade, 2007 OSDUHS

	Total	Males	Females	G7	G8	G9	G10	G11	G12	
Alcohol	61.2	61.7	60.7	28.1	40.1	58.9	69.6	79.2	83.0	*
Binge Drinking	26.3	27.1	25.4	4.4	6.5	18.8	29.8	42.2	48.0	*
Cannabis	25.6	26.9	24.3	3.6	6.6	21.0	30.9	40.0	44.7	*
Opioid Pain Relievers (NM)	20.6	18.0	23.5	12.5	22.1	24.0	21.5	22.0	20.5	*
Cigarettes	11.9	11.7	12.1	2.5	3.8	10.2	13.7	19.3	19.2	*
Solvents	5.8	4.9	6.8	9.3	10.1	5.8	5.6	3.9	1.5	*
Stimulants (NM)	5.7	4.0	7.5	1.9	3.3	6.4	5.4	8.2	7.9	*
Other Hallucinogens	5.5	6.6	4.3	0.6	1.0	4.1	6.3	10.9	8.8	*
OTC Sleeping Medication (NM)	4.0	3.2	4.9	3.2	3.3	5.5	2.3	5.0	4.4	
Ecstasy (MDMA)	3.5	3.4	3.5	s	1.2	2.8	4.7	6.2	5.0	*
Cocaine	3.4	3.6	3.1	1.7	2.0	2.3	3.4	5.7	4.5	*
Jimson Weed	2.6	2.7	2.4	1.2	1.5	2.6	3.1	3.3	3.4	
Glue	2.5	2.1	3.0	3.1	5.2	2.3	2.2	2.0	1.0	*
Tranquillizers/Sedatives (NM)	1.8	1.7	1.9	s	1.6	1.2	2.3	3.2	2.1	*
OxyContin (NM)	1.8	1.7	1.9	1.0	1.5	0.8	1.9	3.2	2.2	*
LSD	1.6	2.1	1.1	s	1.0	1.9	1.0	3.0	2.1	*
Methamphetamine	1.4	1.5	1.4	s	0.5	1.5	1.2	2.9	1.8	*
Ketamine	1.1	1.3	1.0	s	s	0.8	s	2.0	2.5	*
Crack	1.0	0.9	1.1	0.7	0.7	1.0	1.1	2.2	0.5	*
ADHD Drugs (NM)	1.0	1.1	1.0	s	s	1.7	1.1	2.2	0.9	*
Heroin	0.9	1.3	0.6	0.6	0.8	1.0	0.7	1.7	0.7	
Ice (Crystal Methamphetamine)	0.8	0.8	0.8	s	0.9	0.7	0.7	1.6	0.5	
PCP	0.7	0.9	0.5	s	s	0.7	0.7	1.3	0.8	
Rohypnol	0.6	s	0.8	0.6	1.4	0.7	s	0.8	s	
GHB	0.5	s	0.7	s	s	s	s	1.0	1.0	
Any Illicit Drug, including cannabis	28.7	29.3	28.1	6.9	10.0	25.3	33.2	43.3	47.3	*
Any Illicit Drug, excluding cannabis	11.7	11.7	11.6	4.4	5.9	11.0	12.1	18.4	16.3	*
Steroids (lifetime use)	1.3	2.0	0.5	0.7	0.6	s	1.3	2.0	2.4	

Notes: binge drinking (5+ drinks on one occasion) refers to the past 4 weeks time period; NM=non-medical use; OTC= over-the-counter; s=estimate suppressed (less than 0.5%); \* indicates a significant sex difference, or grade differences ( $p < .05$ ), not controlling for other factors.

## 2007 Subgroup Differences (Grades 7 to 12)

- ❑ Males are more likely than females to use four drugs: LSD, other hallucinogens, heroin, and steroids. Females are more likely to use stimulant pills, opioid pain relievers for non-medical purposes, and over-the-counter sleeping medication for purposes other than sleeping.
  
- ❑ Past year use varies by grade for most of the substances:
  - alcohol,
  - binge drinking,
  - cannabis,
  - opioid pain relievers,
  - cigarettes,
  - solvents,
  - stimulants,
  - LSD,
  - other hallucinogens,
  - ecstasy,
  - cocaine,
  - glue,
  - tranquilizers,
  - OxyContin,
  - methamphetamine,
  - Ketamine,
  - crack,
  - ADHD drugs,
  - any illicit drug including cannabis, and
  - any illicit drug excluding cannabis.

Use of these drugs tends to increase with grade with the exceptions of glue and other solvents, which decrease with grade.

- ❑ Many regional differences exist, as shown in the table below:

Regional Differences in Drug Use, 2007	
Use Below Provincial Average	Use Above Provincial Average
<b>Toronto</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alcohol</li> <li>• Ecstasy</li> <li>• Any Illicit, excl. cannabis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Binge Drinking</li> <li>• Methamphetamine</li> </ul>
<b>Northern Ontario</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cigarettes</li> <li>• Binge Drinking</li> <li>• Methamphetamine</li> <li>• Cocaine</li> <li>• Ecstasy</li> <li>• Opioid Pain Relievers</li> <li>• Any Illicit, excl. cannabis</li> </ul>
<b>Western Ontario</b>	
<b>Eastern Ontario</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crack</li> </ul>	

## Changes Between 2005 and 2007 (Grades 7 to 12)

The number, and magnitude, of declines in past year drug use found in the last survey has attenuated, as the majority of drug use remained stable between 2005 and 2007.

However, there were four drugs that showed small, yet statistically significant, decreases between 2005 and 2007:

- ❑ cigarettes: from 14.4% to 11.9%,
- ❑ methamphetamine: from 2.2% to 1.4%,
- ❑ crack: from 2.0% to 1.0%,
- ❑ steroids (lifetime): from 2.3% to 1.3%.

Only one drug showed a small, but significant increase: non-medical OxyContin use increased between 2005 and 2007 (from 1.0% to 1.8%).

## Short-Term Changes, 1999 – 2007 (Grades 7 to 12)

There have been 14 significant changes in drug use between 1999 and 2007, all of which have been decreases:

- ❑ alcohol: from 66.0% to 61.2%
- ❑ cigarettes: from 28.4% to 11.9%
- ❑ stimulants: from 7.3% to 5.7%
- ❑ LSD: from 6.8% to 1.6%
- ❑ PCP: from 3.0% to 0.7%
- ❑ hallucinogens: from 12.8% to 5.5%
- ❑ glue: from 3.8% to 2.5%
- ❑ methamphetamine: from 5.0% to 1.4%
- ❑ crack: from 2.5% to 1.0%
- ❑ heroin: from 1.9% to 0.9%
- ❑ Rohypnol: from 3.1% (2001) to 0.6%
- ❑ steroids (lifetime): from 3.4% to 1.3%

- ❑ use of any illicit drug *including cannabis*, significantly decreased between 1999 (32.3%) and 2007 (28.7%)

- ❑ use of any illicit drug *excluding cannabis*, significantly decreased between 1999 (20.5%) and 2007 (11.7%)

## Subgroup Changes, 1999 – 2007 (Grades 7 to 12)

With the exceptions of non-medical OxyContin use (which increased among males and Eastern Ontario students), stimulant use (which increased among females); ecstasy use (which increased among Northern Ontario students), and tranquilizer use (which increased among Eastern Ontario students), the subgroup changes within the period from 1999 to 2007 show decreases in use.

**Sex:** Apart from the increase in OxyContin use among males and the increase in stimulant use among females between 2005 and 2007, both sexes show many decreases in drug use during the period between 1999 and 2007. These are listed in the table below:

Changes in Drug Use by Sex 2007 vs 2005 ( <b>bolded</b> ) and 2007 vs 1999	
Males	Females
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cigarettes</li> <li>• Alcohol</li> <li>• Binge Drinking</li> <li>• Cannabis</li> <li>• Glue</li> <li>• LSD</li> <li>• PCP</li> <li>• Other Hallucinogens</li> <li>• Heroin</li> <li>• <b>Methamphetamine</b></li> <li>• <b>Crack</b></li> <li>• Heroin</li> <li>• GHB</li> <li>• <b>Rohypnol</b></li> <li>• Ketamine</li> <li>• Any Illicit incl. cannabis</li> <li>• Any Illicit excl. cannabis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cigarettes</li> <li>• LSD</li> <li>• PCP</li> <li>• Other Hallucinogens</li> <li>• Methamphetamine</li> <li>• <b>Crack</b></li> <li>• Rohypnol</li> <li>• Any Illicit excl. cannabis</li> </ul>
<b>+ OxyContin</b>	<b>+ Stimulants</b>
• = decrease; + = increase	

**Grade:** All grades showed decreases in drug use during the period between 1999 and 2007. These are listed in the table below. No grade showed a significant increase in the use of any drug during this period.

Decreases in Drug Use by Grade 2007 vs 2005 ( <b>bolded</b> ) and 2007 vs 1999	
<b>7<sup>th</sup>-Graders</b>	
• Cigarettes	• Alcohol • Methamphetamine
<b>8<sup>th</sup>-Graders</b>	
• Cigarettes	• Alcohol
• Binge Drinking	• Cannabis
• LSD	• PCP
• <b>Other Hallucinogens</b>	• Methamphetamine
• Any Illicit incl. cannabis	• Any Illicit excl. cannabis
<b>9<sup>th</sup>-Graders</b>	
• Cigarettes	• LSD
• PCP	• Other Hallucinogens
• Methamphetamine	• <b>Crack</b>
• Heroin	• Rohypnol
• Any Illicit excl. cannabis	
<b>10<sup>th</sup>-Graders</b>	
• Cigarettes	• LSD
• PCP	• Other Hallucinogens
• Methamphetamine	• GHB
• <b>Rohypnol</b>	• Any Illicit excl. cannabis
<b>11<sup>th</sup>-Graders</b>	
• Cigarettes	• Cannabis
• LSD	• PCP
• Other Hallucinogens	• Methamphetamine
• Ketamine	• Any Illicit excl. cannabis
<b>12<sup>th</sup>-Graders</b>	
• Cigarettes	• LSD
• Other Hallucinogens	• Methamphetamine
• <b>Crack</b>	• <b>Ecstasy</b>
• Any Illicit excl. cannabis	

**Region:** Each of the four regions showed significant declines in drug use in the period between 1999 and 2007 (listed in the table below). There were only 3 increases: Northern students showed an increase in ecstasy use, and Eastern students showed increases in non-medical OxyContin use and tranquilizer use.

Changes in Drug Use by Region 2007 vs 2005 ( <b>bolded</b> ) and 2007 vs 1999	
<b>Toronto</b>	
• Cigarettes	• LSD
• PCP	• Other Hallucinogens
• <b>Methamphetamine</b>	• Any Illicit excl. cannabis
<b>Northern Ontario</b>	
• Cigarettes	• Solvents
• LSD	• PCP
• Other Hallucinogens	• Any Illicit excl. cannabis
	+ Ecstasy
<b>Western Ontario</b>	
• <b>Cigarettes</b>	• Alcohol
• Cannabis	• LSD
• PCP	• Other Hallucinogens
• <b>Methamphetamine</b>	• <b>Cocaine</b>
• <b>Crack</b>	• <b>Ecstasy</b>
• Rohypnol	• Ketamine
• Any Illicit incl. cannabis	• Any Illicit excl. cannabis
<b>Eastern Ontario</b>	
• Cigarettes	• LSD
• PCP	• Other Hallucinogens
• Methamphetamine	• Crack
• Heroin	• Any Illicit excl. cannabis
	+ <b>OxyContin</b>
	+ <b>Tranquillizers</b>
• = decrease; + = increase	

## Long-Term Changes, 1977 – 2007 (Grades 7, 9, 11 only)

Generally, rates of drug use in 2007 are lower compared to earlier periods, especially the peak periods of drug use observed in the late 1970s and again in the late 1990s.

The data reveal 5 dominant patterns:

Pattern 1: Use of drugs found to be at an all-time low in 2005 and stable in 2007:

- ◆ cigarettes
- ◆ LSD

Pattern 2: Use of drugs significantly lower in 2007 compared to the peaks in use in 1979 and 1999 (2003 for cocaine):

- ◆ alcohol
- ◆ cannabis
- ◆ glue
- ◆ cocaine

Pattern 3: Use of drugs significantly lower in 2007 compared to the peak use in 1979 or the early 1980s:

- ◆ heroin
- ◆ stimulants
- ◆ tranquilizers

Pattern 4: Use of drugs significantly lower in 2007 compared to the peak use in 1999 (2001 for ecstasy):

- ◆ other hallucinogens
- ◆ PCP
- ◆ methamphetamine
- ◆ crack
- ◆ ecstasy

Pattern 5: Use *not* significantly lower than the peak years of 1979 or 1999:

- ◆ solvents
- ◆ binge drinking

## Cigarettes Overview

- In 2007, 12% of students report smoking during the past year (about 119,900 students), and about 5% of students smoke on a daily basis. Almost three-quarters (72%) report never trying a cigarette in their lifetime – this is a substantial increase from even a decade ago.
- Past year smoking does not differ between males and females (both 12%). There are significant differences by grade (ranging from 2% of 7<sup>th</sup>-graders to 19% of 11<sup>th</sup>- and 12<sup>th</sup>-graders). There are also regional differences, with Northern students (20%) most likely to smoke, while Toronto students (10%) are least likely. Students in the West (12%) and East (12%) fall in-between.
- About one-fifth (18%) of smokers may be dependent on cigarettes, as defined by smoking within 30 minutes of waking in the morning.
- In 2007, the majority (53%) of smokers reported an attempt to quit smoking during the 12 months before the survey.
- In 2007, 4% of underage students (under 19 years of age) successfully purchased cigarettes at least once during the 4 weeks before the survey. This is a significant decrease from the estimates found in past surveys (e.g., 14% in 1999).

## Alcohol Overview

- In 2007, about two-thirds (61%) of all students report drinking (excluding sips) during the 12 months before the survey. This represents about 616,300 students in Ontario. Males (62%) and females (61%) are equally likely to be drinkers. Past year drinking varies by grade (increasing from 28% of 7<sup>th</sup>-graders to 83% of 12<sup>th</sup>-graders). Toronto students (55%) are least likely to drink, while students in the North (71%) are most likely.

- ❑ Most drinking occurs only on special occasions (23%). One-in-ten (10%) students drink at least once a week, and a very small percentage (less than 0.5%) drink on a daily basis.
- ❑ About one-quarter (26%) of students report binge drinking (5+ drinks on one occasion) at least once during the month before the survey. This percentage represents about 262,400 students in grades 7 through 12. About the same percentage (24%) report getting drunk at least once in the past month.
- ❑ Also, about 10% of students report binge drinking 2 to 3 times during the past month, and another 5% report doing so 4 or more times.

## Cannabis Overview

- ❑ About one-quarter (26%) of students use cannabis, and 30% report trying it at least once in their lifetime. Males (27%) and females (24%) are equally likely to use cannabis. Use increases with each grade, increasing from 4% of 7<sup>th</sup>-graders to 45% of 12<sup>th</sup>-graders. There are no significant regional differences in cannabis use.
- ❑ Among all students, 14% report using cannabis six times or more during the past year.
- ❑ About 10% of cannabis users (2.5% of all students) use cannabis daily.
- ❑ About 10% of cannabis users may have a dependence problem (3% of all students), as measured by the Severity of Dependence Scale (SDS).

## Non-Medical Use of Prescription Drugs

- ❑ OxyContin is a brand name for a highly addictive prescription painkiller containing the opioid, oxycodone. In 2007, about 2% report using OxyContin during the past year for non-medical purposes. The 2007 estimate of 2% is significantly higher than that from 2005 (1%). In 2007, there is no significant difference in use between males and females. Use significantly increases with grade, peaking in grade 11 at 3%. There are no significant regional differences in non-medical OxyContin use.
- ❑ For the first time in 2007, the *OSDUHS* asked students about their use of prescription opioid pain relievers (e.g., Percocet, Percodan, Tylenol #3, Demerol, codeine) for non-medical purposes. About 21% of students report using a prescription opioid pain reliever for non-medical purposes at least once in the past year. Females (24%) are more likely than males (18%) to use an opioid pain reliever for non-medical purposes. There is significant grade variation, with 7<sup>th</sup>-graders least likely to use compared to all other grades. Use significantly varies by region, with students in the North (27%) most likely to use, while Toronto students are least likely (18%).
- ❑ For the first time in 2007, the *OSDUHS* asked students about their non-medical use of any drug typically used to treat Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in children (e.g., Ritalin, Concerta, Adderall, Dexedrine). About 1% report using an ADHD drug for non-medical purposes in the past year. There is no significant difference between males and females. There is a significant grade effect, with 11<sup>th</sup>-graders most likely to use (2%). Regional estimates do not significantly differ.

## Other Highlights

- ❑ In 2007, just over one-quarter (28%) of students report *no substance use* (including alcohol and cigarettes) during the past year. A similar proportion (25%) report using only alcohol.
- ❑ One-in-fifteen (6%) students report using alcohol, tobacco, cannabis *and* at least one other drug during the past year.
- ❑ About 1% of students report using an illegal drug by injection during the past year. This estimate represents about 9,200 Ontario students in grades 7 to 12.
- ❑ The percentage of all students reporting first-time drug use during the past year is as follows: 16% for alcohol, 6% for cigarettes, 9% for cannabis, and about 3% for illicit drugs other than cannabis.

## Early Initiation

Fewer students today are using alcohol, tobacco and cannabis at an early age.

- ❑ Only about 3% of 7<sup>th</sup>-graders in 2007 smoked their first cigarette by grade 6 (age 11), compared to 27% in 1997, and 41% in 1981.
- ❑ In 2007, 31% of 7<sup>th</sup>-graders used alcohol by grade 6 (age 11), compared to 42% in 2003 and 50% in 1981.
- ❑ In 2007, 5% of 7<sup>th</sup>-graders used cannabis by grade 7 (age 12), compared to 8% in 2003 and 9% in 1981.
- ❑ In 2007, the mean age at which 11<sup>th</sup>-grade smokers reported smoking their first cigarette was 13.3 years. The mean age of first alcoholic drink among 11<sup>th</sup>-grade drinkers was 13.5 years, and the first time they were drunk was at age 14.0. The mean age of first cannabis use among 11<sup>th</sup>-grade users was 14.0 years.

## Perceptions of Risk and Disapproval

- ❑ Among the drug behaviours surveyed, students feel that the greatest risk of harm is associated with regular marijuana use (52%), followed by trying ecstasy (41%), trying cocaine (37%), trying LSD (36%), daily smoking (31%), binge drinking on weekends (27%), and trying cannabis (19%).
- ❑ Between 1999 and 2007, there were increases in the perception of risk regarding trying cocaine, ecstasy and LSD. Compared to recent surveys in 2003 and 2005, students in 2007 are more likely to believe there is a great risk of harm in smoking 1 or 2 cigarettes a day.
- ❑ Between 1999 and 2007, there were increases in disapproval towards the following behaviours: using cannabis either experimentally or regularly, trying cocaine, trying ecstasy, and trying LSD.

## Perceived Availability of Drugs

- ❑ In 2007, the substance most readily available to students is alcohol (59% report that it would be “easy” or “very” easy to obtain), followed by cigarettes (49%), cannabis (43%), ecstasy (16%), cocaine (14%), LSD (10%), and OxyContin or other prescription pain relievers (10%).
- ❑ Over the short-term (1999-2007), the perceived availability of alcohol, cigarettes, cannabis, cocaine, LSD, and ecstasy has significantly decreased.
- ❑ Over the long-term, the perceived availability of cannabis, as well as cocaine, increased between 1989 and 2001, but has since decreased. The availability of LSD has been on a downward trend since 1995.

## *School and Neighbourhood*

- ❑ About 15% of students were drunk or high at school at least once during the 12 months before the survey. This percentage represents about 141,800 Ontario students in grades 7 to 12.
- ❑ One-fifth (21%) of students had been offered, sold, or given a drug at school during the 12 months before the survey (representing about 194,400 Ontario students).
- ❑ Almost half (49%) of students surveyed believe that drug use in their school is higher today than a few years ago (33% stated it was the same and 17% stated it was lower).
- ❑ One-quarter (25%) of students believe that drug use is a “big problem” in their school, while about half (51%) say it is a small problem, and 24% say it is not a problem.
- ❑ About one-third (31%) of students report that someone tried to sell them drugs at least once during the 12 months before the survey.
- ❑ Over one-quarter (28%) of students report seeing drug selling in their neighbourhood.

## **Consequences and Problems Related to Alcohol and Other Drug Use**

### *Drugs and Vehicles*

- ❑ One-in-eight (12%) licensed drivers in grades 10 to 12 report driving within an hour of consuming two or more drinks. Although drinking and driving has remained stable since 1999, rates are significantly lower compared to the late 1970s and early 1980s.
- ❑ The percentage of drivers reporting cannabis and driving is higher than the percentage reporting drinking and driving. About one-in-six (16%) drivers in grades 10 to 12

reported driving a vehicle within one hour of using cannabis at least once during the past year. The percentage is significantly lower in 2007 compared to 2005 (20%).

- ❑ About one-quarter (26%) of students in grades 7 to 12 report being a passenger in a vehicle driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol, and 18% report being a passenger in a vehicle driven by someone who had been using drugs. These percentages have significantly decreased over the short-term.

### *Hazardous and Problematic Drinking*

- ❑ In 2007, 19% of students (30% of drinkers) report drinking at a hazardous level as determined by the AUDIT scale, a percentage representing about 193,000 students. Males (19%) and females (18%) are equally to drink at this level. Hazardous drinking increases with grade (1% of 7<sup>th</sup>-graders to 34% of 12<sup>th</sup>-graders). There is significant variation among the regions, ranging from a low of 13% in Toronto to a high of 26% found in the North.
- ❑ While hazardous drinking among males remained stable between 2005 and 2007, females showed a significant increase, from 14% to 18%.
- ❑ About one-third (32%) of students in 2007 report at least one of the seven AUDIT problem symptoms. About 2% report a dependence symptom only, 16% report an adverse consequence only, and 14% report both symptom types.
- ❑ The percentage of students reporting 1 or more AUDIT symptoms remained stable between 1999 (33%) and 2007 (32%).

### *Drug Use Problem*

- ❑ About one-in-seven (15%) students may have a drug use problem, as measured by the CRAFFT screener. There is no significant

sex or regional variation. There is significant grade variation: reports are lowest among 7<sup>th</sup>-graders (2%) and highest among 12<sup>th</sup>-graders (25%). The percentage indicating a drug use problem remained stable between 2003 and 2007.

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- About 1.5% of students report that they had been in a treatment program during the past year because of their alcohol and/or drug use. This estimate represents about 14,700 Ontario students in grades 7 to 12.

### *Coexisting Hazardous Drinking and Elevated Psychological Distress*

- About 9% (89,900 Ontario students) report both hazardous drinking and elevated psychological distress (i.e., symptoms of anxiety and depression).
- Females are more likely than males to report these coexisting problems (12% vs 6%). There is significant variation by grade: from 1% of 7<sup>th</sup>-graders to 16% of 12<sup>th</sup>-graders. There are significant regional differences, with students in the North (12%) most likely to experience coexisting problems, while students in Toronto (6%) are least likely.