

Drug Use Highlights from the 2005 *Ontario Student Drug Use Survey (OSDUS)*

This *eBulletin* highlights the main drug findings from the 2005 *Ontario Student Drug Use Survey (OSDUS)*, an Ontario-wide school survey of students in grades 7 to 12. The 2005 sample size of 7,726 students represents about 975,200 students in grades 7 to 12 across the province.

Also highlighted are trends in tobacco, alcohol and other drug use, based on 15 surveys conducted since 1977. The *OSDUS* is the longest ongoing school survey of adolescents in Canada, and the second-longest internationally.

Past Year Drug Use (%) by Total, Sex, and Grade, 2005 OSDUS

	Total	Males	Females		G7	G8	G9	G10	G11	G12	
<i>Alcohol</i>	62.0	62.3	61.8		31.4	44.3	64.8	69.6	76.1	81.8	*
<i>Cannabis</i>	26.5	27.9	25.1	*	3.0	9.7	23.0	33.6	40.1	46.2	*
<i>Binge Drinking</i>	22.7	25.1	20.2	*	3.4	7.4	18.8	26.2	34.5	42.5	*
<i>Cigarettes</i>	14.4	13.9	14.9		2.0	5.8	12.6	17.9	23.5	22.9	*
<i>Hallucinogens</i>	6.7	7.6	5.6	*	0.5	2.7	5.7	8.1	11.1	11.1	*
<i>Solvents</i>	5.3	4.7	5.9		9.2	8.8	5.7	5.0	2.7	1.3	*
<i>Stimulants (NM)</i>	4.8	4.3	5.4		1.1	3.9	5.7	5.3	6.5	6.0	*
<i>Ecstasy (MDMA)</i>	4.5	4.6	4.3		s	1.2	3.6	5.3	7.7	8.1	*
<i>Cocaine</i>	4.4	4.5	4.3		1.7	1.7	3.8	4.6	7.2	7.1	*
<i>Ritalin (NM)</i>	2.4	2.8	2.0		0.7	1.7	3.1	3.2	3.3	2.5	*
<i>Glue</i>	2.3	2.8	1.7		4.0	2.8	3.3	2.0	1.4	0.6	*
<i>Methamphetamine</i>	2.2	2.6	1.7	*	s	1.6	2.9	2.4	2.8	2.9	*
<i>Crack</i>	2.0	2.1	1.9		1.0	1.5	2.6	2.5	2.1	2.1	
<i>LSD</i>	1.7	2.1	1.4		s	1.0	2.4	1.6	2.8	2.2	*
<i>Barbiturates (NM)</i>	1.7	2.0	1.4		0.6	1.6	1.6	1.8	2.4	2.1	
<i>Tranquillizers (NM)</i>	1.6	1.5	1.8		s	0.7	2.5	1.2	2.3	2.5	*
<i>Ketamine</i>	1.3	1.6	0.9	*	0.6	0.6	1.5	1.6	1.9	1.4	
<i>PCP</i>	1.1	1.4	0.7	*	s	1.0	1.5	1.0	1.4	1.1	
<i>Rohypnol</i>	1.0	1.2	0.7		0.6	1.1	2.1	1.4	0.6	s	*
<i>OxyContin</i>	1.0	0.9	1.2		0.9	0.7	1.3	0.7	1.2	1.4	
<i>Heroin</i>	0.9	1.1	0.7		0.6	1.0	1.4	0.6	0.8	1.0	
<i>Ice</i>	0.9	1.2	0.5	*	s	1.0	1.4	0.5	0.7	0.5	
<i>GHB</i>	0.5	0.6	0.5		s	0.6	0.7	0.5	0.6	0.5	
<i>Any Illicit, including cannabis</i>	28.7	29.9	27.4		5.5	12.4	25.2	35.5	42.0	48.2	*
<i>Any Illicit, excluding cannabis</i>	12.1	12.6	11.6		3.8	7.2	11.6	14.2	18.1	17.0	*
<i>Steroids (lifetime)</i>	2.3	3.2	1.4	*	s	1.9	2.0	2.9	2.6	3.7	*

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

Demographic Correlates of Student Drug Use, 2005 OSDUS

Student drug use is associated with the following demographic factors:

Sex: Males are significantly more likely than females to use 6 drugs: cannabis, hallucinogens, methamphetamine, Ketamine, PCP, and “Ice” (crystal methamphetamine). Males are also more likely to binge drink.

Age/Grade: Drug use varies by grade for 18 of the substance use measures: alcohol, binge drinking, cigarette smoking, cannabis use, LSD, other hallucinogens, solvents, stimulants, ecstasy, cocaine, Ritalin, glue, methamphetamine, tranquilizers, Rohypnol, steroids, any illicit drug including cannabis, and any illicit drug excluding cannabis. Use of these drugs tends to increase with grade with the exception of glue and other solvents, which decrease with grade.

Region: In addition to smoking and binge drinking, the use of the following drugs significantly differs by region of the province: cannabis, hallucinogens (other than LSD and PCP), stimulants, cocaine, Ritalin, crack, tranquilizers, Ketamine, OxyContin, heroin, and any illicit drug (excluding cannabis). In general, students in Toronto (with an exception for heroin) and the East region of the province are less likely to use these drugs compared to the province as a whole, whereas Northern and Western students are more likely to use.

Trends in Drug Use

2005 vs. 2003 (Grades 7 to 12)

Of the 24 drug measures included in the 2005 and 2003 surveys, 11 showed significant decreases among the total sample of students:

- cigarettes (from 19% in 2003 to 14% in 2005)
- alcohol (from 66% to 62%)
- LSD (from 2.9% to 1.7%)
- PCP (from 2.2% to 1.1%)
- hallucinogens (from 10% to 7%)
- methamphetamine (from 3.3% to 2.2%)
- heroin (from 1.4% to 0.9%)
- Ketamine (from 2.2% to 1.3%)
- barbiturates (from 2.5% to 1.7%)
- use of any illicit drug including cannabis (from 32% to 29%)
- use of any illicit drug excluding cannabis (from 15% to 12%).

No drug showed a significant increase between 2003 and 2005. Use of all other drugs remained stable between these two survey years.

More students in 2005 reported being drug-free (including alcohol and tobacco) during the past year compared to 2003 (36% vs. 32%, respectively).

1977–2005 (Grades 7, 9, and 11 only)

Spanning back to 1977, four dominant patterns of drug use among Ontario students are evident. These are displayed in Figures 1 to 4.

The first pattern (Figure 1) shows decreases during the 1980s, increases during the 1990s, continual decreases after 1999, reaching an all-time low in 2005. The pattern is evident for smoking cigarettes and LSD use.

The second pattern (Figure 2) concerns cocaine, which is the only drug that is not lower in 2005 compared to the peak year of use in 1979. Cocaine use decreased during the 1980s and early 1990s. Since then, it has increased and remains elevated.

The third long-term use pattern (Figure 3) shows use that is significantly lower in 2005 compared to the peak year of use in 1979. This pattern is evident for alcohol, cannabis, stimulants, glue, heroin, barbiturates, and tranquilizers.

The fourth pattern (Figure 4) shows use that is significantly lower in 2005 compared to the peak year of use in 1999. This is evident for PCP, other hallucinogens, solvents, and methamphetamine.

Figure 1.
Long-term Trends in Drug Use: Pattern 1

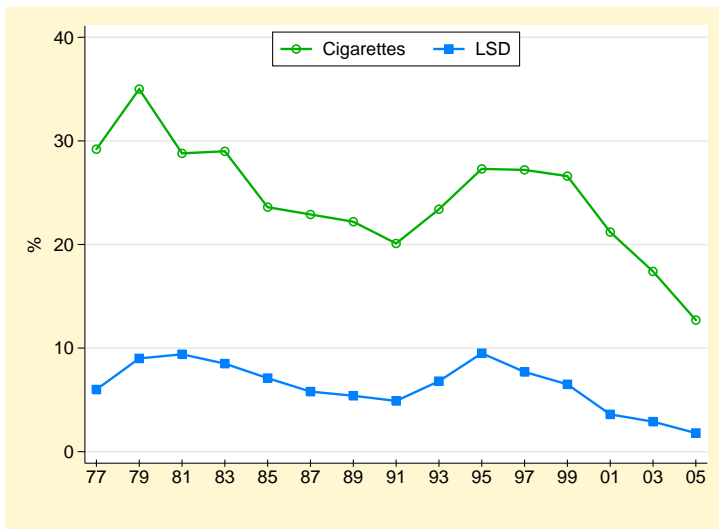


Figure 2.
Long-term Trends in Drug Use: Pattern 2

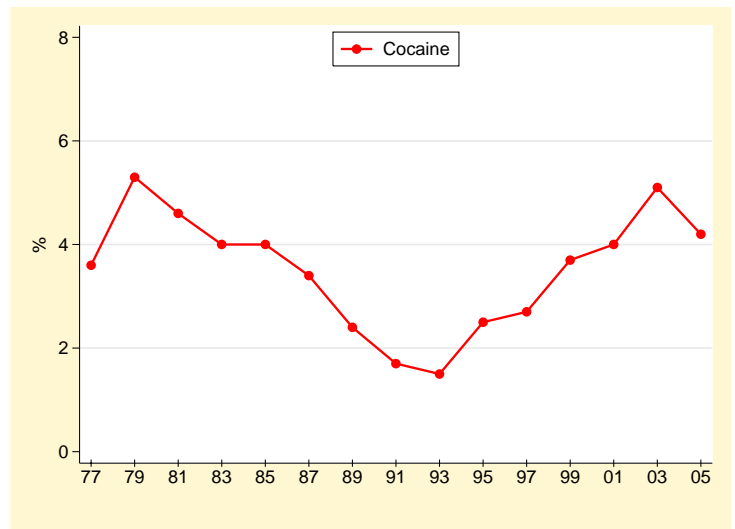


Figure 3.
Long-term Trends in Drug Use: Pattern 3

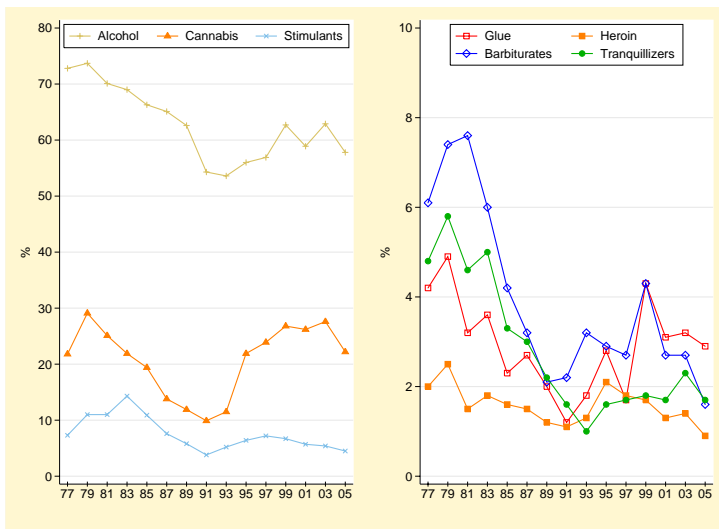
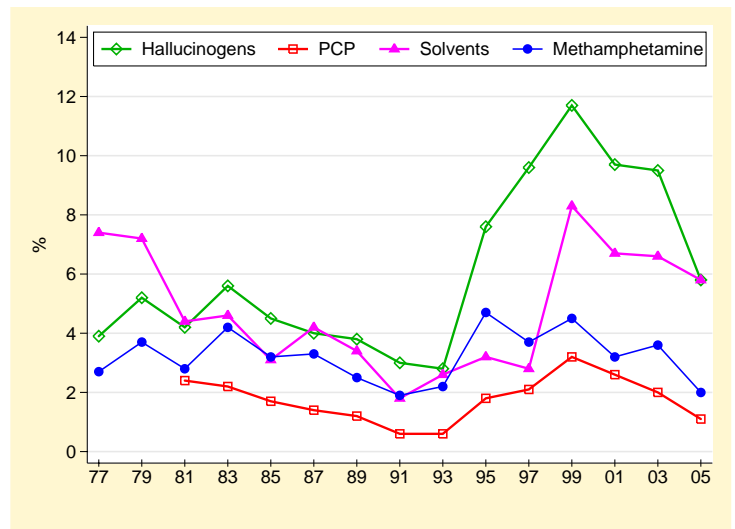


Figure 4.
Long-term Trends in Drug Use: Pattern 4



Methods:

The *Ontario Student Drug Use Survey (OSDUS)* is an Ontario-wide survey of elementary (grades 7 and 8) and secondary (grades 9-12) school students conducted every two years since 1977. The 2005 survey, which used a stratified (region) two-stage cluster design (school, class) included 7,726 students in grades 7 to 12 from 42 school boards, 137 schools, and 445 classes. Self-administered questionnaires, which promote anonymity, were administered by staff from the Institute for Social Research, York University on a classroom basis between January and June 2005. The student participation rate was 72%.

Note that prior to the 1999 survey, only students in grades 7, 9, and 11 were included. Therefore, long-term trends are limited to only these three grades.

All survey estimates were weighted, and variance and statistical tests were corrected for the sampling design. The 2005 full sample size of 7,726 students represents about 975,200 students in grades 7 to 12 in public and Catholic schools across the province.

Terminology:

- **Past Year Drug Use:** Percentages reflect use of the drug at least once during the 12 months before the survey.
- **Alcohol Use** is defined as drinking any alcohol during the past 12 months, excluding sips, but includes drinking at special events.
- **Binge Drinking** is defined as consuming 5 or more drinks on one occasion during the 4 weeks before the survey.
- **Cigarette Smoking** is defined as smoking less than 1 cigarette or more daily in the past 12 months, but excludes trying a cigarette.
- **Hallucinogens** are drugs such as Mescaline and Psilocybin ("magic mushrooms"); excluded are LSD and PCP.
- **Any Illicit Drug Use, Including and Excluding Cannabis** measures use of at least one of the following 11 drugs in the past 12 months: cannabis, barbiturates, heroin, methamphetamine, stimulants, tranquilizers, LSD, PCP, other hallucinogens, cocaine, and crack. This measure is also reported without cannabis use. The drugs excluded from both measures are glue, solvents, ecstasy, Ice (crystal methamphetamine), GHB, Rohypnol, Ketamine, Ritalin, OxyContin and any prescription drug.
- **Region:** For the survey design, Ontario was divided into four regions using the following boundaries: Toronto (schools within the former Metropolitan Toronto); North (schools within the North Bay and Sudbury areas and farther north); East (schools within York Region and farther east); West (schools within Peel Region and farther west).
- **Significant Difference** refers to a difference between two percentages that is not likely due to chance. For example, a difference found at the $p < .05$ level of statistical significance is one that is less than 5% likely to occur by chance alone.

Source:

Adlaf, E.M., & Paglia-Boak, A. (2005). *Drug Use Among Ontario Students, 1977-2005: Detailed OSDUS Findings*. CAMH Research Document Series, No. 16. Toronto: Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. (The report is available in PDF format at <http://www.camh.net/research/osdus.html>.)

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