

Drug Use Highlights from the 2007 OSDUHS

This *eBulletin* highlights the main drug use findings from the 2007 Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey (OSDUHS), an Ontario-wide school survey of students in grades 7 to 12. The 2007 survey sample size of 6,323 represents just over one million students in grades 7 to 12 across the province.

Also highlighted are trends in tobacco, alcohol and other drug use, based on 16 surveys conducted since 1977. The OSDUHS, now spanning 30 years, is the longest systematic study of alcohol and drug use among a youthful population in Canada, and the second-longest internationally.

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, incl. cannabis	28.7	29.3	28.1	6.9	10.0	25.3	33.2	43.3	47.3 *
Any Illicit Drug, excl. 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.

Demographic Correlates of Student Drug Use

Student drug use is associated with the following demographic factors:

Sex: Males are significantly more likely than females to use 4 drugs: LSD, other hallucinogens, heroin, and steroids. Females are more likely to use stimulant pills, prescription-type opioid pain relievers without a prescription, and over-the-counter sleeping medication for purposes other than sleeping.

Age/Grade: Use significantly varies by grade for 20 of the substance measures: cigarettes, alcohol, binge drinking, cannabis, opioid pain relievers, OxyContin, solvents, glue, stimulants, LSD, other hallucinogens, ecstasy, cocaine, crack, tranquilizers, methamphetamine, Ketamine, ADHD

drugs, any illicit drug (general measure) including and excluding cannabis. Use of these drugs tends to increase with grade with the exceptions of glue and other solvents, which decrease with grade.

Region: Compared to the provincial averages, Toronto students are less likely to binge drink, to use alcohol, ecstasy, methamphetamine, and any illicit drug excluding cannabis. Compared to the province as a whole, Northern Ontario students are more likely to smoke cigarettes, binge drink, use alcohol, methamphetamine, cocaine, crack, ecstasy, opioid pain relievers, and any illicit drug excluding cannabis. Eastern Ontario students are more likely to use crack, while Western Ontario students do not differ from the province as a whole on any drug use measure.

Trends in Drug Use

2007 vs. 2005 (Grades 7–12)

Between 2005 and 2007, four drugs showed small, yet statistically significant, decreases in past-year use: cigarettes (from 14% to 12%, methamphetamine (from 2% to 1%), crack (from 2% to 1%); and lifetime use of steroids (from 2% to 1%). Only one drug showed a small, but significant increase: non-medical OxyContin use increased, from 1% to 2%.

Short-Term Trends, 1999–2007 (Grades 7-12)

There have been 14 significant changes in past-year drug use between 1999 and 2007, all of which have been decreases: cigarettes, alcohol, glue, LSD, PCP, other hallucinogens, methamphetamine, stimulants, crack, heroin, Rohypnol, steroids (lifetime use), any illicit drug (general measure) including and excluding cannabis.

Long-Term Trends, 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 drug use patterns, spanning back to 1977:

The first pattern (Figure 1) applies to cigarettes and LSD, which were each found to be at an all-time low in 2005 and stable in 2007.

The second pattern (Figure 2) shows drug use that is significantly lower in 2007 compared to the peaks in use in 1979 and 1999 (2003 for cocaine). This pattern applies to alcohol, cannabis, glue, and cocaine.

The third pattern (Figure 3) displays use that is significantly lower in 2007 compared to the peak use in 1979 or early 1980s. This applies to heroin, stimulants, and tranquilizers.

The fourth pattern (Figure 4) shows use that is significantly lower in 2007 compared to the peak use in 1999 (2001 for ecstasy). This applies to PCP, other hallucinogens, methamphetamine, crack, and ecstasy.

The fifth long-term pattern (Figure 5) displays use that is not significantly lower than the peak years of 1979 or 1999. This pattern applies to solvent use and binge drinking.

Figure 1.
Long-Term OSDUHS Drug Use Trends: Pattern 1

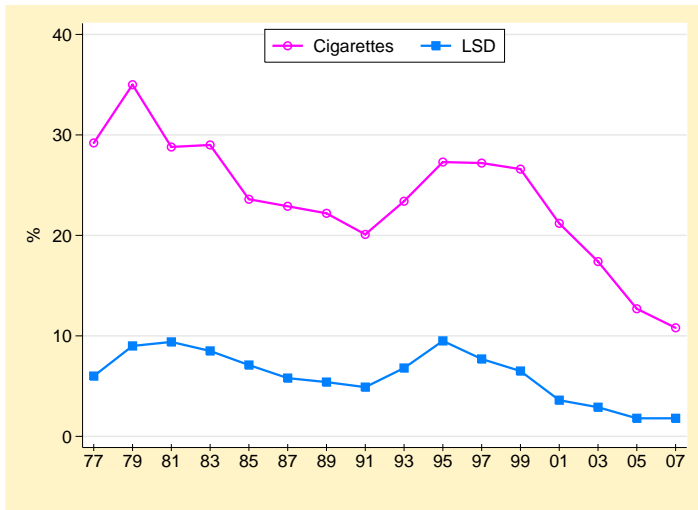


Figure 2.
Long-Term OSDUHS Drug Use Trends: Pattern 2

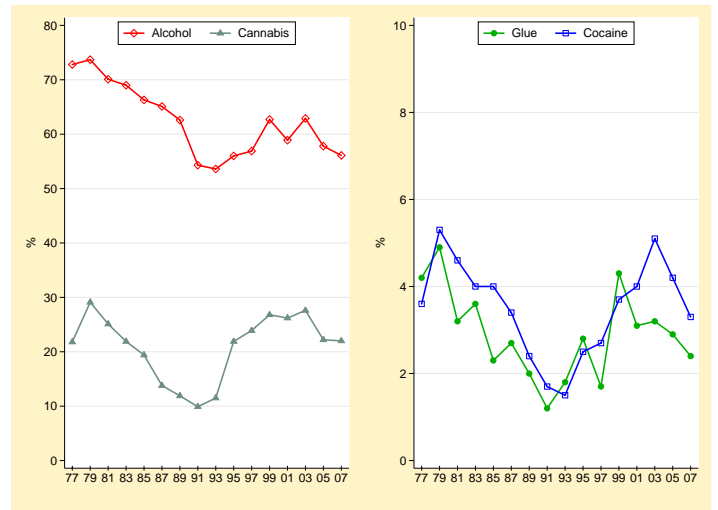


Figure 3.
Long-Term OSDUHS Drug Use Trends: Pattern 3

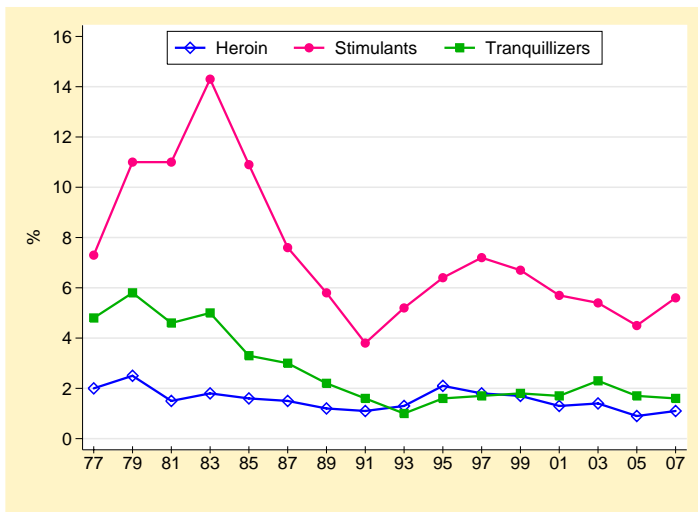


Figure 4.
Long-Term OSDUHS Drug Use Trends: Pattern 4

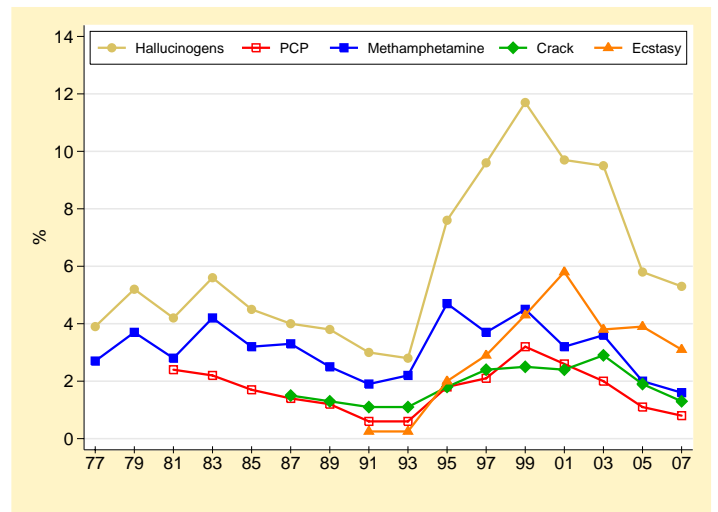
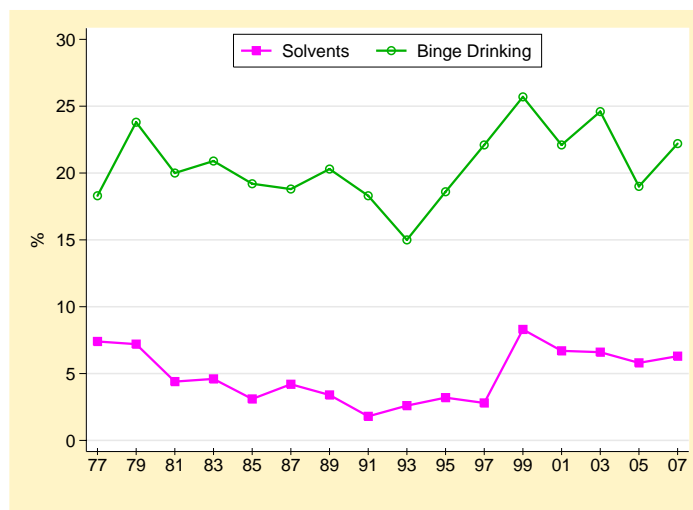


Figure 5.
Long-Term OSDUHS Drug Use Trends: Pattern 5



Methods:

The *Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey (OSDUHS)* 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 2007 survey, which used a stratified (region) two-stage cluster design (school, class) included 6,323 students in grades 7 to 12 from 43 school boards, 119 schools, and 385 classes. Self-administered questionnaires, which promote anonymity, were administered by staff from the Institute for Social Research, York University on a classroom basis between November 2006 and June 2007. The student participation rate was 68%.

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 2007 full sample size of 6,323 students represents about 1,011,000 students in grades 7 to 12 in public and Catholic schools across the province.

Terminology:

- **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 area and farther north); East (schools within York Region and farther east); West (schools within Peel Region and farther west).
- **Past Year Drug Use** is defined as using the drug at least once during the 12 months before the survey.
- **Non-Medical Use** is defined as using the drug without a doctor's prescription 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.
- **Opioid Pain Relievers (NM):** refers to the non-medical use of prescription opioid-based pain relievers, such as Percocet, Percodan, Tylenol #3, Demerol, OxyContin, and codeine, at least once during the past 12 months.
- **Other 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 10 drugs in the past 12 months: cannabis, 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, OxyContin and any other prescription drug.
- **95% Confidence Interval (CI)** can be crudely interpreted as being 95% likely to include the "true" value if every student in Ontario was surveyed.
- **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. (2007). *Drug Use Among Ontario Students, 1977-2007: Detailed OSDUHS Findings*. CAMH Research Document Series, No. 20. 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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