

# Alcohol and Youth: Recommendations for Research An Analysis of Canadian Data on Alcohol and Youth Trends

Jason LeMar  
Jennifer Lodge  
Benjamin Rempel

Prepared for  
The Alcohol Education Programs of the  
Ontario Public Health Association  
March 2008

Alcohol Policy Network



Funding generously provided by the Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

### **Authors:**

**Jason LeMar** is employed with the Ontario Public Health Association as a Coordinator for the Alcohol Education Programs. His main responsibilities include researching and producing papers, along with keeping key stakeholders abreast of current trends and issues around alcohol policy. He is a graduate of Brock University with a Bachelor of Arts in Health Sciences along with a Workplace Wellness and Health Promotion Certificate from Centennial College.

**Jennifer Lodge** is a research associate with the Ontario Public Health Association and is currently completing the Centennial College Workplace Wellness and Health Promotion Post Graduate Program. She is also a graduate of the University of Toronto with an Honours Bachelor of Science in Psychology and Philosophy.

**Benjamin Rempel** is the Manager of Alcohol Education and Injury Prevention at the Ontario Public Health Association. He is a graduate of Laurentian University with an Honours degree in Health Promotion.

*The authors wish to acknowledge the valuable contributions of the ARAPO Committee, OPHA Staff, as well as various researchers and colleagues in the substance use and misuse and health promotion fields that assisted us with this paper.*

*ARAPO is a provincial network made up of members who share the goal of promoting public health and safety by reducing the impact of alcohol advertising, promotion, and sponsorship through education, policy, and community action.*

For more information or to order additional copies of this paper, please contact:

The Alcohol Education Programs  
C/o Ontario Public Health Association  
700 Lawrence Avenue West, Suite 310  
Toronto, Ontario, M6A 3B4  
P: 416-367-3313 ext. 264 or Toll free: 1-800-267-6817  
F: 416-367-2844  
E: [ARAPO@opha.on.ca](mailto:ARAPO@opha.on.ca) W: [www.apolnet.ca](http://www.apolnet.ca)

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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<i>Background</i>	<b>2</b>
<i>Introduction</i>	<b>3</b>
<i>Methodology</i>	<b>4</b>
<i>Survey Summaries</i>	<b>6</b>
Western Canada	
• Adolescent Health Survey (AHS)	<b>6</b>
• The Alberta Youth Experience Survey (TAYES)	<b>7</b>
Central Canada	
• Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey (OSDUHS)	<b>8</b>
• Youth Resilience Questionnaire	<b>10</b>
Eastern Canada	
• New Brunswick Student Drug Use Survey	<b>11</b>
• Nova Scotia Student Drug Use Survey	<b>13</b>
• Prince Edward Island Student Drug Use Survey	<b>14</b>
National	
• Alcohol and Drug Use In Early Adolescence	<b>15</b>
• Canadian Campus Survey (CCS)	<b>16</b>
• Enhanced Surveillance of Canadian Street Youth (E-SYS)	<b>17</b>
International	
• National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)	<b>19</b>
<i>Discussion</i>	<b>21</b>
<i>Recommendations</i>	<b>23</b>
<i>Conclusion</i>	<b>28</b>
<i>References</i>	<b>30</b>
<i>Appendices</i>	<b>32</b>

## **BACKGROUND**

Since 2003, the Alcohol Education Programs of the Ontario Public Health Association, which include the Alcohol Policy Network (APN) and the Association to Reduce Alcohol Promotion in Ontario (ARAPO), have coordinated much of their work in the area of alcohol consumption and alcohol promotion in relation to Canadian youth. This focus helped produce the 2007 release of “Alcohol and Youth Trends: Implications for Public Health”.

This paper aims to document where the direction of Canadian research is in relation to substance use and youth and if research on advertising can be explored within these or other research studies.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Through a variety of different research projects and recent key informant interviews, the Association to Reduce Alcohol Promotion in Ontario (ARAPO) found Canadian research to be scarce regarding the effects of alcohol promotion and youth consumption of alcohol. When searching for research on this topic, it was found that American research institutes are producing lead studies and results. Two of these organizations are the Marin Institute<sup>1</sup>, a California based watchdog organization whose mission is to regulate the negative practices of big alcohol; and Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth<sup>2</sup> which leads research on advertising and youth alcohol consumption. Their major work includes, “Monitoring the Marketing Practices of the Alcohol Industry to Focus Attention and Action on Industry Practices that Jeopardize the Health and Safety of America's Youth”.

In addition to those produced by the above mentioned organizations, other independent studies were found that aimed at linking alcohol promotion and youth consumption. The results of five of these studies have been summarized in Appendices A-E.

Due to the fact that there is no current *Canadian* research investigating the link between alcohol promotion and consumption with regard to youth populations, this report has outlined what research is being completed with respect to youth and their alcohol consumption in Canada.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.marininstitute.org/about\\_us/mission.htm](http://www.marininstitute.org/about_us/mission.htm), March 2008

<sup>2</sup> <http://camy.org/about/>, March 2008

## **METHODOLOGY**

The search for literature pertaining to youth trends in alcohol use, specifically the effects of alcohol advertising on youth alcohol consumption, included accessing academic literature, books and scholarly journal articles, government documents, policy reports, grey literature, and papers published by professional organizations.

The findings from these sources yielded 53 documents. Of the 53 documents, seven met the criteria for inclusion as described below.

- The survey be accessible for review as well as a report on that survey's findings.
- The survey be directed to youth in particular, beginning at the grade seven level.
- Find surveys that addressed the issue of alcohol advertising and its affect on youth alcohol consumption.
- The surveys used represent various areas across Canada: Western Canada, Central Canada, and Eastern Canada proportionally.

However after extensive searching, a decision was made that there simply was not enough Canadian data on this subject. Once this discovery was made the decision to use only surveys that focus on youth substance use became the most prominent criteria.

The websites of known organizations in the drug and alcohol awareness and research field were searched for relevant surveys and studies completed on alcohol use trends among youth.

The "Google" search engine was also used to locate links to these surveys, and other titles of articles, studies, or surveys of interest. Key words searched included, "Alcohol Use Surveys", "Alcohol Use Among Youth", "Trends in Alcohol Use Among Youth", "Youth Substance Abuse", and "Surveys on Substance Abuse".

Websites of the following organizations were consulted for information on surveys: Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC), Brock Research Institute for Youth Studies, Canadian Centre for Substance Abuse, Canadian Institute of Health Research, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), The Centre for Addictions Research of British Columbia (CARBC), Department of Community Health and Epidemiology at Dalhousie University, Health Canada, McCreary Centre Society, New Brunswick Department of Education, New Brunswick Department of Health and Wellness, Nova Scotia Departments of Health and Education, Public Health Agency of Canada, Statistics Canada, and The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

A second method of retrieving relevant information was done through communication with stakeholders in the alcohol and substance abuse field. These stakeholders represent eight different agencies within North America and yielded seven surveys that met our criteria.

In addition, members of the Association to Reduce Alcohol Promotion in Ontario identified two surveys that met our criteria. This resulted in a total of 11 surveys included in this report.

The following is a list of the surveys summarized in this report:

- The Adolescent Health Survey (AHS)
- Alcohol and Drug Use in Early years
- Youth Resilience Questionnaire
- Canadian Campus Survey
- Enhanced Surveillance of Canadian Street Youth (E-SYS)
- New Brunswick Student Drug Use Survey (in collaboration with Prince Edward Island Student Drug Use Survey and Nova Scotia Student Drug Use Survey)
- Nova Scotia Student Drug Use Survey (in collaboration with Prince Edward Island Student Drug Use Survey and New Brunswick Student Drug Use Survey)
- Prince Edward Island Student Drug Use Survey (in collaboration with New Brunswick Student Drug Use Survey and Nova Scotia Student Drug Use Survey)
- Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey (OSDUHS)
- National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)
- The Alberta Youth Experience Survey (TAYES)

This search aimed to include only primary research, however secondary research was found and thus included for reference in the appendices of the paper. An Internet search found the following five studies done in the United States on alcohol advertising and its relationship to youth alcohol consumption.

- Alcohol Use in Motion Pictures and Its Relation with Early-Onset Teen Drinking, F.X. Gibbons, J. Gobson et al., 2006.
- Does alcohol advertising promote adolescent drinking? Results from a longitudinal assessment, R.L. Collins, P.L. Ellickson et al., 2005.
- Early Adolescent Exposure to Alcohol Advertising and Its Relationship to Underage Drinking, R.L. Collins, P.L. Ellickson et al., 2007
- Effects of Alcohol Advertising Exposure on Drinking Among Youth, CAMY, 1999-2001.
- Saturated in Beer: Awareness of Beer Advertising in Late Childhood and Adolescence, R.L. Collins, P.L. Ellickson et al., 2005.

## **SURVEY SUMMARIES**

### **Western Canada**

**Survey Name:** The Adolescent Health Survey (AHS)

**Region:** British Columbia

**Date:** 1992, 1998, 2003

**Organization:** McCreary Centre Society

**Contact Information:** [mccreary@mcs.bc.ca](mailto:mccreary@mcs.bc.ca)

**Information for this summary can be found at the following link:**

Report on the 2003 AHS survey can be found at:

[http://www.mcs.bc.ca/pdf/AHS-3\\_provincial.pdf](http://www.mcs.bc.ca/pdf/AHS-3_provincial.pdf)

For information pertaining particularly to alcohol use among youth, please see pg. 15 of the report (or pg. 17 of the PDF file).

#### **Background:**

The 2003 AHS was the third survey completed in BC by the McCreary Centre Society and the fourth is to be completed in early 2008. The AHS is used to gather information about youth in BC, specifically around their health-promoting behaviours and their health-compromising behaviours. Questions surrounding physical health, emotional health, and factors that can influence health during adolescence and later life are addressed and compiled. The results of these surveys have been used by schools, communities, government agencies, health professionals and youth groups for the purpose of planning youth programs and services that aid youth in engaging in health-promoting behaviours.

#### **Methods & Procedures:**

Over 73,000 students have been interviewed over the course of the three surveys. Students are asked to write their responses to the questions in the survey, the proceedings take approximately 30-45 minutes, and the survey is conducted by trained public health nurses. The survey is voluntary and all answers given are confidential. Parents are given the right to refuse their child's participation in the survey. The survey is of no cost to either the school districts or the schools themselves. Through random selection, public school classrooms of grades 7 through 12 were selected so as to provide a representative sample of the various districts in BC.

#### **Results of Interest:**

This survey shows that substance use among youth has declined in the past five years for alcohol, marijuana, and harder drugs. Over the years (from 1992-2003) overall alcohol use among youth had decreased 6%. In 2003, 57% of students had ever tried alcohol and these statistics were down from 63% in 1998 and 65% in 1992. The number of 13-year-olds who had ever had a drink had decreased 16% over the past decade to 33% in 2003, from 44% in 1998 and 71% in 1992. About 46% of male and 43% of female students who had tried alcohol engaged in past-month binge drinking, a number that had not changed since 1998.

**Survey Name:** The Alberta Youth Experience Survey (TAYES)

**Region:** Alberta

**Date:** 2002, 2005

**Organization:** Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC)

**Contact Information and source of information for this summary can be found at the following links:**

Summary of TAYES 2005:

[http://www.aadac.com/documents/TAYES05\\_summary\\_report.pdf](http://www.aadac.com/documents/TAYES05_summary_report.pdf)

Report on the findings and what they may imply or mean in regards to Alberta youth:

[http://www.aadac.com/documents/TAYES05\\_alcohol\\_use\\_among\\_alberta\\_youth.pdf](http://www.aadac.com/documents/TAYES05_alcohol_use_among_alberta_youth.pdf)

A profile of alcohol use among Alberta youth based on information collected in TAYES 2005: [http://www.aadac.com/documents/profile\\_TAYES05\\_alcohol\\_use.pdf](http://www.aadac.com/documents/profile_TAYES05_alcohol_use.pdf) .

### **Background:**

The Alberta Youth Experience Survey (TAYES) measures alcohol, tobacco, illicit drug use and gambling activity among Alberta students in grades 7 through 12. Student attitudes and perceptions towards substance use and gambling are also measured with the activities of student social networks taken into consideration. TAYES was initiated in 2002 by AADAC for the purpose of measuring youth substance use and gambling behaviour and other risk factors related to these behaviours. In 2005, the survey was conducted again, this time asking all the questions from the 2002 survey along with questions regarding youth attitudes, perceptions and social networks. Overall 3,915 youth from grades 7-12 participated in the survey.

### **Methods & Procedures:**

Students in grades 7-12 from public, Catholic, and charter school systems throughout Alberta were surveyed. For students in grades 7-9 a questionnaire with 201 questions was administered, while students in grades 10-12 received a similar survey with 57 more questions added. Consent was received from guardians in the necessary cases, while confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed to participants.

### **Results of Interest:**

Of the students that completed the TAYES survey, 36.6% were found to be non-drinkers while 63.4% had consumed alcohol in the last 12 months. Current drinkers among students increased by grade and 33.2% of all students met Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) criteria for hazardous drinking. The numbers for hazardous drinking increased by grade with 5.9% of Grade 7 students, 14.1% of Grade 8 students, 23.3% of Grade 9 students, 34.1% of Grade 10 students, 37.8% of Grade 11 students, and 39.9% of Grade 12 students demonstrating risky drinking behaviour. Overall, 31.3% of all students reported incidents of binge drinking. The rate of binge also increased significantly by grade with 3% of Grade 7 students, 10.5% of Grade 8 students, 19.7% of Grade 9 students, 35.9% of Grade 10 students, 38.6% of Grade 11 students, and 47.5% of Grade 12 students reporting incidents of binge drinking.

### Central Canada

**Survey Name:** Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey (OSDUHS)

**Region:** Ontario

**Date:** 1977, 1979, 1981, 1983, 1985, 1987, 1989, 1991, 1993, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007

**Organization:** Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

**Contact Information:** Edward M. Adlaf: [Edward\\_adlaf@camh.net](mailto:Edward_adlaf@camh.net)

**Information for this summary can be found at the following links:**

Detailed results for these topics summarized at:

[http://www.camh.net/Research/Areas\\_of\\_research/Population\\_Life\\_Course\\_Studies/OSDUS/OSDUHS2007\\_DrugHighlights\\_final.pdf](http://www.camh.net/Research/Areas_of_research/Population_Life_Course_Studies/OSDUS/OSDUHS2007_DrugHighlights_final.pdf) on page 10 of the report, or page 14 of the PDF document.

For the Detailed Analysis of Results visit the following link:

[http://www.camh.net/Research/Areas\\_of\\_research/Population\\_Life\\_Course\\_Studies/OSDUS/OSDUHS2007\\_DrugDetailed\\_final.pdf](http://www.camh.net/Research/Areas_of_research/Population_Life_Course_Studies/OSDUS/OSDUHS2007_DrugDetailed_final.pdf) beginning on page 45 of the report, or page 76 of the PDF document.

#### **Background:**

In this 30-year anniversary of the OSDUS, it was decided that it was now necessary to elaborate the important aspect of health that is captured in the survey by adding questions surrounding healthy behaviours and attitudes and thus making the survey Ontario Student Drug Use and *Health* Survey. OSDUHS is a population survey of Ontario students from grades 7 to 12 and serves to identify factors such as epidemiological trends in student drug use, mental health, physical activity and risky behaviour, as well as identifying risk factors that contribute to student drug use. This survey began in 1977 and is the longest ongoing survey in Canada. The results of the study have been consistently used by health, education, and government officials in efforts to create preventative policies, programs, and serves to direct programming to address the needs of youth in Ontario.

#### **Methods & Procedures:**

OSDUHS is a population survey administered to approximately 6,000 students from over 100 elementary and secondary schools across the country every two years. The survey is self-administered and anonymous so to encourage more honest and accurate responses from students. A sample of school and classrooms to be surveyed is selected at random using a two-staged, stratified cluster sample design. Random selection is employed at both stages (school and classroom), however regions are less random as surveyors divide the province into four different categories: Toronto, Northern Ontario, Eastern Ontario, and Western Ontario. Students had to return a signed parental consent form to take part in the survey and the survey was administered in classrooms and took approximately 30-40 minutes.

#### **Results of Interest:**

Of the students surveyed, 61% reported drinking alcohol during the 12 months prior to the survey (representing 616,300 students in grades 7-12 in Ontario). Drinking significantly increases with grade, the rates climbing more than ten percent with each grade between grades 7 and 11 (28%-79%) and by 12<sup>th</sup> grade reaching 83%.

About 23% of all students restrict their drinking to special occasions only while 1 in 10 students (10%) drink at least once a week and less than 0.5% drink on a daily basis.

In regards to binge drinking among students, 26% reported binge drinking at least once during the 4 weeks prior to the survey (representing about 262,000 students).

Approximately 10% of students reported binge drinking 2-3 times during the past month and another 5% report binge drinking 4 or more times in the past month. Binge drinking increases significantly with grade, the lowest rate being among the 7<sup>th</sup> grade students at 4% and the highest rate being among the 12<sup>th</sup> grade students at 48%.

Finally, 19% of students reported drinking at a hazardous level as defined by the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT), thus representing approximately 193,000 students.

The OSDHUS survey breaks down the data collected from the survey in regards to alcohol use into five different categories: Past Year Alcohol Use, Frequency of Drinking, Binge Drinking (Past Month), Drunkenness (Past Month), and Hazardous Drinking.

**Survey Name:** Youth Resilience Questionnaire

**Region:** Niagara

**Date:** 2001, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2007

**Organization:** Brock Research Institute for Youth Studies, Brock University

**Contact Information:** Teena Willoughby, University Co-Director [twilloug@brocku.ca](mailto:twilloug@brocku.ca)

**Information for this summary can be found at the following links:**

Reports from all years can be found on the YLC-CURA Niagara website under research reports <http://www.brocku.ca/cura/researchreports.html>

Brock's 2007 Report:

<http://www.brocku.ca/cura/pdf/YLC-CURA%20-%202007%20Secondary%20Report.pdf>

(See section 6.4 (Risk Behaviours) for the results from substance abuse and youth)

**Background:**

This survey has been ongoing for 7 years, conducted in 2001, 2003, 2004, 2006, and 2007. The purpose of the survey is to focus on perceptions and behaviours of youth in the Niagara area with the goal of understanding youth lifestyle choices. It is hoped this understanding will lead to the development of more effective ways of encouraging youth to make positive lifestyle choices.

**Methods & Procedures:**

Questions regarding intrapersonal relationships, family and peer relationships, risk behaviours, leisure activities, community, religion, and school behaviours are posed to students from the Niagara region. In 2007, the survey was completed by 2,412 students in Niagara region high schools from grades 11 and 12. Each home received a phone call about the survey so as to better inform the parents of what the survey was about prior to receiving the consent form that they were required to sign if their children were to be permitted to participate in the survey. Students were given a script before they filled out the survey that outlined what the survey was about and why it was important, as well as emphasizing that the survey was voluntary. The survey was administered during class time with moderators consisting of both teachers and research assistants. The survey took approximately one to one-and-a-half hours to complete.

**Results of Interest:**

Out of the 2,412 students surveyed, 81.7% of students have had more than a sip or two of alcohol. When asked how many drinks students consumed at one time when drinking, 28.8% reported drinking between 4-6 drinks at one time and 22.8% drank 2-3 drinks at one time.

The results of the survey are broken down into a report in seven different chapters, reflecting the seven different areas of focus: intrapersonal relationships, family and peer relationships, risk behaviours, leisure activities, community and religion, school behaviours, and physical and mental health.

### Eastern Canada

**Survey Name:** New Brunswick Student Drug Use Survey (in collaboration with Prince Edward Island Student Drug Use Survey and Nova Scotia Student Drug Use Survey)

**Region:** New Brunswick

**Date:** 1996, 1998, 2002, 2007

**Organization:** New Brunswick Department of Health and Wellness, New Brunswick Department of Education, School Districts and Public Schools of NB, Dalhousie University

**Contact Information:** Department of Community Health and Epidemiology, Dalhousie University <http://che.medicine.dal.ca/>

**Information for this Summary can be found at the following links:**

Highlights Report

<http://www.gnb.ca/0378/pdf/StudentDrugUseSurvey2002ENG.pdf>

Technical Report

<http://www.gnb.ca/0378/pdf/tech-report2002revised-Final11.pdf>

#### **Background:**

The student drug use surveys are used to ask students in both junior-high and senior-high about their experiences with substance use, gambling, and associated risk behaviours. The student drug use survey is conducted across all the Atlantic Provinces (with the exception of Newfoundland and Labrador who chose not to participate in 2002). Each province conducts its own survey and reports on its own results. The 2002 survey is the third application of the survey.

#### **Methods & Procedures:**

The survey was completed by 3,854 students. The students were randomly selected from grades 7, 9, 10, and 12. The survey was a self-administered questionnaire that was kept anonymous and confidential. One difference in the survey administered to the New Brunswick students compared to surveys administered in the other Atlantic Provinces was that the Department of Education asked that two versions of the questionnaire be administered, with the grade 7 version not including the questions on sexual-risk behaviour that were included in the grade 9, 10, and 12 questionnaires.

#### **Results of Interest:**

Much like the other Atlantic Provinces, alcohol, cannabis, and tobacco were the three most commonly used drugs among students in New Brunswick. The use of alcohol was found to have remained reasonably stable since the 1998 survey. In regards to risky behaviours, more than half (55%) of high school students engaged in unplanned sexual activity because they were under the influence of alcohol or other drugs while about 1 in 10 had, on at least one occasion, driven a motor vehicle within one hour of consuming 2 or more drinks of alcohol.

The survey found that 53% of students reported drinking alcohol at least once within 12 months prior to the survey and 30% of students were frequent alcohol users. More females (55%) than males (51%) reported drinking alcohol at least once in the past year. While female rates have remained the same since 1998, the rates reported by males have decreased significantly. Drinking increases with grade level: 14% of grade 7 students, 48% of grade 9 students, 70% of grade 10 students, and 84% of grade 12 students. Among those students considered frequent drinkers, 47% had their first drink in grade 7 or earlier; 48% consumed alcohol one or more times per week in the past

year; 52% went to a bar, tavern, etc. at least once in the past year; 94% had 5 or more drinks on the same occasion in the past month; and 69% became intoxicated at least once in the past month.

In relation to peer drinking, the survey found that 81% of students drank if half or more of their friends also drank, while only 3% drank if none of their friends drank.

**Survey Name:** Nova Scotia Student Drug Use Survey (in collaboration with Prince Edward Island Student Drug Use Survey and New Brunswick Student Drug Use Survey)

**Region:** Nova Scotia

**Date:** 1996, 1998, 2002, 2007

**Organization:** Addiction Services, Nova Scotia Departments of Health and Education and Dalhousie University

**Contact Information:** Department of Community Health and Epidemiology, Dalhousie University <http://che.medicine.dal.ca/>

**Information for this Summary can be found at the following links:**

Highlights report

[http://www.gov.ns.ca/health/downloads/2002\\_NSDrugHighlights.pdf](http://www.gov.ns.ca/health/downloads/2002_NSDrugHighlights.pdf)

Technical Report

[http://www.gov.ns.ca/health/downloads/2002\\_NSDrugTechnical.pdf](http://www.gov.ns.ca/health/downloads/2002_NSDrugTechnical.pdf)

#### **Background:**

The student drug use surveys are used to ask students in both junior-high and senior-high about their experiences with substance use, gambling, and associated risk behaviours. The student drug use survey is conducted across all the Atlantic Provinces (with the exception of Newfoundland and Labrador who chose not to participate in 2002). Each province conducts its own survey and reports on its own results. The 2002 survey is the third application of the survey.

#### **Methods & Procedures:**

The survey was administered to 205 randomly selected classes resulting in 4,247 students being surveyed throughout Nova Scotia. Participation in the survey was anonymous and confidential and it was comprised of 100 close-ended questions and one open-ended question. Topics regarding demographics, social environment, substance use, associated risk behaviours and problems, help seeking, gambling, and school drug education rules are investigated through this questionnaire. The 2002 survey included, for the first time, a section on mental health.

#### **Results of Interest:**

The survey revealed a decrease in the prevalence of alcohol, cigarettes, LSD and inhalants and showed no substantial change in the other 9 substances measured from 1998 (57%) to 2002 (52%). It was also found that 28% of students reported high-risk alcohol consumption behaviours (such as drinking to the point of drunkenness). Alcohol, cannabis, and tobacco were the three most commonly reported substances used among youth; however it should be noted that 26% of youth reported never having consumed alcohol. Of the 84% that reported consuming alcohol, almost half said that the first time of consumption was in grade 8. Also, 30% of youth reported consuming alcohol more than once a month, and 14% reported consuming alcohol at least once a week. In relation to peer alcohol use, youth were more likely to report having used alcohol and having used alcohol to the point of drunkenness as more of their friends reported using alcohol.

**Survey Name:** Prince Edward Island Student Drug Use Survey (in collaboration with New Brunswick Student Drug Use Survey and Nova Scotia Student Drug Use Survey)

**Region:** Prince Edward Island

**Date:** 1996, 1998, 2002, 2007

**Organization:** Prince Edward Island Department of Health and Social Services, and the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology

**Contact Information:** Department of Community Health and Epidemiology, Dalhousie University <http://che.medicine.dal.ca/>

**Information for this survey can be found at the following link:**

[http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/hss\\_drug\\_high\\_e.pdf](http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/hss_drug_high_e.pdf)

**Background:**

The student drug use surveys are used to ask students in both junior-high and senior-high about their experiences with substance use, gambling, and associated risk behaviours. The student drug use survey is conducted across all the Atlantic Provinces (with the exception of Newfoundland and Labrador who chose not to participate in 2002). Each province conducts its own survey and reports on its own results. This is the third application of the survey.

**Methods & Procedures:**

The PEI student drug use survey uses the standard scannable survey administered across the Atlantic Provinces and is filled out anonymously by the students selected to participate. Of rural and urban settings in PEI, 125 classes were selected, and from these classes 2,416 students were randomly and anonymously selected. The survey combines both qualitative and quantitative methods to describe the extent and patterns of alcohol and drug use among PEI students. Questions at the end of the survey allowed students to comment on and express their opinions and concerns regarding alcohol and drug use.

**Results of Interest:**

The most common substances used by students were alcohol, cannabis, and tobacco, with alcohol ranking as the most used substance by students in PEI. Overall 48% of students reported drinking alcohol at least once during the twelve months prior to the survey. The rates of alcohol use increase with age and grade, with 10% of grade 7 students, 39% of grade 9 students, 63% of grade 10 students, and 81% of grade 12 students reporting alcohol use. Of the 48% that reported past year drinking, 26% were found to be frequent alcohol users. Of these alcohol users, 100% reported drinking more often than monthly, 73% reported having five or more drinks on the same occasion in the month prior to the survey, and 72% reported being drunk at least once in the month prior to the survey.

Some of the trends found in student alcohol consumption among PEI adolescents from 1996 to 2002 included that half of the students ever surveyed reported alcohol use, and the rates for grade 7 alcohol consumption decreased from 1996 to 2002. However, the biggest increase in alcohol use consistently occurred between grade 7 and grade 9.

## National

**Survey Name:** Alcohol and Drug Use in Early Adolescence

**Region:** Canada

**Date:** report written April 2007 based on the results of the 1998/1999 National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY)

**Organization:** Health Statistics Division on Behalf of Statistics Canada

**Contact Information:** Authors: Dave Haans and Tina Hotton, Statistics Canada  
[infostats@statcan.ca](mailto:infostats@statcan.ca)

**Information for this summary can be found at the following link:**

Full Report:

<http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/82-003-XIE/0030382-003-XIE.pdf>

### **Background:**

This report was written based on results from the 1998/99 National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY) which is conducted every two years by Statistics Canada. To obtain information for this survey researchers interview the “person most knowledgeable” (PMK) about the child (in most cases the mother), the PMK’s spouse, the child, and on occasion the child’s teacher and principal. This report uses this data to examine the odds of 12-15 year-olds drinking to the point of intoxication and their level of drug use.

### **Methods & Procedures:**

An estimation of lifetime drinking and drug use was established for youth age 12-15 and the mean age of first drug use and friend’s use of drugs was established. Following this, logistic regression models were created to estimate odds of drinking to the point of intoxication and drug use in the past twelve months. Factors that may influence drug and alcohol use were also taken into consideration, and estimates were adjusted with these factors in mind. Some of these factors included: peer substance use and behaviours, parental practices, quality of parent-child relationship, parental alcohol abuse, school attachment and achievement, emotional health, religiosity, and socio-demographic factors.

### **Results of Interest:**

In 1998/99 approximately 4 in 10 children aged 12-15 (42%) reported that they had consumed at least one drink of alcohol at some point in the past. At age 12, 17% said they had had at least one alcoholic beverage but by age 15, up to 66% reported consuming at least one alcoholic beverage in the past. Twenty-two percent of adolescents said they had been drunk at least once. Among 12 year olds, 4% said they had been drunk at least once, however by age 14, 29% reported having been drunk at least once and by age 15, 44% reported having been drunk at least once. The average age of first intoxication among youth who reported having been drunk was 13.2. About 6 out of 10 children (62%) reported drinking to intoxication in the past year if most or all of their friends used alcohol while only 8% of those with few or no friends who used alcohol reported being drunk in the past year.

This report uses the relevant data from the 1998/1999 NLSCY to underline key topics in the prevalence of alcohol and drug use in youth. Some topics covered include: average age at first use, peer influence, parental drinking, effects of age, parenting style, and family structure, school performance and commitment, general life stressors, and other protective factors. This information can be found on pages 9-19 of the report (or starting on page 11 of the PDF document).

**Survey Name:** Canadian Campus Survey (CCS)

**Region:** Canada

**Date:** March and April 2004

**Organization:** Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR), Centre for Addictions and Mental Health (CAMH)

**Contact Information:** Edward M. Adlaf: [Edward\\_adlaf@camh.net](mailto:Edward_adlaf@camh.net)

**Information for this summary can be found at the following link:**

The full report on the Canadian Campus Survey:

[http://www.camh.net/Research/Areas\\_of\\_research/Population\\_Life\\_Course\\_Studies/CCS\\_2004\\_report.pdf](http://www.camh.net/Research/Areas_of_research/Population_Life_Course_Studies/CCS_2004_report.pdf)

**Background:**

The main purpose of the CCS was to underline the individual, social, and environmental determinants of hazardous drinking among Canadian undergraduates. Because heavy drinking among university students can have such a detrimental effect on both a student's individual life as well as the environment of the campus community, an understanding of the problem must be reached. This survey focused on alcohol use, drug use, gambling problems, and mental health issues among Canadian undergraduates as a means of identifying the problem at hand and understanding the relationships between student characteristics and the results of this study.

**Methods & Procedures:**

A campus-stratified, single-staged selection of undergraduates enrolled in full-time studies was used to select students to partake in the survey from 64 accredited universities during the 2003-2004 academic years. The students were given the option to choose between a mail-based interview and a web-based interview. From each of the 64 universities, 350 students were randomly selected to undergo the interview process. Participation in the survey was completely voluntary and confidential and as a reward for participation, students' names were entered in draws.

**Results of Interest:**

Alcohol was found to be used by 85.7% of university/post-secondary students in the past year and 77.1% in the past 30 days. About 1 out of 10 students (9.9%) were lifetime abstainers from alcohol use. It was found that alcohol use increased with year of study; 82.3% of first-year students reported past year drinking while 88.9% of fourth-year students reported past year drinking. Drinking types also determined how much an individual drank. Light-infrequent drinking was defined as consuming five or less drinks daily drinking, less than once a week. This type of drinking was reported by 35.1% of students. Light-frequent drinking was defined as drinking less than five drinks daily and drinking at least one day a week every week. This type of drinking was reported by 22.1% of students. Almost one-third of students report a heavy drinking pattern (consuming more than five drinks a day and potentially drinking on a weekly basis). Another important factor in determining student alcohol use was living arrangements. Compared to students living at home with family, students living on or off campus without family drank more often and more heavily. In regards to harmful drinking, 43.9% of undergraduates reported at least one indicator of harmful drinking such as feeling guilty, experiencing memory loss or an injury and having concerns about their drinking. The survey also found that 31.6% of undergraduates reported at least one indicator of dependent drinking such as being unable to stop, failing to perform normal everyday activities, or needing a drink first thing in the morning.

**Survey Name:** Enhanced Surveillance of Canadian Street Youth (E-SYS)

**Region:** Canada

**Date:** 1999, 2001, 2003

**Organization:** Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC)

**Contact Information:** The Jeanne Mance Building, AL 1906B, Public Health Agency of Canada, Ottawa Ont., K1A 0K9, and Fax: 613-941-9813

**Information for this summary can be found at the following link:**

Alcohol and substance use among street youth results- Canadian Street Youth and Substance Use: Findings from Enhanced Surveillance of Canadian Street Youth, 1999-2003:

[http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/sti-its-surv-epi/report07/pdf/csy07\\_e.pdf](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/sti-its-surv-epi/report07/pdf/csy07_e.pdf)

**Background:**

The E-SYS is held every two years and provides researchers with information on the prevalence of sexually-transmitted infections, blood-borne infections, behaviours (both positive and risky) and risk determinants among Canadian street youth populations. Most information regarding youth drug use in Canada is collected from students and this excludes the street youth population who are at more risk to die of drug overdose or suicide. This survey gathers information from this often forgotten-about group and the information is used to develop an understanding of risk behaviours, risk determinants, and patterns of substance use among street youth.

**Methods & Procedures:**

Repeated surveying of street youth plus blood sampling is used to gather data for the E-SYS survey. The study has been done in four phases. Phase I was done in 1998 to estimate the likelihood of success of the survey. Phase II was held in 1999, Phase III in 2001, and Phase IV in 2003. All three phases involved snowball sampling methods where participants were recruited through drop-in centres and outreach work. Two interviewer-administrated questionnaires were conducted with the recruited youth. One questionnaire asked about family history, lifestyle, demographics, attitudes and knowledge about risk factors, and sexual practices. The second questionnaire followed the results of the blood and urine samples collected from the participants. If these were positive for Sexually Transmitted Infections or Blood-Bourne Infections then a questionnaire regarding knowledge of barriers to partner notification was administered. Youth were permitted to participate in the survey only once per phase and over the three years of data collection 4,728 street youth were interviewed.

**Results of Interest:**

When the E-SYS evaluated street youth only, it was found that in 2003 about 76% of street youth reported consuming alcohol in the three months prior to the interview, 5 % reported drinking daily, and 40% of those who drank reported recent alcohol intoxication. The number of street youth reporting alcohol consumption in the three months prior to the survey (76%) was down from 80.6% in 1999 and 79.1% in 2001. Some of the most significant factors found to be associated with drinking for street youth included experiencing sexual and other types of abuse, involvement in the sex trade, having been to jail or in a detention centre, and having been expelled from or dropped out of school.

In comparison, in the 12 months prior to the Canadian Addiction Survey, 79.3% of Canadians aged 15 or older reported alcohol consumption, 14% were former drinkers (those who consumed alcohol in their lifetime but not in the past 12 months), and 7% were lifetime abstainers. Among the 15-24 year olds, 83% were current drinkers, 8%

were former drinkers, and 9% were abstainers. Among the current drinkers 13.8% reported heavy drinking at least once a week and 46% reported heavy drinking at least once a month.

### International

**Survey Name:** National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)

**Region:** United States

**Date:** 1971-Present (done yearly)

**Organization:** The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

**Contact Information:** Joel Kennet, Ph.D., National Study Director, Office of Applied Studies, DHHS/OAS/SAMHSA, 1 Choke Cherry Road, Room 7-1009, Rockville, MD 20857 e-mail: [Joel.Kennet@samhsa.hhs.gov](mailto:Joel.Kennet@samhsa.hhs.gov)  
<http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/nsduh.htm>

**Information for this Summary can be found at the following links:**

Report on the 2006 NSDUH survey

<http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/nsduh/2k6nsduh/2k6Results.pdf>

NSDUH Homepage

<https://nsduhweb.rti.org/>

#### **Background:**

The NSDUH is the primary source of statistical information on illegal drug use in the United States and has been in use by the Federal Government since 1971. The survey is sponsored by SAMSHA, the US Department of Health and Human Services, and is planned and managed by SAMSHA alone. This survey gathers information from households as well as non-institutional group quarters such as group homes and shelters, as well as military base civilians. The NSDUH, however, does not include the homeless population that does not use shelters, military personnel on active duty, or citizens in jails or hospitals.

The data collected from the NSDUH is used to provide national and state-level estimates of past month, past year, and lifetime substance use as well as to inform health professionals and governments on important trends and issues in substance use.

#### **Methods & Procedures:**

The NSDUH is a nationwide survey that involves interviewing approximately 70,000 randomly selected individuals aged 12 and older. Participants are randomly selected via their households. The households are selected and a professional field representative makes a personal visit to the household. The residents of the household answer a few preliminary questions and once these are complete one or two residents may be asked to complete the entire interview for the survey.

#### **Results of Interest:**

The NSDUH results show that the rate of current alcohol use among youth aged 12-13 years old was 3.9%, 14-15 years old was 15%, aged 16-17 years old was 29.7%, aged 18-20 years old was 51.6%, and aged 21-25 years old was 68.6%. Binge drinking among youth also increased as age increased with 15% of 12-13 year olds, 8.9% of 14-15 year olds, 20% of 16-17 year olds, 36.2% of 18-20 year olds, and 46.1% of 21-25 year olds reporting binge drinking. The rate of binge drinking peaked between the ages of 21-23 years old with 49.3% of 21-year olds, 48.9% of 22-year olds, and 47.2% of 23-year olds reporting binge drinking.

Heavy alcohol use was reported by 15.6% of 18-25 year olds which was similar to the rates reported in 2005. For youth aged 12-17 years old, current alcohol use was reported in 16.6% of this population, youth binge drinking was reported in 10.3% of this population, and heavy drinking was reported in 2.4% of this population. These rates were also on par with the results from the 2005 survey.

In 2006, approximately 10.8 million 12-20 year olds reported past month drinking (28.3% of this age group), approximately 7.2 million (19%) were binge drinkers, and 2.4 million (6.2%) were heavy drinkers. These results have remained reasonably the same since the 2002 survey. It was also found that among youth, more males than females aged 12-20 years old reported current alcohol use (29.2% vs. 27.4%), binge drinking (21.3% vs. 16.5%), and heavy drinking (7.9% vs. 4.3%).

## DISCUSSION

### **Key Findings:**

- Trends of alcohol use among youth are fairly consistent across Canada.
- Alcohol, Cannabis, and Tobacco are consistently ranked as the top three drugs used by youth in Canada.
- The largest increase in percentage of those reporting alcohol consumption occurs between grade 7 and grade 9.
- Across the country 26-30% of youth were considered frequent/hazardous drinkers.
- The age at which most youth reported their first experience of being intoxicated ranged from 12-13 years old.
- The amount of drinking in one year, month, week, or on a particular occasion all increase as age increases
- Little to no research is currently being conducted on the influence of alcohol promotion on youth alcohol consumption.
- The lack of change in the majority of trends found in youth alcohol use across Canada indicates that this problem is not being addressed to the extent it should be.

As explained in the introduction and methodology sections, ARAPO aimed to find leading Canadian research that investigated the relationship between alcohol promotion and alcohol consumption among youth. Due to limited Canadian studies on this topic, the methodology was changed to compile research on alcohol use among youth (beginning at grade 7) in Canada.

A review of the findings from various provincial surveys has illustrated some important trends seen in youth alcohol consumption patterns across all provinces. The most common substances used among youth were consistently found to be alcohol, cannabis, and tobacco. In each study, it was found that over half, 53 – 63%, of the youth surveyed reported past-year alcohol consumption. The use of alcohol among youth was found to increase with grade, with reported alcohol consumption being the lowest in grade 7 and highest in 12. While some surveys found that the rate of grade 7 students reporting past year alcohol consumption had declined slightly over the past 5 years, for the most part, alcohol consumption among youth has remained relatively stable. The most notable trend in past-year alcohol consumption among youth is that the largest increase in percentage of those reporting alcohol consumption occurs between grades 7 and 9, various surveys reported the increase to range from 18% to 34%.

Binge drinking is another issue that was addressed in most of these surveys. The rate of those who reported engaging in binge drinking ranged from 3% for (grade seven) to 48% for (grade 12) of those who reported past-year alcohol consumption.

Questions relating to frequency of alcohol consumption in the twelve months prior to completing the survey were posed. Much like the increase in alcohol consumption showed an increase as grade level increased so to did frequent drinking/ hazardous drinking. Of those who reported having consumed alcohol in the past year, 26-30% of youth across the country were considered frequent/hazardous drinkers. Of these frequent/hazardous drinkers, 48-100% drank more than monthly, 69-72% drank to the point of intoxication at least once in the month prior to the survey, and 73-94% reported having consumed five or more alcoholic beverages on one occasion.

A review of the National surveys leads to similar findings. With the exception of the street youth study, all these surveys found the majority of young Canadians below the legal drinking age had engaged in drinking, and as their age and grade increased so to did their drinking (in terms of percentage of students that consume alcohol). The studies also reveal that youth engage in smoking cigarettes and smoking marijuana. The National surveys are complementary to the more region-specific surveys of the provinces, showing that even when evaluated on a larger scale, trends in youth drinking remain consistent. The age at which most students reported having first experienced being intoxicated ranged from 12-13 years of age, and the amount of drinking in one year, month, week, or on a particular occasion all increase as age increases. Binge drinking, another serious trend among youth, also increases as age increases.

Research is being conducted in the United States to determine what affect alcohol advertising has on youth drinking and this, coupled with the above findings on youth consumption, suggests to the authors that this is a subject that needs to be pursued in Canada. In addition to American research leading the way, there are other reasons why pursuing Canadian research for alcohol promotion should persist. They include a growing concern from a public health perspective and, more recently, a public outcry for the regulation of food advertising to children, which at this point only speaks to “fast food” and carbonated beverages. Providing alcohol marketing research to an informed and concerned public makes sense and makes the argument for regulating advertisements stronger. Additionally, the National Alcohol Strategy Workgroup indicated in their proposed National Alcohol Strategy that alcohol promotion should be monitored. Moreover, the Nova Scotia alcohol strategy has a mandate to regulate alcohol promotion, which illustrates that this is regarded as an issue in other provinces.

In all the surveys reviewed, only the Canadian Campus Survey made mention of the affect of alcohol advertising on youth alcohol consumption rates. Question 27 (I), which measures students’ views on responsible advertising, asks students their thoughts on the following statement: “There should be more advertising against drinking...” Following that sub-question, Adlaf and colleagues asked if universities should “Ban advertisements of alcohol availability at campus events and parties...” The data from the two questions show that university students opinions about responsible advertising is neutral (43%) and that 50% of students either disagree or strongly disagree with a total ban on advertising alcohol and alcohol promotions on campus, while 34% are neutral on that topic. Of the 61 total questions, 29 ask about alcohol consumption and opinions on alcohol. The section on alcohol is the largest devoted to one issue.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Key Recommendations:**

1. Increase Research
2. Support the Proposed National Alcohol Strategy
3. Support the Proposed Provincial Alcohol Strategy
4. Maintain the Focus of Community Work

### **1. Increase Research**

In 2007, the National Alcohol Strategy Working Group submitted 41 recommendations in their publication titled *Reducing Alcohol-Related Harm in Canada: Toward a Culture of Moderation*. Recommendation #15 addresses a variety of different issues that need more attention, including developing a national coordinated data-collection system, having the determinants of health inform the direction of research, and collecting data on First Nations populations. Recommendation #30 states to, “Coordinate funding for research and publication of an annual report documenting the exposure of underage youth in Canada to alcohol advertising”. As Babor et al, explain in their 2003 publication, *Alcohol: No Ordinary Commodity*, “research in the area of alcohol advertising is likely to remain hotly contested- there is some evidence that marketing may have an impact on our youth”. As this is not a resounding claim that alcohol marketing leads to alcohol consumption, increased research in Canada is needed, taking a three-pronged approach:

- Nationally-focused research
- Provincially-focused research
- Locally-focused research.

A brief description below outlines possibilities for this approach.

- a. Nationally-focused research – Develop a national research initiative which could include a variety of research agencies, including but not limited to: Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (CCSA), Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR), Statistics Canada, Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA), and Health Canada. This initiative could include increasing knowledge on a variety of substance abuse issues related to public health, including alcohol advertising.
- b. Provincially-focused research – Most provinces and territories already engage in primary research of alcohol and substance abuse. However, a more concerted effort to have provinces commit to research of this issue with common time parameters to facilitate comparing data among provinces should be made. Professionals in public health, policy and research would then have access to current and meaningfully comparable data. The topics could include data that provinces already collect with additional research for alcohol advertising and its implication on consumption. This data may show the differences in how alcohol

is sold, distributed, and marketed in different provinces and territories and how these differences affect consumption rates and levels.

- c. Locally-focused research – Within each province / territory, an initiative to research the varying regions could be done by leading hospitals, universities and/or public health units. The local inter-provincial work may show differences in these locations. This work could inform public health units in that region as to where to focus some of their energy and resources for upcoming trends in substance abuse work.

## **2. Support the Proposed National Alcohol Strategy**

“In an age of consumerism, it behooves policy-makers to ensure that alcohol policies are fashioned with public health in mind” (Babor et al. 2003). In order for that statement to come to fruition, a concerted effort on the part of both the Federal and provincial / territorial governments needs to take the form of a guiding initiative similar to the National Alcohol Strategy (NAS) Workgroup’s 41 recommendations, specifically recommendation #31, which reads “Review existing advertising regulatory systems with a view to updating the standards, especially as they pertain to youth, as well as the mechanisms of receiving and responding to consumer complaints about alcohol advertising”.

The proposed national strategy utilizes the four pillars of health promotion; harm reduction, prevention, treatment, and enforcement. This approach incorporates services from a variety of sectors and also impacts many major themes surrounding alcohol, including but not limited to: taxation, minimum drinking age, distribution, promotion, education, treatment, and, arguably the most important, the modification of the context when consuming alcohol. As a result, significant differences can be made to the impacts of alcohol including: deaths and injuries sustained in vehicular crashes, apparent and hidden health care costs, and chronic disease incurred costs through consumption of alcohol.

Jurgen Rehm’s 2002 study, *The Cost of Substance Abuse in Canada*, takes a macro look at the burden of alcohol. “Alcohol represents more than one third of attributable costs to the economy with respect to all substances ingested. This cost is approximately 14.6 billion dollars or \$463 incurred to every man, woman, and baby in Canada” (CCSA, 2002). Rehm explains that the \$14 billion cost includes: direct health care costs, direct law enforcement costs, as well as indirect costs such as productivity losses in the workplace. Based on Rehm’s analysis of the economic burden of substance misuse to Canada, along with the success of the anti-smoking strategy both nationally and provincially, it is apparent that there is a real opportunity to address alcohol at a national level.

In September 2007, the Federal government released their new drug strategy. This strategy is a three-tiered approach aimed at “preventing illicit drug use, treating illicit drug use, and combating the production and distribution of illicit drug use”<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Government of Canada, National Anti-Drug Strategy [www.nationalantidrugstrategy.gc.ca.htm](http://www.nationalantidrugstrategy.gc.ca.htm), March 2008

Because the new *National Anti-Drug Strategy* only focuses on illegal drugs, efforts should be underway to address alcohol nationally based on current Canadian data which clearly shows the substantially higher burden of alcohol to illicit drugs. Carolyn Franklin, a senior advisor to the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse, noted that the support for the National Alcohol Strategy has gained momentum and that leading Federal and provincial organizations are taking the lead in 37 of the 41 recommendations<sup>4</sup> and include groups such as Health Canada, Ontario Public Health Association, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, and the Brewers Association of Canada. Additionally the Secretariat of the NAS will be contacting many stakeholders to discuss challenges, opportunities, and ways to work together to proceed in the implementation of the National Alcohol Strategies. Lastly, CCSA encourages the NAS secretariat and other jurisdictions to share ideas and other valuable information in the pursuit of a concerted national alcohol strategy.

### **3. Support the Proposed Provincial Alcohol Strategy**

While the need for a national alcohol strategy is imperative for a consistent front, so too is the development of provincial alcohol strategies. Public health units, community organizations, research institutes and other stakeholders in the substance use and misuse field need to strategize and coordinate their efforts with stakeholders from the other sectors that alcohol affects.

In Ontario, this is being done through the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health through the Health, Education and Enforcement in Partnership (HEP) initiative. This initiative can be referred to as the Proposed Ontario Drug Strategy. Although this strategy is in its infancy, the lead consultant, Reggie Caverson, presented preliminary information at the 5<sup>th</sup> annual Alcohol: No Ordinary Commodity Forum in March 2008. This presentation included advice for stakeholders such as: forming and communicating common messages, informing stakeholders from other leading provincial ministries of current work being done, and having a decisive action plan.

Many would agree that a provincial alcohol strategy is needed because it prioritizes a variety of topics and communicates with its citizens that these are the problems plaguing society. To illustrate, consider these statistics highlighted in Nova Scotia's strategy released in August 2007:

- 74-81 % of Nova Scotians are current alcohol drinkers
- Among all drinkers, the average number of drinks consumed in one sitting is 3.2
- Each year approximately 3,000 hospital admissions can be attributed to alcohol
- 230 deaths can be attributed to alcohol in Nova Scotia annually
- 52% of male and female students in grade 7,9,10, and 12 consumed alcohol in 2002
- 20% of Nova Scotians consume alcohol in a way that negatively impacts their health and well-being
- The total cost of alcohol on the province of Nova Scotia is \$419 million annually or \$443/ person

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<sup>4</sup> Carolyn Franklin's Presentation: *Update: National Alcohol Strategy*, presented at the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Alcohol: No Ordinary Commodity, March 2008.  
[http://www.apolnet.ca/resources/education/presentations/ANOC5\\_Shows/Franklin-ANOC5.pps](http://www.apolnet.ca/resources/education/presentations/ANOC5_Shows/Franklin-ANOC5.pps)

An important part of Nova Scotia's strategy is their plan to be proactive in addressing these issues. Nova Scotia is actively implementing many of its goals from its provincial alcohol strategy. When speaking of Ontario's alcohol strategy, Reggie Caverson, the lead consultant for the Ontario HEP initiative, notes that Ontario faces many similar challenges before a cohesive alcohol strategy much like the one found in Nova Scotia is implemented. Some of the challenges include:

- Limited provincial substance abuse data
- Silos among sectors
- No coordination of substance abuse efforts
- Mixed perspectives on harm reduction
- No provincial government leadership
- No commitment
- No funding
- Drug strategy not considered a priority

In addition to the challenges noted above by Caverson, she also included areas which need to be explored across Ontario communities in order to realize a province-wide alcohol strategy:

- Political will
- Leadership, sustainability, and funding
- Need for data
- Local issues that need to be addressed (FASD, safer bars, community support)
- Substances being addressed
- Wide range of sectors involved
- A balanced comprehensive approach<sup>5</sup>

Although the proposed Ontario Drug Strategy is in an initial phase, a resolute arrangement which includes all major issues surrounding alcohol and other drugs must be maintained. The work from research institutes, local health agencies, government and community groups will help move the proposed strategy to a realized strategy.

#### **4. Maintain the Focus of Community Work**

With the impact that substance use has on the health care system, the justice system, the education system, and a variety of others, it is not only important to acknowledge the work being done by grassroots organizations and but also that this work continue to be supported.

Working under health promotion theories and through a population health approach, the impact of 22 FOCUS resource sites throughout Ontario, the work being done by Parent Action on Drugs, Media Awareness Network, The Alcohol Policy Network, The Council On Drug Abuse, and The Ontario Drug Awareness Partnership along with Public Health

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<sup>5</sup> Reggie Caverson's Presentation: *Developing an Ontario Drug Strategy: Progress, Challenges, and Implications*, presented at the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Alcohol: No Ordinary Commodity, March 2008. [http://www.apolnet.ca/resources/education/presentations/ANOC5\\_Shows/Caverson-ANOC5.pps](http://www.apolnet.ca/resources/education/presentations/ANOC5_Shows/Caverson-ANOC5.pps)

Units across the province has a major impact on where the direction of substance use research is headed. The aforementioned community organizations have proven to be leaders within the context of their work. This work includes leading substance use educational and training sessions, informing national and provincial policy changes, and presenting leading research to substance use agencies. To maintain Canada's role as a country leading in health within a variety of different facets, the acknowledgement and maintenance of these grassroots organizations must be a primary focus to maintain high standards in health promotion in the substance use and misuse field.

## **CONCLUSION**

As the demand for more research on topics of public health increase, this demand also makes its way to issues on alcohol and other substances. Through the years, leading Canadian researchers have argued for a more regulated system for alcohol control. One aspect of alcohol control comes in the form of advertising regulation. However, there is virtually no current literature that examines the impact of alcohol advertising and alcohol consumption in Canada. There is current research that investigates this issue in the United States, which can be found in the appendix.

In light of the lack of research being done on alcohol promotion and its affect on youth, a push to commence this research has been recommended using a three-pronged approach: national research conducted by leading government agencies; provincial research that could include investigating alcohol promotion within the provincial parameters; and, local research initiatives that can focus on community-specific areas of interest.

The importance of supporting the National Alcohol Strategy Working Groups 41 recommendations was highlighted. Additionally, Nova Scotia's alcohol strategy has paved the way for other provinces to formulate their own provincial strategy, which, is currently being developed in Ontario.

Finally, while the move for more research and final strategies is advanced, the community-focused organizations must also be maintained. As the theoretical work in the form of research and strategies is created, the practical applications will ultimately be executed by regional health units and community organizations.

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**APPENDICES**

**Appendix A:** Alcohol Use in Motion Pictures and Its Relation with Early-Onset Teen Drinking

**Appendix B:** Does alcohol advertising promote adolescent drinking? Results from a longitudinal assessment

**Appendix C:** Early Adolescent Exposure to Alcohol Advertising and its Relationship to Underage Drinking

**Appendix D:** Effects of Alcohol Advertising Exposure on Drinking Among Youth

**Appendix E:** Saturated in Beer: Awareness of Beer Advertising in Late Childhood and Adolescence

**Appendix F:** Centre on Alcohol Marketing and Youth (CAMY)

**Appendix G:** Marin Institute: Alcohol Industry Watchdog

## APPENDIX A

**Study Name:** Alcohol Use in Motion Pictures and Its Relation with Early-Onset Teen Drinking

**Region:** New Hampshire and Vermont (US)

**Date:** January 2006

**Researchers:** James D. Sargent, Thomas A. Wills, Mike Stoolmiller, Jennifer Gibson, Frederick X. Gibbons

**Information for this Study can be found at the following link:**

[http://www.jsad.com/jsad/article/Alcohol Use in Motion Pictures and Its Relation with EarlyOnset Teen Drink/912.html](http://www.jsad.com/jsad/article/Alcohol%20Use%20in%20Motion%20Pictures%20and%20Its%20Relation%20with%20EarlyOnset%20Teen%20Drink/912.html) (abstract)

Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs Homepage <http://www.jsad.com/>

### **Background:**

The aim of this study was to further understand the relationship between alcohol consumption in popular movies and the effect this has on teen drinking patterns. The study assessed drinking in a sample of movies popular among contemporary youth and examined what impact exposure to these movies had on early-onset adolescent drinking in a randomly selected group of youth.

### **Methods & Procedures:**

The study surveyed 4,655 students with a longitudinal follow-up survey of those who originally reported themselves as non-drinkers. The students were aged 14-15 years old and were selected from 15 New Hampshire and Vermont schools. Each student was asked if he or she had seen the movies listed in the 50 movie collection that researchers had used to study alcohol use in motion pictures. Movie alcohol use and movie viewing by youth, along with alcohol use among the students was analyzed.

### **Results of Interest:**

This study reported that 92% of the movies in the movie sample depicted drinking. It was found that 23.1% of students in the sample reported having tried alcohol and 14% of the students who initially had reported being non-drinkers had tried alcohol by the time of the follow-up assessment. Evidence was also found to support the idea that higher exposure to movie alcohol use increased the risk of alcohol use.

**APPENDIX B**

**Study Name:** Does alcohol advertising promote adolescent drinking? Results from a longitudinal assessment.

**Region:** South Dakota, U.S.

**Date:** 2005

**Researchers:** Rebecca L. Collins, Ph.D., Phyllis L. Ellickson, Ph.D., Daniel F. McCaffrey, Ph.D., Katrin Hambarsoomians, M.S.

**Information for this Study can be found at the following link:**

[http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/15679753?ordinalpos=1&itool=EntrezSystem2.PEntrez.Pubmed.Pubmed\\_ResultsPanel.Pubmed\\_RVAbstractPlusDrugs1](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/15679753?ordinalpos=1&itool=EntrezSystem2.PEntrez.Pubmed.Pubmed_ResultsPanel.Pubmed_RVAbstractPlusDrugs1) (abstract)

PubMed Homepage <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/entrez/>

**Background:**

The purpose of this study was to further understand the relationship between exposure to alcohol advertising and its affect on drinking among US adolescents. The study also aimed to assess whether exposure to alcohol and drug prevention programs were helpful in mitigating any affects alcohol advertising has on youth drinking trends.

**Methods & Procedures:**

The relationship between exposure to alcohol advertising among grade 8 and 9 students were measured by first measuring alcohol awareness in these students when they were in grade 7 and the effects of intervention programs on aiding students to avoid drinking through the years. The study used students from 41 South Dakota schools and a total of 3,111 7<sup>th</sup> graders were followed through to grade 9. The students' exposures to four different advertising types were recorded; in-store displays, magazines, television advertising, and concession stands.

**Results of Interest:**

Among 7<sup>th</sup> grade non-drinkers, the study found that exposure to in-store beer displays predicted drinking onset by grade 9 and exposure to magazines with alcohol advertisements and to beer concession stands at sports or music events predicted frequency of grade 9 drinking. The study also found that participation in prevention programs helped reduce future drinking rates and also worked to counteract the effect of in-store beer displays.

### **APPENDIX C**

**Study Name:** Early Adolescent Exposure to Alcohol Advertising and Its Relationship to Underage Drinking

**Region:** South Dakota, US

**Date:** 2007

**Researchers:** Rebecca L. Collins, Ph.D., Phyllis L. Ellickson, Ph.D., Daniel F. McCaffrey, Ph.D., Katrin Hambarsoomians, M.S.

**Information for this Study can be found at the following link:**

<http://www.jahonline.org/article/PIIS1054139X07000250/fulltext>

Journal of Adolescent Health Homepage <http://www.jahonline.org/home>

#### **Background:**

The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not early adolescents who are exposed to alcohol marketing are subsequently more likely to drink. The question arose to the researchers after a review of previous studies revealed that exposure to alcohol has only a limited influence on mid-adolescent drinkers, while early adolescents may be more vulnerable to alcohol advertising effects.

#### **Methods & Procedures:**

Two surveys were administered in schools to 1,786 South Dakota youth. These surveys measured the exposure of the youth to television beer advertisements, alcohol ads in magazines, in-store beer displays and beer concessions, radio-listening time, ownership of beer promotional items during the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, and drinking intentions at the 7<sup>th</sup> grade.

#### **Results of Interest:**

Strong evidence showed that experience with alcohol advertising at the grade 6 level was strongly predictive of grade 7 drinking and grade 7 intentions to drink. It was also found that youth in the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of alcohol marketing exposure had a predicted probability of drinking that was 50% greater than that of youth in the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile.

**APPENDIX D**

**Study Name:** Effects of Alcohol Advertising Exposure on Drinking Among Youth  
**Region:** U.S.

**Date:** April 1999-February 2001

**Researchers:** Leslie B. Snyder, PhD; Frances Fleming Milici, PhD; Michael Slater, PhD; Helen Sun, MA; Yuliya Strizhakova, PhD

**Information for this Study can be found at the following link:**

<http://archpedi.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/full/160/1/18>

**Background:**

The purpose of this study was to better understand the affect of alcohol advertising on youth drinking rates. The premise was that the higher the amount spent on alcohol advertising, the higher the rates of youth alcohol use in a given area.

**Methods & Procedures:**

This was a longitudinal study conducted over the course of two years. Telephone interviews were conducted with 15-26 year olds living in households randomly selected from within the top 75 media markets in the US (representing approximately 79% of the US population). The telephone interviews were conducted in four waves, April-July 1999, December 1999-January 2000, May-June 2000, and December 2000-January 2001. Questions of self-reported exposure to alcohol advertisements and drinking patterns in the prior month were asked and answers were correlated against alcohol expenditure per capita in the respondent's media market in the prior month.

**Results of Interest:**

The general results of this study found that youth you saw more alcohol ads on average drank more alcoholic beverages (each additional advertisement seen increased the number of drinks the youth drank by 1%). Also, youths that lived in markets with greater alcohol advertising expenditures were found to have drank more then those in markets with less alcohol advertising expenditures, with each dollar spent per capita on alcohol advertising raising the number of drinks consumed by these youth by 3%. There was also evidence found to support the idea that alcohol advertising can influence youth to consume alcohol.

**APPENDIX E**

**Study Name:** Saturated in Beer: Awareness of Beer Advertising in Late Childhood and Adolescence

**Region:** South Dakota, US

**Date:** 2000

**Researchers:** Rebecca L. Collins, Ph.D., Phyllis L. Ellickson, Ph.D., Daniel F. McCaffrey, Ph.D., Katrin Hambarsoomians, M.S.

**Information for this Study can be found at the following link:**

[http://www.jahonline.org/article/S1054-139X\(04\)00459-8/abstract](http://www.jahonline.org/article/S1054-139X(04)00459-8/abstract) (abstract)

Journal of Adolescent Health Homepage <http://www.jahonline.org/home>

**Background:**

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of how much exposure youth in the region are subjected to and how much of it they comprehend. Exposure, response to, and awareness of Beer advertising was assessed among 4<sup>th</sup> graders and 9<sup>th</sup> graders with some specific focus in the survey on the Budweiser advertisement that uses lizards and an animated ferret.

**Methods & Procedures:**

The study surveyed 1,996 4<sup>th</sup> graders and 1,525 9<sup>th</sup> graders in South Dakota schools. The survey offered questions on several indicators of alcohol awareness, exposure, and response such as recognition, product naming, brand naming, and liking of stills of particular advertisements.

**Results of Interest:**

The survey found that 14% of 4<sup>th</sup> graders and 20% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders recognized at least 3-4 sample beer ads and 75% of 4<sup>th</sup> grades and 87% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders recognized the Budweiser ferret advertisement. Of these students, 1 in 3 4<sup>th</sup> graders, and more than 3 out of 4 9<sup>th</sup> graders could name Budweiser as the brand name that used this advertisement. The survey results also showed that 29% of 4<sup>th</sup> graders and 82% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders could list 3 or more beer brands. Although it was found that 9<sup>th</sup> grade students held more of a liking for the beer advertisements and paid more attention to them, the study suggested that 4<sup>th</sup> grade students actually experience more exposure to these advertisements.

**APPENDIX F**

**Organization Name:** Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth (CAMY)

**Region:** United States

**Contact:** Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth

Health Policy Institute

Georgetown University

Box 571444

3300 Whitehaven Street, N.W., Suite 5000

Washington, DC 20057-1485

Phone: 202.687.1019

Email: [info@camy.org](mailto:info@camy.org)

Website Address: <http://camy.org/>

**Background:**

The Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth (CAMY) is located at Georgetown University and focuses on monitoring the practices of the alcohol industry. It is because of the vast amount of research and work that CAMY does in the alcohol advertising field in the United States that it deserves a mention in this paper as an organization Canadian research should look towards following.

CAMY focuses its research on providing information that will allow for attention and action to be paid to the alcohol industry that jeopardize the health and safety of the youth in America. It is a strong focus of CAMY to reduce the rates of underage drinking and the suffering caused by alcohol-related injuries and death among young people. It is CAMY's belief that the key to reducing these overwhelmingly high rates of alcohol use and injury related to alcohol use among youth is to use the public health strategies to limit the access to and appeal of alcohol to underage persons.

## **APPENDIX G**

**Organization Name:** Marin Institute

**Region:** United States

**Contact:** 24 Belvedere Street

San Rafael, CA 94901

Phone: 415-456-5692

After-hours media contact: 415-548-0492

Fax: 415-456-0491

Email: [info@marininstitute.org](mailto:info@marininstitute.org)

Website Address: [http://www.marininstitute.org/about\\_us/contact.htm](http://www.marininstitute.org/about_us/contact.htm)

### **Background:**

Established in 1987, the Marin Institute works to reduce the impact of the alcohol industry and its negative practices on the public. The Marin Institute both monitors and works to expose the alcohol industry for improper/harmful actions in relation to their products, promotions and social influences.

The Marin Institute deserves a mention in this paper as it is a leader in research and advocacy for public policy in regards to alcohol advertising and serves as an example of what can be done in this field.

The following are some of the things the Marin Institute does for organizations and communities:

- 1) Help develop effective environmental prevention strategies
- 2) Get technical assistance on alcohol policy and media advocacy
- 3) Track alcohol industry advertising and promotion practices
- 4) Take action on hot alcohol policy issues and counter-marketing campaigns
- 5) Produce timely fact sheets, newsletters, community success stories and other resource tools

It is the Marin Institute's goal to free communities of the impact of the alcohol industry's negative influences and work towards creating an alcohol industry that does not harm the public's health.