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TRENDS IN STUDENT SMOKING GIVE REASON FOR CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM

The Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey

Current cigarette smoking among Ontario's middle school and secondary school student population has decreased by more than half in the past ten years and daily smoking by more than three-quarters during that time, according to recent findings from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health's Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey (OSDUHS). This Update provides findings on the extent and patterns of tobacco use among students from the most recent OSDHUS report, *Drug Use among Ontario Students, 1977-2009: Detailed OSDUHS Findings*.

OSDUHS is the longest-running ongoing school survey of adolescents in Canada, and the second longest in North America. Findings from the survey describe past year use of tobacco, alcohol, and illicit drugs, the non-medical use of prescription drugs, and monitor changes since 1977. A total of 9,112 students (65% of selected students) in grades 7 to 12 from 47 school boards across the province participated in the 2009 OSDUHS. All data are based on self-reports derived from anonymous questionnaires administered in classrooms between November 2008 and June 2009.

Past Year Cigarette Smoking

- Approximately 12% (119,600) of students in grades 7 to 12 across Ontario reported past year smoking (95% CI: 11%-13%) in 2009. While there was no significant change in past year smoking since 2007, smoking has declined dramatically since 1999, when about 28% of students reported smoking in the past year.
- Males were more likely to smoke in the past year than females (13% vs. 11%).
- Smoking increased with grade (Figure 1).
- Smoking was most likely in the Northern region of the province (Figure 2).

Daily Smoking

- Approximately 5% (52,500) of students across Ontario smoked one or more cigarettes daily in the past year (95% CI: 4%-6%) (Figure 1). There was no difference between male and female students.
- Daily smoking increased with grade until grade 11, when it leveled off.
- Daily smoking varied substantially by region, ranging from almost 2% in Toronto to over 9% in the Northern Region (Figure 2).

While there was no significant increase in daily smoking since 2007, the 2009 rate was less than one-quarter of that found in 1999, when approximately 22% of students reported smoking daily.

Figure 1: Past Year and Daily Cigarette Smoking (%), 1999 and 2009, OSDUHS

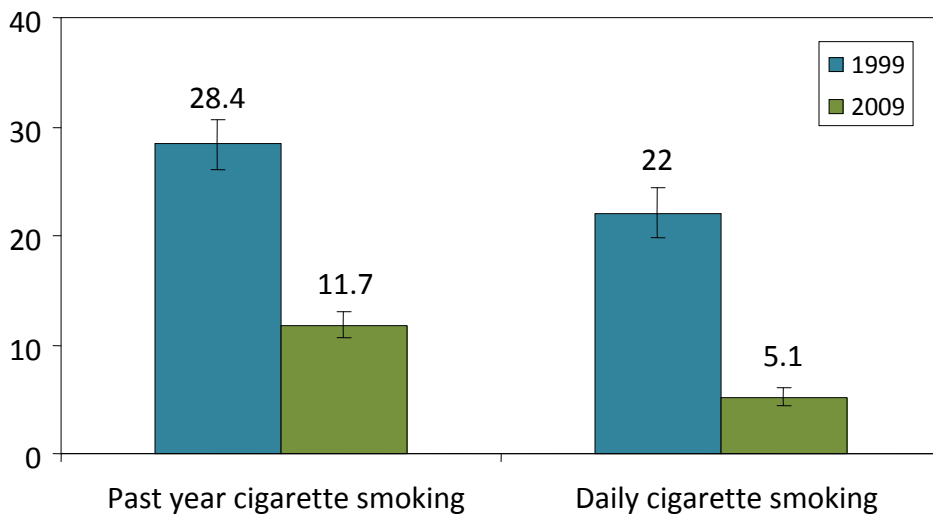
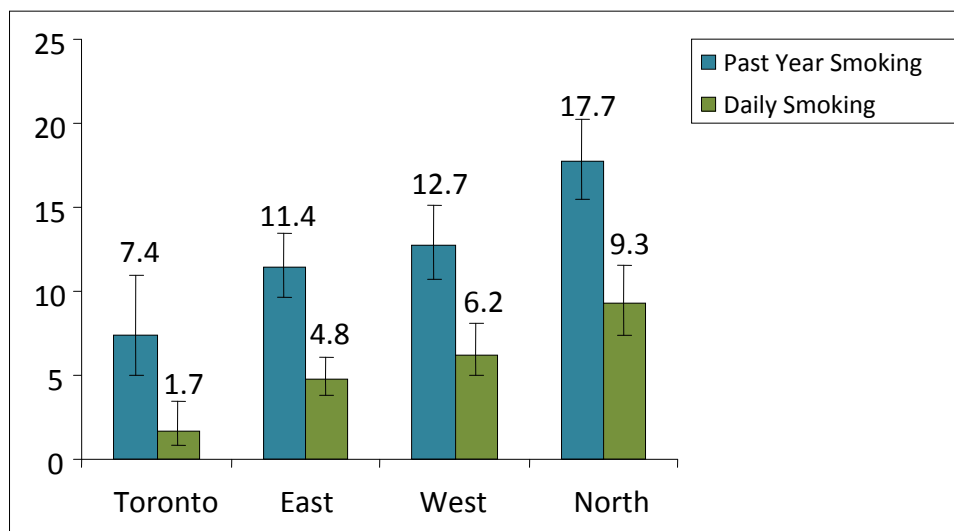


Figure 2: Past Year and Daily Cigarette Smoking (%) by Region, 2009, OSDUHS



Acknowledgement

The 2009 OSDUHS drug use report was authored by Angela Paglia-Boak, Robert Mann, Edward Adlaf and Jürgen Rehm. The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health is a co-sponsor of the Ontario Tobacco Research Unit.

Reference

Paglia-Boak, A, Mann, RE, Adlaf, EM, & Rehm, J. *Drug Use among Ontario Students, 1977-2009: Detailed OSDUHS Findings*. (CAMH Research Document Series No. 27). Available at: <http://www.camh.net/Research/osdus.html>