Drug Prevalence Survey of Secondary School Students

A comparison report of three Caribbean Countries: Barbados, Belize and Guyana

Organization of American States (OAS)
Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD)
Statistical Area - Inter-American Observatory on Drugs (OID)
Inter-American Uniform Drug Use Data System (SIDUC)

Organization of American States

2003

Drug Prevalence Survey of Secondary School Students: A Comparison Report For Selected Countries in The English Speaking Caribbean

Analysis of use of any illicit drug

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1. Introduction

Over the past several decades, there have been dramatic changes in the health of adolescents throughout the Caribbean, characterized by the consequences of high-risk behaviours evolving as the major causes of death and disability during the teen years. These behaviours include, amongst others, increased sexual activity, violence and drug use, the latter incorporating the use of alcohol and cigarettes.

To address the needs of these young persons more effectively, the focus must be shifted away from the consequences of such behaviours, acute illness and the provision of clinical and other treatment services, toward health promotion and risk reduction at the individual and community level.

The Caribbean drug problem is defined by its role in the transhipment of drugs from the major drug-producing nations in South America to the lucrative markets of North America. While there is some production taking place within certain jurisdictions, namely marijuana from Jamaica and in much smaller quantities in some of the other islands, this amount is insignificant when compared to the quantities transiting through its borders.

This increase in trafficking has resulted in an increase in the availability of drugs, and not surprisingly, recognizable adverse consequences that affect all segments of the respective societies. While treatment facilities still deal with the tip of the iceberg in the problem users of marijuana, cocaine and alcohol, the large majority of users from throughout the usage spectrum remain outside the scope of services currently offered. These include the experimental users that previous research within the Caribbean has shown include the secondary school student population, as well as the chronic abusers that commit crimes to feed their habits.

Additionally, several new developments have both supply and demand reduction professionals concerned. These include the introduction of ecstasy to the Caribbean drug scene, the production of high quality heroin in South America that does not require the use of needles, previously believed to serve as a disincentive, and the widespread use of methamphetamine in North America with highs comparable to that of crack cocaine but available at a cheaper price. This is combined with the accepted fact that there is very little objective data routinely collected that will allow for the early identification of any new drugs, changes in usage patterns, and information on the impact of these drugs, thereby denying planners the kind of information required to ensure a timely and appropriate response.

As a result, and as a part of the Inter-American Drug Use Data System (SIDUC), in July 2001 the Statistics Area of the Inter-American Observatory on Drugs (OID) began the program of periodic surveys of secondary school students, to provide countries in the Hemisphere with just such information, as recommended by the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM). The collection of this data on a consistent basis will provide

benchmarks, the basis of programme evaluations, and will assist tremendously in ensuring that moneys spent and efforts expended are achieving the desired effect.

It is expected that the surveys will be conducted every two years. To ensure that this goal indeed becomes reality, the responsibility and effort of authorities in the countries participating in this program cannot be overstated. The program was primarily designed to expand the level of understanding of the status of a complex problem, drug use, through the conduct of surveys that make it possible to statistically pinpoint drug use and relate it to other risk and/or protective factors from the perspective of the adolescents themselves. However, for this first round of surveys, countries are expected to also take the opportunity to build their respective research capacities in preparation for subsequent rounds.

This report represents the synthesis of findings from across three of the five surveys funded by the OAS and conducted in the English-speaking Caribbean Region using the SIDUC standardized methodology. This included the selection of a probability sample of students with similar ages and grade levels and employed the use of the same questionnaire, definitions, collection method and tabulation plan in the different countries. Countries included in this report are Belize, Barbados and Guyana.

CICAD and each of the National Drug Commissions worked together to implement the initial surveys, which targeted those students enrolled in grades 8, 10 and 12 in both public and private secondary schools. In this report, forms 2, 4 and 6 will be used synonymously with grades 8, 10 and 12. Given the characteristics of this type of study, two-phased, stratified samples were designed by clusters.

The surveys collected data on the use of the following drugs: tobacco; alcohol; tranquilizers; stimulants; marijuana; cocaine hydrochloride; crack cocaine; coca paste; ecstasy; methamphetamines; hallucinogens; heroin; opium; morphine; and inhalants. For this report, while the focus is primarily on the use of “any illicit drug”, abbreviated sections are presented for the more prevalent of the substances, namely alcohol, cigarettes and marijuana. For this purpose, the variable “any illicit drug”, which was not a question included in the questionnaire, was created to obtain an overall assessment of drug use. It was the result of a process developed in the data processing stage and encompassed the use of solvents and inhalants, marijuana, hashish, hallucinogens, heroin, opium, morphine, cocaine hydrochloride, coca paste, crack, ecstasy, methamphetamines, and “other drugs”.

Use of these drugs were measured through three indicators:

1. Lifetime prevalence, which is the percentage of the targeted population that had used drugs at least once in their lifetime;
2. Prevalence in the last year, which is the percentage that had used drugs one or more times in the 12 months preceding the survey; and
3. Prevalence in the last month, which is the percentage of the population that had used drugs one or more times in the 30 days immediately preceding the survey.

Lifetime prevalence is generally considered an indicator of the level of experimental drug use while use in the past 30 days is indicative of current use. This is the case even though drug use during a specified time period only indicates that a student used an illicit drug at least once and, as such, this use may have been experimental, sporadic or continuous, as a result of a dependence.

Additionally, the survey also examined average age of first use, ease of access to drugs, perceived risk of drug use and other related variables.

Given the sensitivity of the topic and the tendency to conceal drug use due in part to its illicit status and because of low social tolerance, the research methodology was geared towards protecting confidentiality in order to encourage the youth to give honest responses. No names were included on the surveys and teachers were not allowed to administer the questionnaires. Instead, questionnaires were administered by persons trained to give consistent instructions and guidance. Nonetheless, there will remain those sceptics that, under any circumstances, would not tell the truth and so the figures obtained should be considered a minimum estimate for the purposes of planning prevention programs.

2. Analysis of Findings

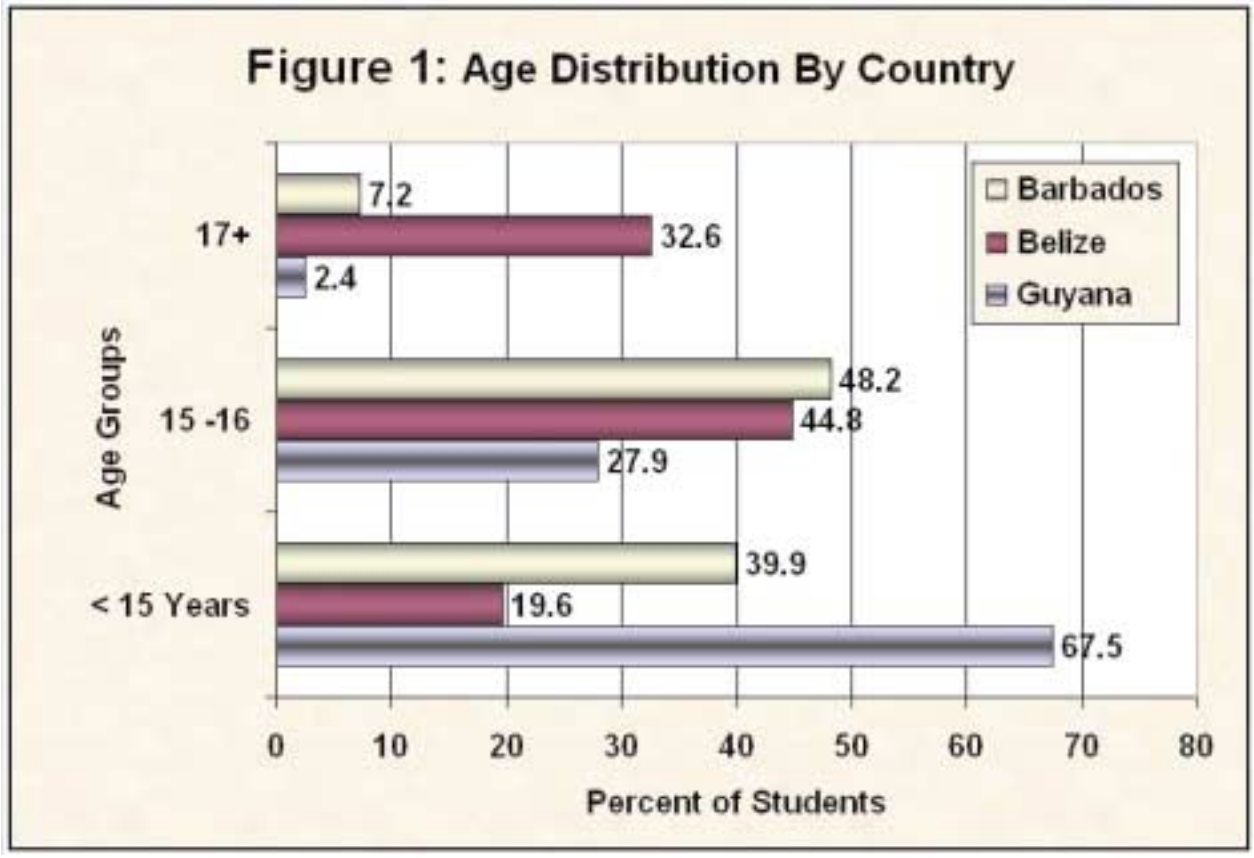
2.1. Student Demographics

Table 1: Student Demographics

Demographic Indicators	Barbados	Belize	Guyana
Number of students Sampled	2178	1731	2869
Age Distribution			
< 15 years	39.9	19.6	67.5
15 - 16	48.2	44.8	27.9
17+	7.2	32.6	2.4
No data	4.8	2.9	2.1
Grade Level			
2nd Form	33.1	63.1	59.6
4th Form	41.6	36.9	36.8
5th or 6th Form	25.4	0	3.6
Gender			
Female	53.4	49.0	52.9
Male	45.4	49.9	46.2
No data	1.1	1.0	0.9
Type of Family			
Father and mother	36.0	59.0	49.9
Father or mother	47.0	20.9	29.9
Parent and step-parent	6.6	9.5	8.6
Other	10.0	8.3	10.5
No data	0.5	2.4	1.0
Type of School			
Public	91.3	44.5	100.0
Private	8.7	0	0
Other	0	55.5	0

As Table 1 shows, the age distributions of the samples from the 3 countries were vastly different and must be taken into consideration during comparisons of prevalence rates. This is clearly illustrated in Figure 1, where it can be seen that while almost two-thirds of the students from Guyana were less than 15 years of age, in Barbados and Belize only 4 of 10 (39.9%) and 2 of 10 (19.6%), respectively, fell in this age category. Conversely, while only a few students from Barbados (7.2%) and Guyana (2.4%) were in the 17 and over category, almost one-third (32.6%) of those from Belize were in this age category.

Figure 1



The students included in these surveys were sampled from the three targeted grades in Barbados and Guyana but was limited to just two grade levels in Belize. The distributions by grade levels did not closely reflect those by age in either Barbados or Belize and only slightly in Guyana. As Table 1 reveals, in Barbados the students sampled were almost equally distributed across the 3 grade levels, while for Belize and Guyana, approximately 6 of 10 were in the youngest cohort sampled from forms 2 or grade 8.

The overall distribution by gender was comparable across the 3 countries with males making up 45.4%, 49.9% and 46.2% in Barbados, Belize and Guyana, respectively.

Information was also gathered on the family structure of the students as it has been shown that children from two-parent households are less likely to be involved in risky behaviours than students from other households. As can be seen in Table 1, Barbados had the lowest percentage of two-biological-parent households with 36%. Belize had the highest percentage with approximately 6 of every 10 students from such households followed by Guyana with 1 of every 2.

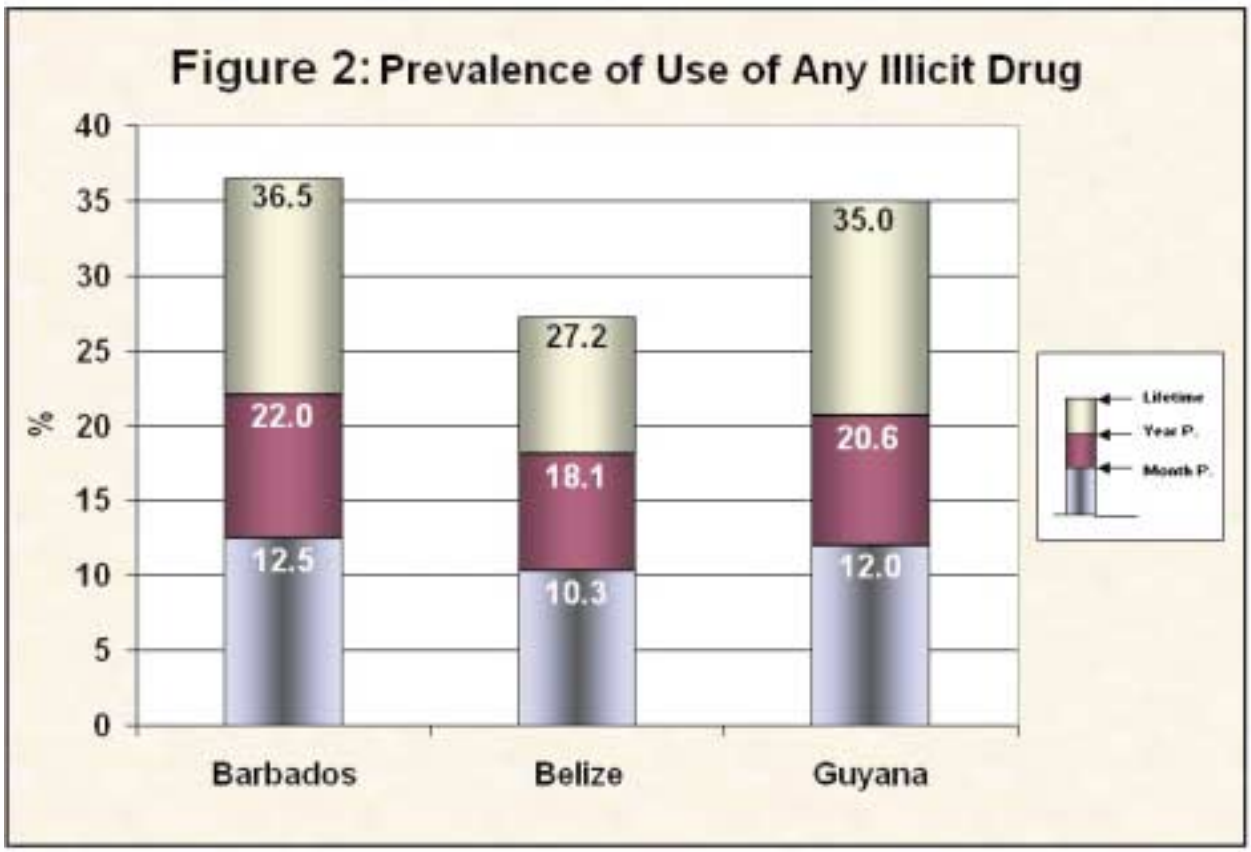
Information on the type of school was obtained, as it is believed that students from private schools may have more expendable cash available to them, which would allow for the purchase of drugs. The distribution of the samples by type of school varied considerably. All of the Guyanese students were from public schools while in Barbados and Belize the public school students accounted for 91.3% and 44.5%, respectively.

2.2. Prevalence of Any Illicit Drug Use

2.2.1. Prevalence of Illicit Drug Use and Age of First Use

The highest figures for illicit drug use for all three of the prevalence indicators were found among students from Barbados; closely followed by those from Guyana. Approximately 1 of every 3 students from both Barbados (36.3%) and Guyana (35.1%) had experimented with at least one illicit drug, followed by approximately 1 of every 4 students in Belize (27.5%). Additionally, more of the students from these two countries seem to remain current drug users, although not by much. The prevalence rates for the use of any illicit drug in the past month were 12.5%, 10.3% and 12.0% for Barbados, Belize and Guyana, respectively (Figure 2).

Figure 2



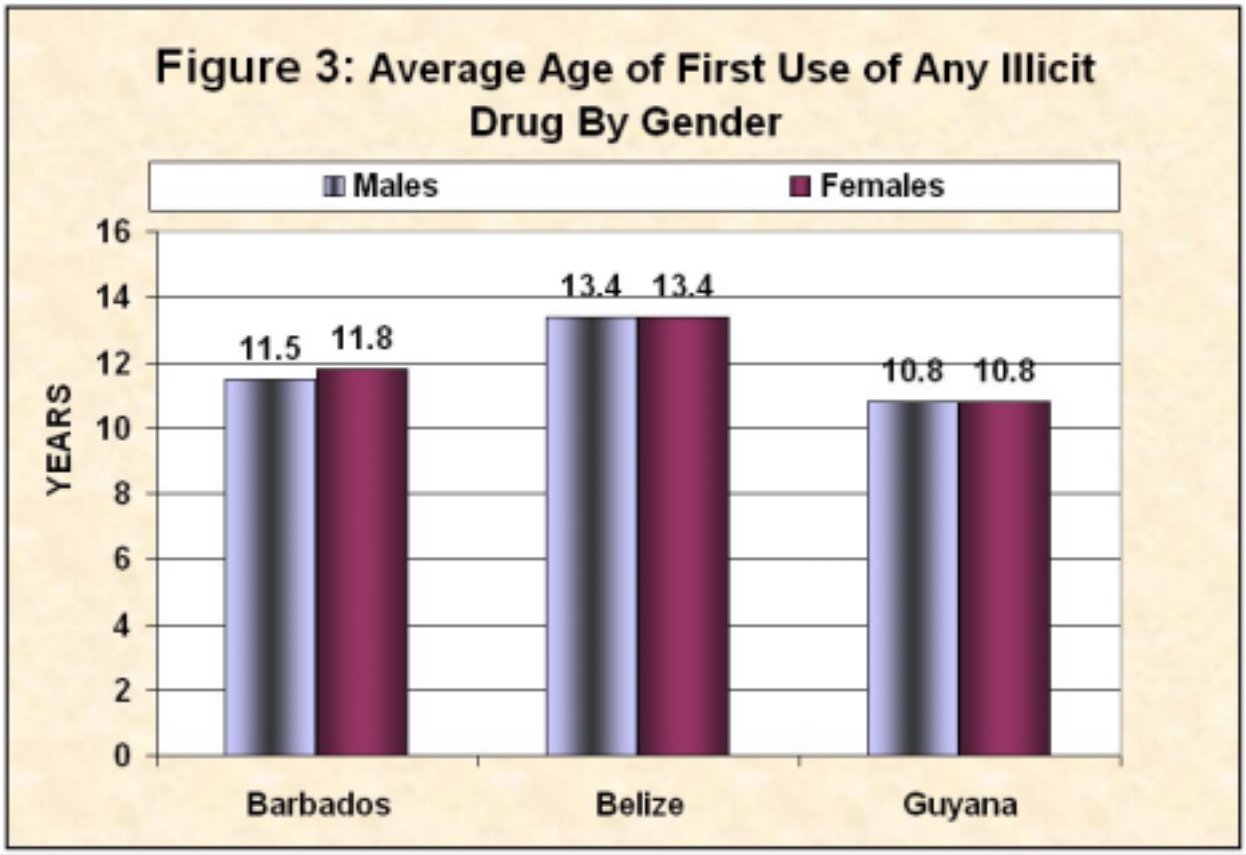
As the term “any illicit drug” use encompasses the use of a number of drugs, the figures for prevalence of this particular indicator is determined by the level of use of each of the individual drugs that were used in its synthesis. As Tables A1 and A2 reveal, the primary contributor to this indicator for all three countries is marijuana. Additionally, there were high levels of solvent and/or inhalant use for Barbados and Guyana, and also high levels of tranquilliser use in Guyana and Belize.

The commencement of illicit drug use, on average, began earlier in Guyana than in either of the other two countries. Guyanese students began using at an average age of 10.8 years. The students in Belize who did use illicit drugs delayed their initiation the longest, beginning at the average age of 13.4 years (Table A3).

As Table A3 shows and Figure 3 also illustrates, surprisingly there were no major differences in the average age at first use based on gender in any of these countries.

One of the commonly hypothesized paths to illicit drug use is via the gateway phenomena, where it is believed that users commence with the legal substances such as cigarettes and alcohol prior to experimenting with the illicit substances such as marijuana and cocaine. Results revealed some evidence of this for both male and female students in Barbados and Belize, where the use of alcohol and cigarettes commenced an average of 1-2 years earlier than the average age of first use for both marijuana and cocaine (Table A3).

Figure 3



Another surprise finding was that while both Barbados and Guyana are two major rum producing countries, where it can be assumed that the cultures are more receptive to alcohol use, there was no major country differences in the average age of first use for

alcohol. Alcohol use for students in these countries commenced about a year earlier than it did in Belize (Table A3).

The surveys also revealed evidence that the age of first illicit drug use is getting progressively younger with subsequent cohorts of students in each of the countries; a finding that may require authorities to rethink the age when students are introduced to prevention programs. However, this distinction is not so clear after the 10th grade as students at this level appear to have begun using at the same age as those in the higher grades (Table A4).

The information on average age of first use is also important, as there is a known direct correlation between early first use and the intensity of future use that can lead to dependence. Utilizing use in the past month (current use) as an indicator of intensity, the average age of first use of any illicit drug for persons who had used in the past month, by grade and gender (Tables A5, A6), was compared to the overall average age of first illicit drug use (Tables A3, A4) of similar groups. While the age of initiation for the current users were slightly lower than the overall average age at initiation in each country, at each grade level and for each sex with few exceptions, these differences were small.

2.2.2. Prevalence of Illicit Drug Use By Gender

In an attempt to better describe and understand the drug phenomena, the general data on the various indicators of prevalence were looked at in relationship to a number of other variables that are known to be associated with drug use.

Results for prevalence by gender are shown in Table 2. In Belize, the prevalence in males for all 3 indicators was approximately double that of females. In Barbados, the prevalence of any illicit drug use was lower in females than it was for males for all 3 indicators, however, these differences were small. In Guyana, while there was an obvious increase in the level of illicit drug usage for males for lifetime use, for both use in the past year and in the past month the prevalence rate for females could be considered as equal to that of their male counterparts.

Table 2: Prevalence Of Use Of Any Illicit Drug, By Gender

Country	Gender	Lifetime Prevalence	Prevalence in the last year	Prevalence in the last month
Barbados	Females	35.0	20.1	10.5
	Males	38.5	24.2	14.7
	Total	36.5	22.0	12.5
Belize	Females	19.0	12.4	6.6
	Males	35.2	23.7	13.9
	Total	27.2	18.1	10.3
Guyana	Females	31.9	20.0	12.0
	Males	39.0	21.5	11.9
	Total	35.0	20.6	12.0

In comparing the usage rates across countries, female students from Belize had the lowest rates for all 3 indicators, with illicit drug use rates in the past month almost one-half that observed in Guyana, who had the highest rates. For males, while less students in Belize experimented with illicit drugs, a larger proportion of those who did continued to use, resulting in male students from Belize being second only to those from Barbados for prevalence within the 30 days immediately preceding the surveys.

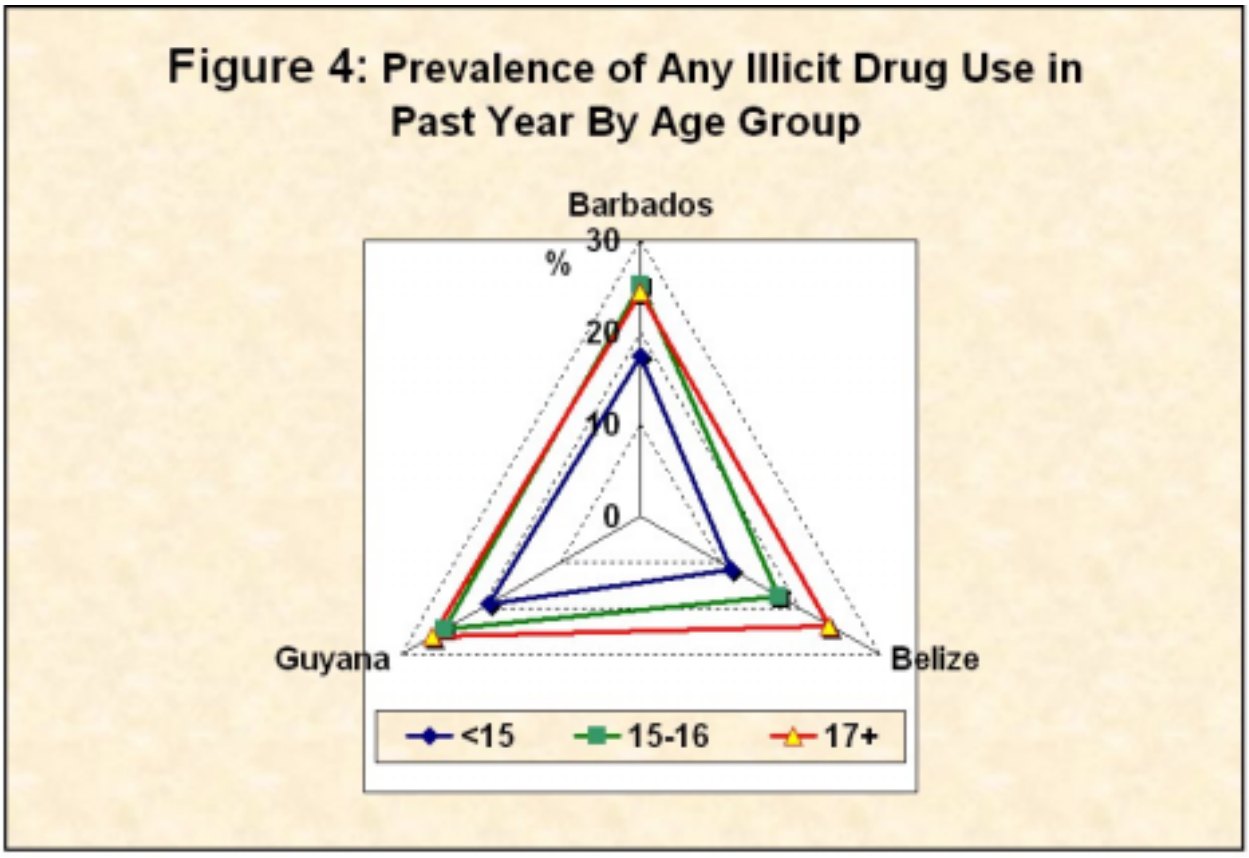
2.2.3. Prevalence of Illicit Drug Use By Age

In addition to the age of first use, the prevalence of use by age is also an important indicator for prevention specialists, as it speaks to the impact of efforts at various stages in the students' development. Results revealed that drug use for all three indicators was positively associated with age, increasing as age increased. The exception was Barbados where for those students in the 15-16 years age group, usage rates of illicit drugs for all three indicators were equal to or slightly greater than those in the oldest age category, 17 years and above. For the other 2 countries, as age increased, so did the prevalence for all 3 indicators (Table 3). The table also shows that students under the age of 15 years in Barbados (29.8%) and Guyana (32.7%) were far more likely to experiment with illicit drugs than those in Belize (18.9%). Country differences in the 17 years and over group were not so obvious for lifetime use.

Table 3: Prevalence Of Use Of Any Drug Among Students, By Age Groups

Country	Age	Lifetime Prevalence	Prevalence in the last year	Prevalence in the last month
Barbados	<15	29.8	17.4	9.3
	15 to 16	41.3	25.1	14.4
	17 and over	39.1	24.4	13.5
	Total	36.5	22.0	12.5
Belize	<15	18.9	11.5	5.0
	15 to 16	25.6	17.3	10.7
	17 and over	35.2	23.7	13.1
	Total	27.2	18.1	10.3
Guyana	<15	32.7	19.1	11.0
	15 to 16	40.1	24.5	14.5
	17 and over	44.9	26.1	15.9
	Total	35.0	20.6	12.0

Figure 4



This is depicted more clearly in Figure 4 where, it can be seen that for use in the past year, the age-specific lines approach the perimeter as age increased, with the exception for the students from Barbados. A further analysis by gender and age revealed that this anomaly observed in Barbados was apparent for either males, females or both males and females in several of the prevalence indicators (Table A7). The increase in use with increasing age was more consistent for both genders in the other two countries.

2.2.4. Prevalence of Illicit Drug Use By Grade

On comparing grade levels to age groups, Table 1 reveal that while no students from forms 5 or 6 were included in the Belize survey, that country had the highest percentage of persons age seventeen years or older. As a result, comparisons by grade with Belize will, in actual fact, be comparing persons of different ages, which could significantly affect the outcome. Hence, grade-level comparisons with Belize were limited.

Nonetheless, as the results presented in Table 4 shows, this association mirrored that observed previously for age in each of the countries. For each of the three indicators for both the group of students from Belize and Guyana, as grade level increased, so did the prevalence rates. As it was observed for age, the prevalence for Bajan students

increased up to grade 10, and then fell off resulting in lower prevalence rates for students in the highest grade for each indicator. This was consistent for both genders (Table A8). With respect to the youngest cohort, the Grade 8 students, those from Guyana had the highest prevalence rates of the three countries, although closely followed by Barbados. This was observed not only for all three indicators of prevalence overall, but also in both sexes for each of the three indicators. This was also the case for those in the highest grade.

Table 4: Prevalence Of Use Of Any Drug Among Students, By Grade

Country	Grade	Lifetime Prevalence	Prevalence in the last year	Prevalence in the last month
Barbados	Grade 8	29.6	16.9	9.6
	Grade 10	41.8	25.7	15.4
	Grade 12	37.1	22.4	11.8
	Total	36.5	22.0	12.5
Belize	Grade 8	23.5	14.8	8.8
	Grade 10	33.5	23.7	12.9
	Total	27.2	18.1	10.3
Guyana	Grade 8	33.3	19.0	10.8
	Grade 10	36.5	22.2	13.1
	Grade 12	48.1	31.7	20.2
	Total	35.0	20.6	12.0

2.2.5. Prevalence of Illicit Drug Use By Type of School

Differences in prevalence rates based on school type were only observed in Barbados and were only evident for use in the past year and past month. Surprisingly, while students from the two systems were equally likely to try an illicit drug at least once in their life, students in the public school system were more likely to continue using as evident by use in the past year and past month. For use in the past month, 13 of every 100 students from the Public School system had used an illicit drug as compared to only 8 of every 100 from the private school system (Table 5).

Table 5: Prevalence Of Use Of Any Illicit Drug Among Students, By Type Of School

Country	Type of School	Lifetime Prevalence	Prevalence in the last year	Prevalence in the last month
Barbados	Public	36.6	22.6	13.0
	Private	36.0	15.3	7.9
	Total	36.5	22.0	12.5
Belize	Public	27.7	18.1	10.6
	Other	26.8	18.1	10.0
	Total	27.2	18.1	10.3
Guyana	Public	35.0	20.6	12.0

2.2.6. Prevalence of Illicit Drug Use By Behavioural Problems

In each of the countries, although less obvious in Guyana, there was an association observed between illicit drug use and behavioural problems (Table 6). The more likely persons were to have been disciplined for behavioural problems, the more likely they were to have used an illicit drug at least once in their life, in the past year and in the past month. In addition, for both Barbados and Belize, as illicit drug use became more current, from lifetime use to use in the past 30 days, the differential between those who had never been disciplined and those who had been disciplined several times, increased. In the group of students from Barbados and Belize, the most frequently disciplined groups were approximately 4 times and 5 times, respectively, more likely to have used an illicit drug in the past year than those who were never disciplined.

This trend was evident for both males and females, and indicated that in screening for high risk students to prevent risky behaviours, females with behavioural problems cannot be ignored (Table A9).

Table 6: Prevalence Of Use Of Any Illicit Drug Among Students, By Behaviour

Country	Discipline Problems	Lifetime Prevalence	Prevalence in the last year	Prevalence in the last month
Barbados	No data	40.0	22.5	13.8
	Never	29.4	16.0	8.3
	Once	39.0	21.7	11.5
	Several Times	64.1	49.8	33.1
	Total	36.5	22.0	12.5
Belize	No data	26.2	16.7	16.7
	Never	18.3	10.3	5.2
	Once	34.8	24.3	11.9
	Several Times	49.6	38.3	26.6
	Total	27.2	18.1	10.3
Guyana	No data	29.1	18.2	8.2
	Never	33.0	19.1	10.7
	Once	34.8	19.0	11.0
	Several Times	38.7	24.0	14.8
	Total	35.0	20.6	12.0

2.2.7. Prevalence of Illicit Drug Use By Academic Performance

As previously observed in other hemispheric secondary school drug prevalence studies, there was an obvious association observed between drug use and repeating courses or grade levels in school. The use of drugs is known to affect attention span, the level of concentration and memory, all of which can hinder performance and increase the likelihood of repeating grades or courses.

Drug prevalence based on whether students had ever repeated a grade or course or not reflected the results for discipline in each of the 3 countries. As Table 7 shows, as the frequency of having repeated increased, so did the likelihood of having used an illicit substance at least once in their life, in the past year and in the past 30 days. No differences were observed in any of the drug prevalence indicators between these two groups in Guyana.

These differences were observed for both males and females in Barbados and Belize for all 3 prevalence indicators, with the exception of lifetime use for males in Barbados (Table A10).

Obviously, special attention must be given to teens experiencing academic difficulties, inclusive of intensive drug prevention education.

Table 7: Prevalence Of Use Of Any Illicit Drug Among Students, By Academic Performance

Country	Repetition of Academic years	Lifetime Prevalence	Prevalence in the last year	Prevalence in the last month
Barbados	No data	45.1	28.0	18.3
	None	35.5	20.9	11.7
	One or more years	39.7	27.5	15.9
	Total	36.5	22.0	12.5
Belize	No data	25.0	15.5	10.7
	None	22.6	15.4	8.2
	One or more years	35.0	22.8	13.7
	Total	27.2	18.1	10.3
Guyana	No data	21.8	15.0	7.5
	None	35.0	20.8	12.2
	One or more years	37.8	21.2	12.1
	Total	35.0	20.6	12.0

2.2.8. Prevalence of Illicit Drug Use By Type of Family

Results revealed a clear protective effect when both father and mother were present as compared to other family structures. This was evident for all countries and all prevalence indicators with the exception of use in the past year and past month for Guyana (Table 8).

Table 8: Prevalence Of Use Of Any Illicit Drug Among Students, By Type Of Family

Country	Type of family	Lifetime Prevalence	Prevalence in the last year	Prevalence in the last month
Barbados	Father and mother	32.5	18.4	9.4
	Father or mother	37.9	22.9	13.3
	Stepfather or stepmother	39.9	24.5	13.3
	Other	43.1	28.7	18.1
	Total	36.6	22.0	12.4
Belize	Father and mother	24.2	15.1	8.1
	Father or mother	27.7	17.0	9.8
	Stepfather or stepmother	31.7	27.3	17.4
	Other	39.4	31.0	16.9
	Total	27.0	18.1	10.1
Guyana	Father and mother	33.7	20.6	11.6
	Father or mother	35.5	20.8	13.1
	Stepfather or stepmother	37.7	20.1	12.7
	Other	38.5	22.0	10.1
	Total	35.1	20.7	12.0

For the indicator use in the last month, in both Barbados and Belize the prevalence for those in the “other” type of family group was approximately double the prevalence in the group where both father and mother were present.

The protective effect that the presence of both the father and mother had was observed for both males and females and for all 3 indicators in Barbados and Belize, but only for lifetime use in Guyana (Table A11).

2.2.9. Prevalence of Illicit Drug Use By Civil Status of Parents

It has been hypothesized and in some cases observed that disruptions in family life such as the separation or divorce of parents or simply being brought up in a single parent household with less supervision could lead to an increase in illicit drug use.

Table 9 reveals that students from families where parents are either separated or divorced holds a consistently greater risk of illicit drug use when compared to children from parents who are married. Additionally, for the three indicators in Barbados and for current use in Belize and Guyana, increased use of drugs was also seen in students from single parent homes.

Table 9: Prevalence Of Any Illicit Drug Use By Parents' Marital Status

Country	Parents Marital Status	Lifetime Prevalence	Last year prevalence	Last month prevalence
Barbados	Married	31.1	19.0	9.6
	Separated, divorced	37.7	22.1	12.4
	Widow(er)	30.4	19.6	4.4
	Living together	34.1	18.8	11.8
	Singles	41.1	24.3	14.2
	Total	35.8	21.3	11.7
Belize	Married	25.2	16.7	8.7
	Separated, divorced	33.9	22.6	14.2
	Widow(er)	32.9	25.0	7.9
	Living together	22.5	13.3	8.0
	Singles	23.2	18.8	13.0
	Total	27.1	18.0	10.0
Guyana	Married	34.7	20.8	11.4
	Separated, divorced	41.2	25.3	15.3
	Widow(er)	38.8	28.8	16.3
	Living together	31.1	15.8	10.4
	Singles	35.4	19.6	12.2
	Total	35.6	20.9	12.3

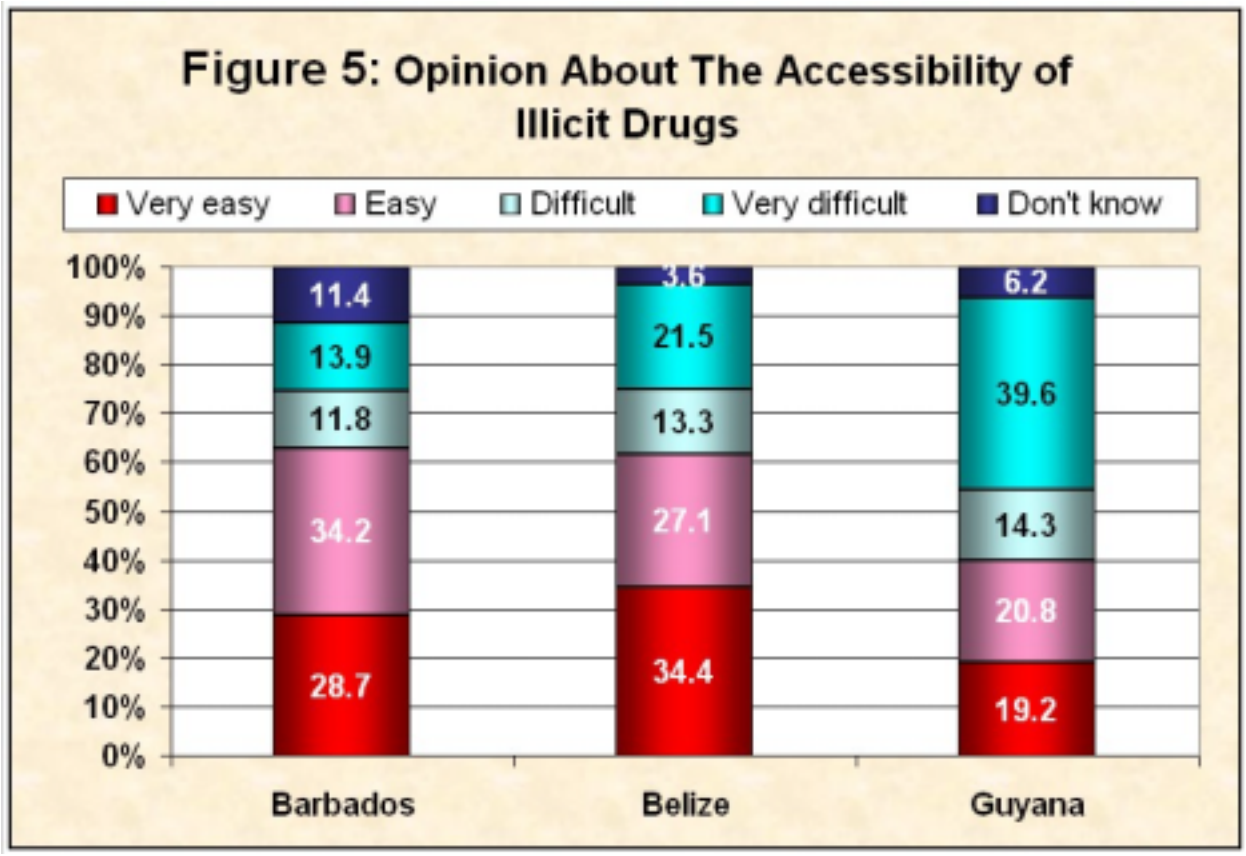
It should be noted, however, that the impact of the marital status of the parents did not appear in the students from Barbados until the later grades, where prevalence rates for groups such as those from homes where parents were either divorced or separated seemed greater. Conversely, in Belize and Guyana the differences were already obvious by the 8th grade (Table A12).

2.2.10. Prevalence of Illicit Drug Use By Accessibility of Drugs

The questionnaire also sought to assess the ease with which students could access certain drugs in their surroundings and to relate this to the prevalence of use.

As both Figure 5 and Table 10 shows, most students in Barbados and Belize felt that it was either very easy or easy to gain access to illicit drugs. Only in Guyana was the majority (53.9%) of the opinion that drugs were difficult or very difficult to get. This may, however, be due to the much younger group of students included in the Guyanese sample. Both Tables A13 and A14 clearly show that accessibility is related to grade level and age, with the ease with which drugs can be accessed increasing as the students' grade level and age rose. By the time of graduation, 8 of every 10 students in Barbados and 7 of 10 in both Belize and Guyana reported easy or very easy access. Similarly, 3 of every 4 in Barbados and 9 of every 10 Guyanese students in the 12th grade were of the same opinion (Tables A13 and A14).

Figure 5



The prevalence of illicit drug use got progressively higher as the group opinions changed from very difficult to access illicit drugs to very easy.

Table 10: Accessibility Of Drugs Among Students

Country	Is it easy to get illicit drugs				
	Very difficult	Difficult	Easy	Very easy	Does not know /did not reply
Barbados	13.9	11.8	34.2	28.7	11.4
Belize	21.5	13.3	27.1	34.4	3.6
Guyana	39.6	14.3	20.8	19.2	6.2

This trend was observed for each of the indicators and in all 3 countries, lending credence to the belief that access and availability does indeed somehow impact both the first use of drugs and its continuous use. In Barbados, use of an illicit drug in the past month was approximately two and one-half times greater in those who reported very easy access to illicit drugs as compared to those reporting that it was very difficult

to access drugs. In Belize, the differential from this ratio was three and one-half times and in Guyana, one and one-half times (Table 11).

Table 11: Prevalence Of Use Of Any Illicit Drug Among Students, By Accessibility

Country	Is it easy to get illicit drugs	Lifetime Prevalence	Prevalence in the last year	Prevalence in the last month
Barbados	Very difficult	26.1	14.2	7.3
	Difficult	28.4	16.3	7.0
	Easy	36.0	21.0	10.8
	Very easy	47.0	29.9	19.0
Belize	Very difficult	15.3	9.1	4.3
	Difficult	20.8	13.9	7.8
	Easy	29.2	19.0	10.7
	Very easy	37.1	25.7	15.4
Guyana	Very difficult	30.7	16.8	10.0
	Difficult	35.9	23.2	13.4
	Easy	42.1	24.7	12.6
	Very easy	40.7	25.2	16.3

2.2.11. Prevalence of Any Illicit Drug Use By The Existence of Friends Who Use Drugs

As can be seen in the results displayed in Table 12, it is obvious that peer pressure plays a significant role in the etiology of student drug use. The more drug-using friends the students reported, the more likely that they themselves would both experiment with and continue using illicit substances.

Table 12: Prevalence Of Use Of Any Illicit Drug Among Students, By The Existence Of Friends Who Use Illicit Drugs

Country	Friends who use illicit drugs	Lifetime Prevalence	Prevalence in the last year	Prevalence in the last month
Barbados	None	21.7	11.2	5.7
	One	40.6	22.6	9.8
	Some	53.7	34.8	21.1
Belize	None	13.6	8.3	4.0
	One	20.3	12.8	6.0
	Some	41.6	28.1	17.0
Guyana	None	31.7	18.2	10.2
	One	39.4	19.9	13.9
	Some	47.9	32.4	18.3

Those students who reportedly had no friends who used illicit drugs had lifetime prevalence rates of 21.7%, 13.6% and 31.7% in Barbados, Belize and Guyana,

respectively. In contrast, for those with several drug using friends, these rates increased to 53.7%, 41.6% and 47.9%, respectively, almost 1 of every two.

Tables A15 and A16 suggests that to counteract any effect of peer pressure, students must be targeted for prevention programs at an early age; at the very latest, prior to the 8th grade. By the age of 15 years, 50% of the students in Belize, 37.1% in Barbados and 19.1% in Guyana had at least 1 friend who used an illicit drug. These percentages and the potential pressure increased with increasing age.

2.2.12. Prevalence of Any Illicit Drug Use By The Perceived Knowledge Of The Consequences of Drug Use

Results that looked at the perceived knowledge of drugs in relation to drug use are presented in Table 13 and reveal no association in any of the countries for lifetime use. In fact, those students who considered themselves well informed experimented with illicit drugs in the same proportions as those not informed. However, it is possible that this "knowledge" may have been only recently acquired and thus any protective effect may only be apparent for recent use such as in the past month. In Barbados, there was evidence of this as while almost 1 in 5 students (19.3%) who were not informed had used in the past month, for those slightly or well informed, the prevalence was almost half of this (10.7% and 12.5%, respectively). For Belize, while there was some evidence of a trend in this direction, it was not as striking as it was for Barbados. The use of illicit drugs by Guyanese students were not deterred by their knowledge of the consequences of drugs and, in fact, those who considered themselves not informed had the lowest prevalence rates for all three indicators; almost one-half that of those slightly informed or well informed.

Table 13: Prevalence Of Use Of Any Illicit Drug Among Students, By Knowledge Of The Consequences Of Drug Use

Country	Do you feel you know enough about the consequences of drugs	Lifetime Prevalence	Last year Prevalence	Last month Prevalence
Barbados	Not informed	38.7	26.9	19.3
	Slightly informed	33.0	18.7	10.7
	Well informed	38.7	23.6	12.5
	Total	36.6	22.0	12.2
Belize	Not informed	27.3	18.2	12.1
	Slightly informed	25.6	17.7	10.3
	Well informed	29.3	18.9	10.3
	Total	27.4	18.3	10.5
Guyana	Not informed	27.5	12.6	7.5
	Slightly informed	41.9	26.7	15.7
	Well informed	42.0	25.5	15.2
	Total	39.0	23.4	13.8

2.2.13. Prevalence of Any Illicit Drug Use By The Perceived Harmfulness of Drugs

This may serve as an indicator of deficiencies in the various drug prevention programs offered at the secondary school level.

Regardless of the drug involved, Table A17 shows that the majority of the students in all 3 countries were of the opinion that usage could be quite harmful or very harmful. The percentage with this opinion increased as the frequency of usage increased from sometimes to frequently.

However, professionals must be concerned about the fact that approximately 1 in 4 students in both Barbados and Guyana did not view the frequent inhalation of solvents as either quite or very harmful. This may reflect the fact that usage was previously unknown and hence not addressed in recent prevention programs. In contrast, the percentage that viewed frequently taking marijuana or cocaine as either quite or very harmful, drugs commonly targeted in prevention programs, was between 80 and 90 percent.

The perception that the students had regarding the dangers of taking the various drugs were extremely important to their choice of whether to use or not. Table A18 reveals, for both Guyana and Barbados, that as the perception of the harm that could result from use increased, the prevalence rates decreased drastically. For prevention specialists, this is positive as it gives hope that well-planned, well-executed and carefully monitored prevention education could be successful.

For lifetime prevalence in Barbados, the increased risk of using an illicit drug, if the perception was that use was not harmful or only slightly harmful, ranged between 4 times and 24 times greater, dependent on the drug and frequency of use. The harmfulness of frequently taking cocaine resulted in the largest increase in risk. In Guyana, the increased risk was 5 times greater for each drug.

2.3. Prevalence of Cigarette Use

2.3.1. Prevalence of Cigarette Use and Age of First Use

The percentage of students who had smoked a cigarette at least once in their lifetime was highest among the Belizean students (43.1%), where the rate was almost double that of the group least likely to experiment with cigarettes, the students from Guyana (23.1%). Not only were the Belizeans more likely to try cigarettes, but they were also more likely to continue smoking. Approximately 1 of every 10 (12.2%) Belizean students had smoked a cigarette in the past month, a stark contrast to the 1 in 20 (4.5%) from Barbados and the 1.7% from Guyana (Figure 6).

Figure 6

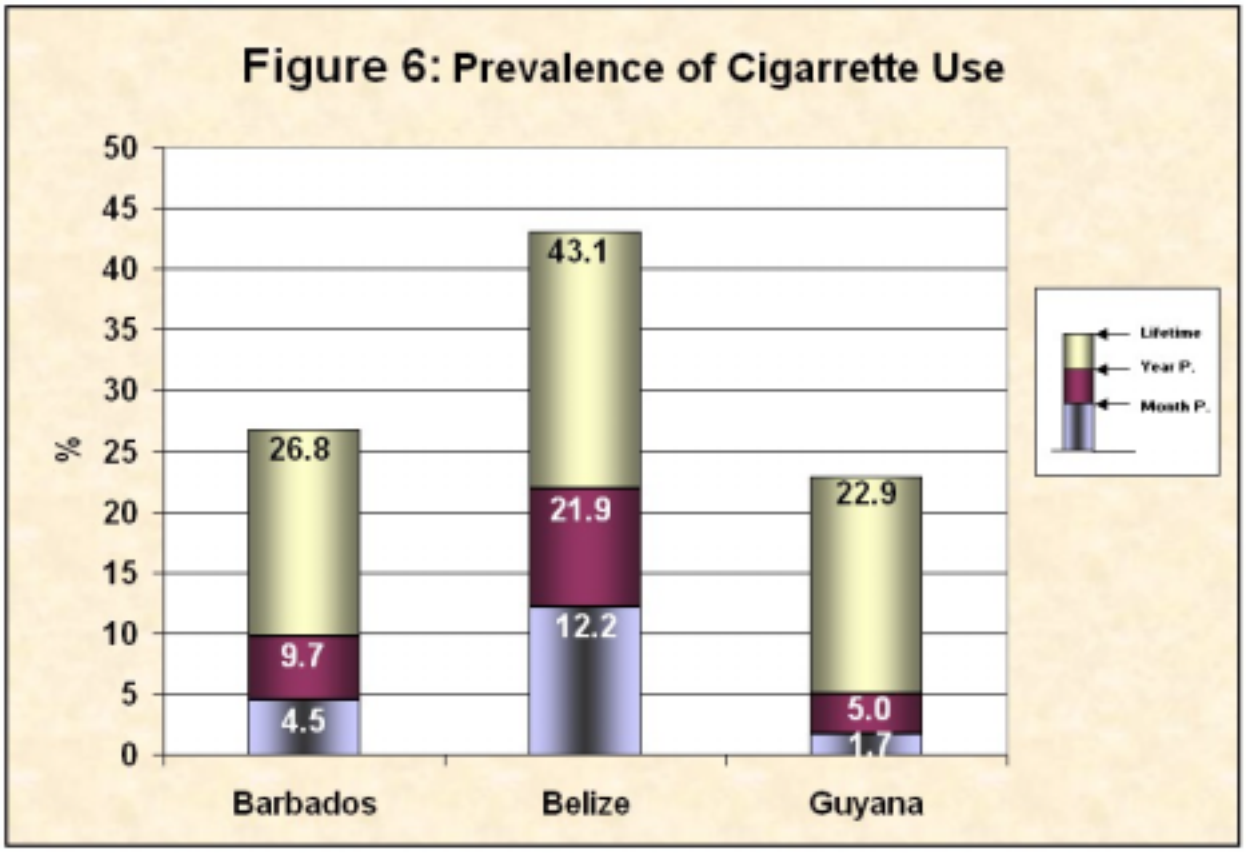
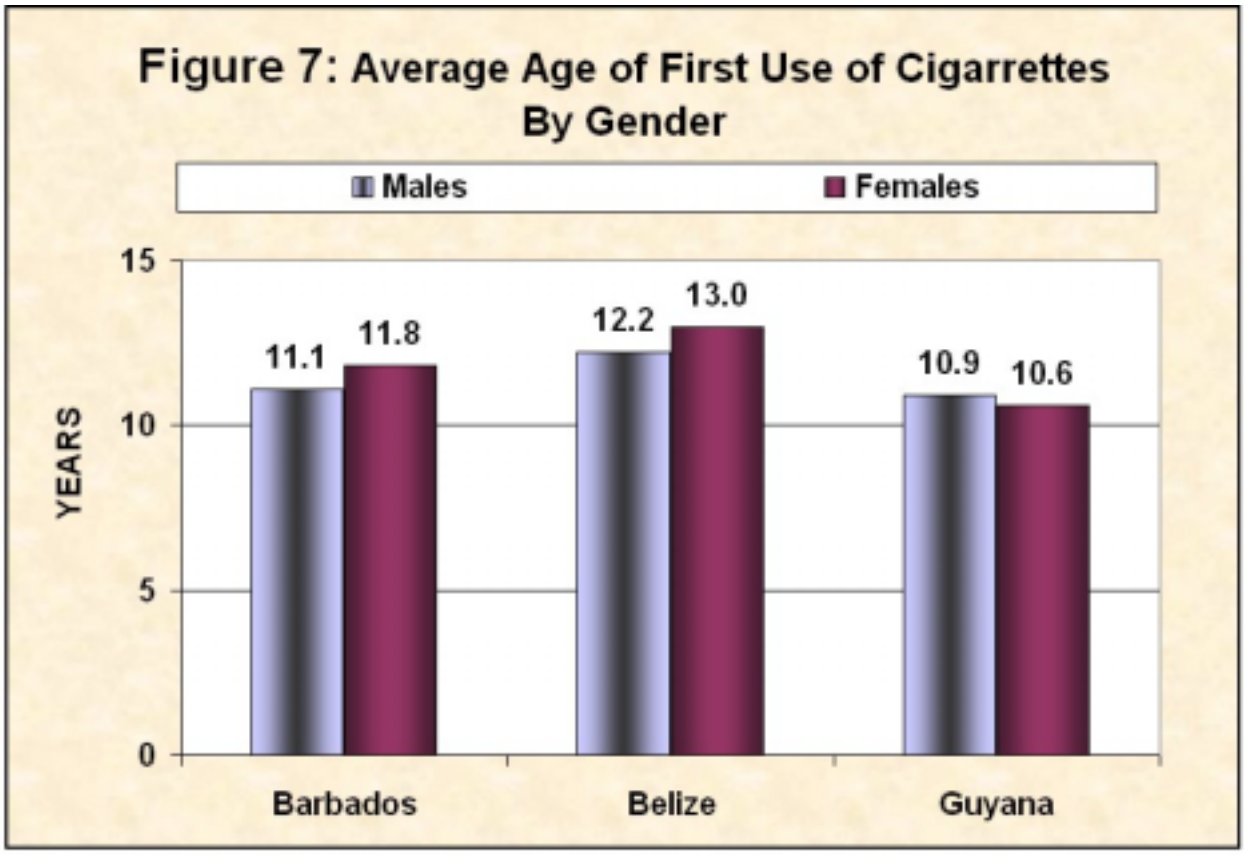


Figure 7



Students from Guyana (10.8 years) began smoking cigarettes, on average, a year earlier than their counterparts from Barbados (11.5 years) and approximately 2 years earlier than the students from Belize (12.5 years). Males were found to have started smoking a bit earlier than females in Barbados and Belize, but a bit later, on average, in Guyana (Figure 7).

2.3.2. Prevalence of Cigarette Use By Gender

Smoking rates were higher among male students from each of the islands. As can be seen in Table 14, not only did more males try cigarettes, but more remained current smokers. The gender differences were most evident in Belize and least pronounced in Barbados. The prevalence of cigarette smoking in the past month among Belizean male students was 3 times that of the Bajan students and 5 times that of the male students from Guyana.

Table 14: Prevalence Of Cigarettes Use, By Gender

Country	Gender	Lifetime Prevalence	Prevalence in the last year	Prevalence in the last month
Barbados	Females	26.4	8.9	3.8
	Males	27.4	10.6	5.3
	Total	26.8	9.7	4.5
Belize	Females	31.8	14.4	7.3
	Males	53.9	29.2	16.9
	Total	43.1	21.9	12.2
Guyana	Females	18.5	3.4	1.3
	Males	28.3	7.1	2.3
	Total	22.9	5.0	1.7

2.3.3. Prevalence of Cigarette Use By Age

While there was evidence of an increase in the rate of cigarette smoking as age increased, in several instances this increase peaked among the group of students aged 15-16 years. Only in Belize were the rates for each age group progressively higher than those in the younger groups (Table 15).

For the youngest group, those 15 years and under, the highest rates for both lifetime use and use in the past month was found among the Belizean students. A total of 36.9% of these students from Belize had tried cigarettes and 9% had smoked within the past month. These rates were twice that of the Guyanese students of the same age for lifetime use and 6 times that for use in the past month.

Table 15: Prevalence Of Cigarettes Use Among Students, By Age Groups

Country	Age	Lifetime Prevalence	Prevalence in the last year	Prevalence in the last month
Barbados	<15	20.0	7.1	3.5
	15 to 16	31.3	11.9	5.7
	17 and over	32.9	10.7	2.7
	Total	26.7	9.8	4.6
Belize	<15	36.9	16.5	9.0
	15 to 16	41.0	21.9	12.4
	17 and over	49.8	25.6	14.0
	Total	43.1	22.1	12.3
Guyana	<15	18.8	4.3	1.5
	15 to 16	32.2	7.2	2.7
	17 and over	35.8	5.9	0.0
	Total	23.1	5.1	1.8

2.3.4. Prevalence of Cigarette Use By Grade

The prevalence of Cigarette use by grade level mirrored the results seen for cigarette use based on age. Among the students from Barbados and Guyana, for the majority of the indicators, the highest rates were found among those in the 10th grade. In fact, in Guyana the prevalence of cigarette smoking within the past year and past month among the 12th graders was even lower than those for the 8th graders. Only the grade 12 students from Belize exhibited grade-specific rates that were consistently higher as the grade level increased (Table 16).

Table 16: Prevalence Of Cigarettes Use Among Students, By Grade

Country	Grade	Lifetime Prevalence	Prevalence in the last year	Prevalence in the last month
Barbados	Grade 8	20.7	6.2	4.0
	Grade 10	29.4	12.1	5.0
	Grade 12	30.3	10.2	4.2
	Total	26.8	9.7	4.5
Belize	Grade 8	39.9	18.9	10.6
	Grade 10	48.4	27.0	14.8
	Total	43.1	21.9	12.2
Guyana	Grade 8	17.8	4.3	1.5
	Grade 10	30.6	6.4	2.2
	Grade 12	26.0	3.0	1.0
	Total	22.9	5.0	1.7

2.3.5. Prevalence of Cigarette Use By Type Of School

Cigarette smoking rates based on whether the students attended public or private schools was not consistent for the 3 prevalence indicators or across countries (Table 17). In Barbados, cigarette smoking was more common among the private students at the experimental stage and within the past year, but more common among public students in the past month. In Belize, the usage rates for each of the 3 parameters were relatively even.

Table 17: Prevalence Of Cigarettes Use Among Students, By Type Of School

Country	Type of School	Lifetime Prevalence	Prevalence in the last year	Prevalence in the last month
Barbados	Public	26.3	9.3	4.6
	Private	32.4	13.0	3.8
	Total	26.8	9.7	4.5
Belize	Public	42.5	21.3	12.2
	Other	43.5	22.4	12.1
	Total	43.1	21.9	12.2
Guyana	Public	22.9	5.0	1.7

2.3.6. Prevalence of Cigarette Use By Behavioural Problems

Table 18: Prevalence Of Cigarettes Use Among Students, By Behaviour

Country	Discipline Problems	Lifetime Prevalence	Prevalence in the last year	Prevalence in the last month
Barbados	No data	24.3	11.4	6.9
	Never	20.6	6.2	2.2
	Once	32.4	11.4	4.6
	Several Times	45.8	21.9	14.1
	Total	26.8	9.7	4.5
Belize	No data	50.0	25.6	12.8
	Never	31.2	14.7	7.2
	Once	54.4	25.9	13.2
	Several Times	69.7	43.2	30.1
	Total	43.1	21.9	12.2
Guyana	No data	22.0	3.0	0.0
	Never	16.5	3.5	1.0
	Once	25.8	5.4	2.6
	Several Times	30.0	7.2	2.4
	Total	22.9	5.0	1.7

In each of the 3 countries, the more behavioural problems that was reported, the more likely the students were to have smoked cigarettes. The only exception was for the Guyanese students who reported several incidences of behavioural problems. The rates for this group in the past month, while higher than the group who reported no problems, was relatively the same as that of the group who only reported one past incident of a behavioural nature. As an example, the group of students from Barbados who had reported several incidences had prevalence rates of 69.7%, 43.2% and 30.1% for lifetime use, use in the past year and past month. These rates were approximately 2 times, 3 times and 4 times, respectively, the rates for those reporting no behavioural problems (Table 18).

2.3.7. Prevalence of Cigarette Use By Grade Repetition

Based on the data presented in Table 19, grade repetition was obviously associated with cigarette use in each of the 3 countries. For those students who had repeated one or more grades, cigarette smoking rates were higher than those in the group who never repeated any grades. This held true for each of the 3 prevalence indicators, except in Barbados where, in the past month, cigarette smoking rates in the two groups were the same.

Table 19: Prevalence Of Cigarettes Use Among Students, By Grade Repetition

Country	Repetition of Academic years	Lifetime Prevalence	Prevalence in the last year	Prevalence in the last month
Barbados	No data	28.8	9.5	4.0
	None	25.4	9.4	4.5
	One or more years	38.3	12.6	4.4
	Total	26.8	9.7	4.5
Belize	No data	48.7	21.6	13.5
	None	37.2	20.0	11.0
	One or more years	52.1	25.0	14.0
	Total	43.1	21.9	12.2
Guyana	No data	11.6	6.6	0.0
	None	20.6	3.8	1.5
	One or more years	32.2	8.9	2.8
	Total	22.9	5.0	1.7

2.3.8. Prevalence of Cigarette Use By Type Of Family

In most instances, having both mother and father in the same household proved to be protective against the use of cigarettes. As compared to having a step-parent in the same household or some other arrangement that included no biological parents, even a single biological parent was protective (Table 20).

Table 20: Prevalence Of Cigarettes Use Among Students, By Type Of Family

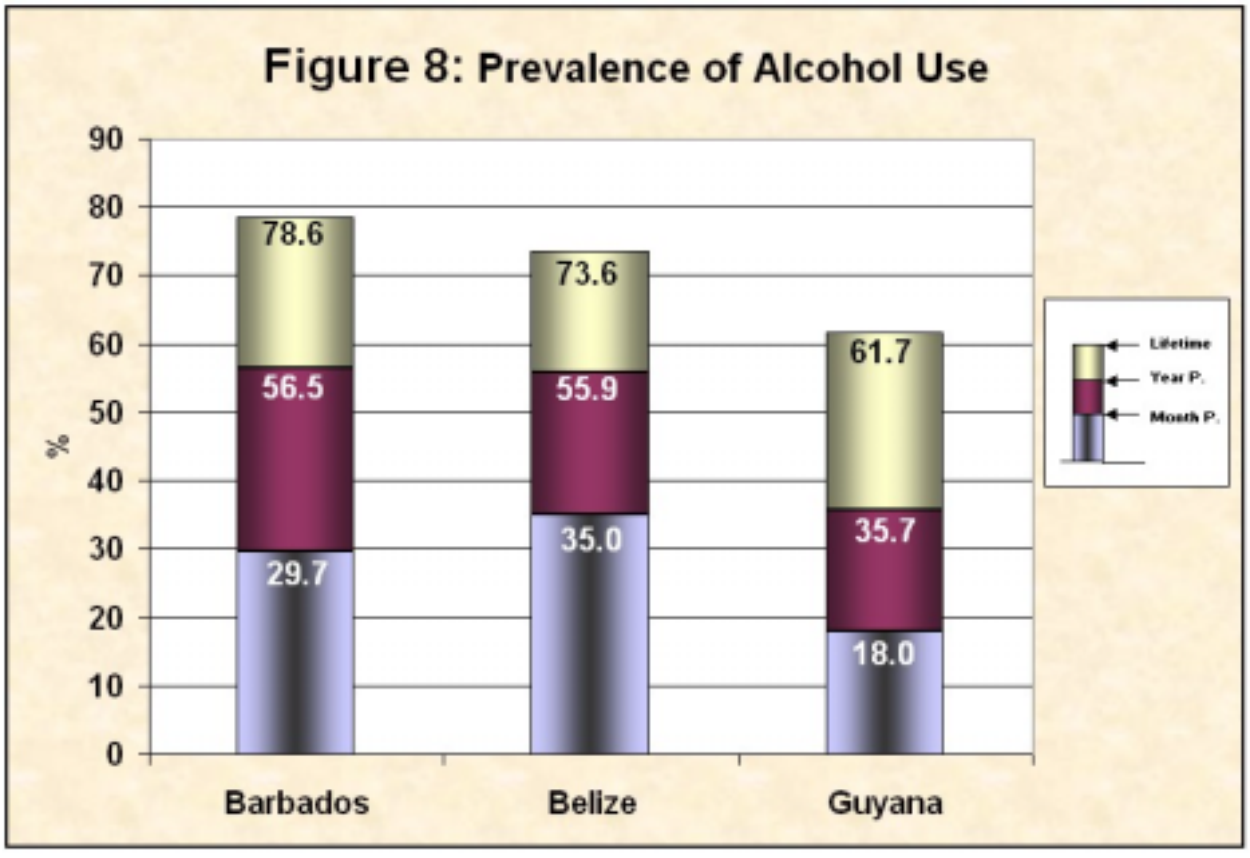
Country	Type of family	Lifetime Prevalence	Prevalence in the last year	Prevalence in the last month
Barbados	Father and mother	21.8	8.8	3.5
	Father or mother	27.3	8.7	4.6
	Stepfather or stepmother	38.4	13.9	6.2
	Other	35.6	14.7	7.7
	Total	26.8	9.7	4.6
Belize	Father and mother	40.0	20.8	11.5
	Father or mother	42.2	20.2	11.0
	Stepfather or stepmother	46.2	23.3	10.7
	Other	58.3	31.3	19.5
	Total	42.6	21.8	12.0
Guyana	Father and mother	18.1	3.7	1.2
	Father or mother	26.7	5.9	2.0
	Stepfather or stepmother	31.4	9.0	3.9
	Other	27.8	5.4	1.4
	Total	22.9	5.0	1.7

2.4. Prevalence of Alcohol Use

2.4.1. Prevalence of Alcohol Use and Age of First Use

The lifetime prevalence of alcohol use was higher among the Bajan students (79%) than among those from Belize (73.7%) and Guyana (62%). However, more of the students from Belize had taken a drink within the past month (Figure 8).

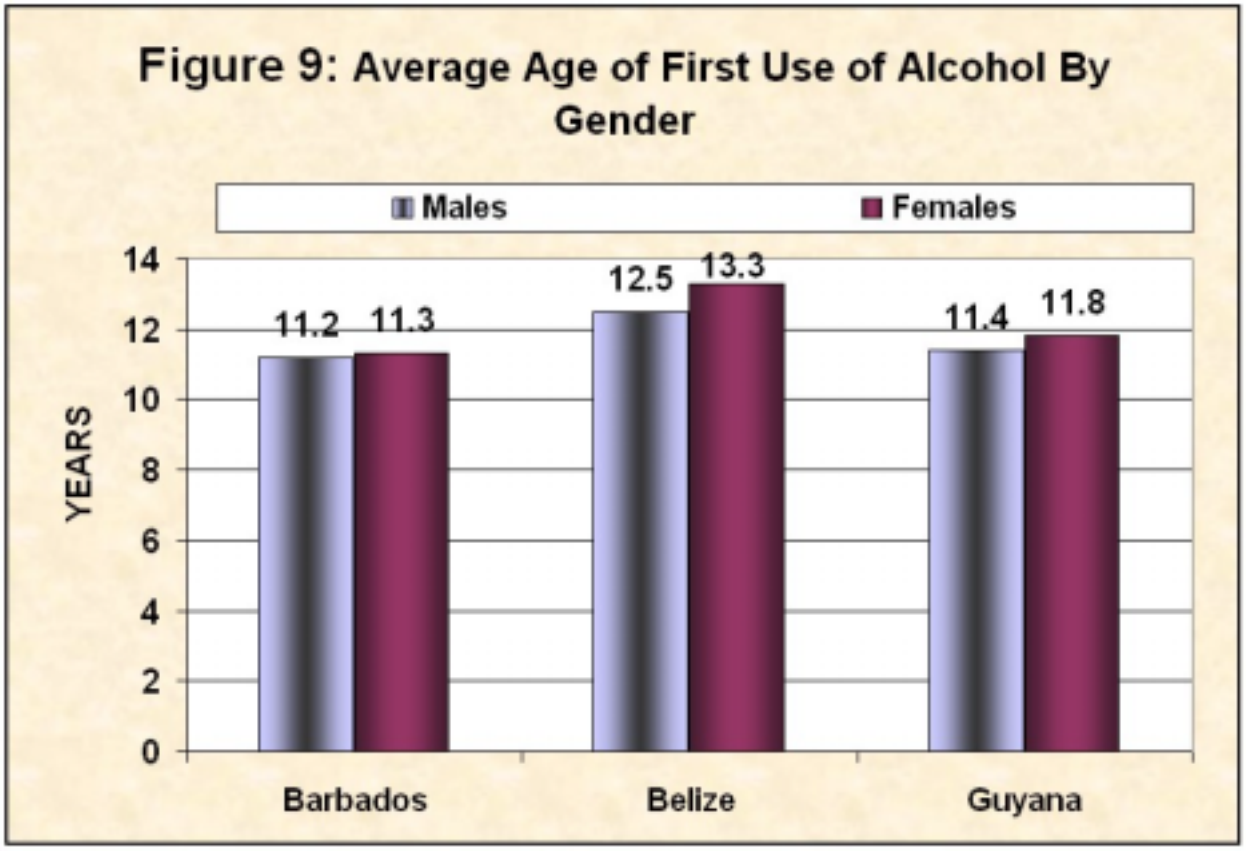
Figure 8



Results revealed that the students from Barbados and Guyana started using alcohol, on average, at a younger age than those from Belize. The mean age at first alcohol use was 11.3 years for the students from Barbados, 11.6 years for the Guyanese students and 12.9 years for the students from Belize. Gender-specific comparisons revealed that, in each of the countries, male students began drinking alcohol a bit earlier or around the same average age as the females. Additionally, the gender rankings followed the same trend as the overall sample with both male and female students from Barbados initiating

their drinking the earliest and both male and female students from Belize commencing the latest (Figure 9).

Figure 9



2.4.2. Prevalence of Alcohol Use By Gender

With the exception of Barbados, where the lifetime prevalence of alcohol use was higher in females and the prevalence in the past year and past month was relatively equal to that of females, a higher percentage of male students drank alcohol than females. Among the students from both Belize and Guyana, the prevalence in males was higher for all three parameters (Table 21).

Table 21: Prevalence Of Alcohol Use, By Gender

Country	Gender	Lifetime Prevalence	Prevalence in the last year	Prevalence in the last month
Barbados	Females	78.6	56.0	28.7
	Males	78.4	57.0	30.9
	Total	78.6	56.5	29.7
Belize	Females	69.7	51.3	29.7
	Males	77.4	60.6	40.3
	Total	73.6	55.9	35.0
Guyana	Females	58.0	30.4	15.7
	Males	66.2	42.2	20.8
	Total	61.7	35.7	18.0

2.4.3. Prevalence of Alcohol Use By Age

Age was found to be positively associated with alcohol consumption in each country, although this association was not always observed in those students in the highest age group. Prevalence rates in Barbados, generally, increased up to the age of 15-16 years, and then levelled off or decreased as age continued to increase. A similar trend was seen for prevalence in the past month among Guyanese students. For the students from Belize, the rate of alcohol use increased consistently with each level of increase in age for all 3 prevalence indicators (Table 22).

Table 22: Prevalence Of Alcohol Use Among Students, By Age Groups

Country	Age	Lifetime Prevalence	Prevalence in the last year	Prevalence in the last month
Barbados	<15	72.7	45.1	20.9
	15 to 16	83.4	65.4	36.7
	17 and over	83.9	61.7	32.0
	Total	79.0	56.7	29.8
Belize	<15	68.1	46.4	25.7
	15 to 16	71.9	53.5	34.0
	17 and over	79.6	65.9	42.7
	Total	73.7	56.2	35.3
Guyana	<15	57.7	32.1	15.8
	15 to 16	70.9	43.0	23.2
	17 and over	77.9	57.4	22.4
	Total	62.0	35.9	18.1

Looking specifically at the students under 15 years, it was observed that a greater proportion of this group had tried alcohol in Barbados (72.7%) than in Belize (68.1%) or Guyana (57.7%). However, Belize had the highest percentage of current drinkers among students in this youngest age cohort.

2.4.4. Prevalence of Alcohol Use By Grade

Table 23: Prevalence Of Alcohol Use Among Students, By Grade

Country	Grade	Lifetime Prevalence	Prevalence in the last year	Prevalence in the last month
Barbados	Grade 8	70.8	41.4	18.2
	Grade 10	81.3	62.7	36.2
	Grade 12	84.1	65.0	33.5
	Total	78.6	56.5	29.7
Belize	Grade 8	68.4	48.4	29.6
	Grade 10	82.4	68.4	44.0
	Total	73.6	55.9	35.0
Guyana	Grade 8	56.3	31.2	15.6
	Grade 10	68.7	40.3	20.8
	Grade 12	77.7	58.8	28.4
	Total	61.7	35.7	18.0

The increase in alcohol use as grade level increased was more consistent than the increase observed in relation to age. The only instance where the highest prevalence rate was not found among those in the highest grade level was for use in the past month among the students from Barbados. Similar to the situation observed for alcohol use by age, the highest rates for experimental use among the 8th graders was found among the Bajan students, but the highest rates for current use or use in the past month for the same group was found among the students from Belize (Table 23).

2.4.5. Prevalence of Alcohol Use By Type Of School

Contrary to the situation observed for the illicit drug marijuana, where use among the public school students was consistently higher than among the private school students, the prevalence rates for alcohol use were higher among the private school students for each indicator in Belize and for use in the past month in Barbados (Table 24).

Table 24: Prevalence Of Alcohol Use Among Students, By Type Of School

Country	Type of School	Lifetime Prevalence	Prevalence in the last year	Prevalence in the last month
Barbados	Public	79.7	57.2	29.5
	Private	66.8	49.2	31.9
	Total	78.6	56.5	29.7
Belize	Public	70.1	53.6	32.7
	Other	76.4	57.7	36.9
	Total	73.6	55.9	35.0
Guyana	Public	61.7	35.7	18.0

2.4.6. Prevalence of Alcohol Use By Behavioural Problems

The association between behavioural or disciplinary problems and substance use observed for other drugs was also apparent for alcohol use (Table 25). The prevalence of alcohol use over the students' lifetime, in the past year and in the past month, in each country, increased with each level of increase in the number of reported incidences of behavioural problems. For the students from Barbados who had experienced behavioural problems several times, the prevalence rate in the past month was twice that of those with no behavioural problems. A similar trend was observed among the students from both Belize and Guyana.

Table 25: Prevalence Of Alcohol Use Among Students, By Behaviour

Country	Discipline Problems	Lifetime Prevalence	Prevalence in the last year	Prevalence in the last month
Barbados	No data	57.9	40.3	25.0
	Never	75.0	50.6	23.7
	Once	85.5	64.7	35.4
	Several Times	88.0	72.8	48.4
	Total	78.6	56.5	29.7
Belize	No data	72.5	59.0	30.8
	Never	65.3	46.3	25.7
	Once	85.2	67.2	44.8
	Several Times	87.0	74.6	55.7
	Total	73.6	55.9	35.0

Guyana	No data	43.7	24.5	13.4
	Never	53.6	28.2	13.6
	Once	66.7	35.4	16.4
	Several Times	71.8	47.3	25.6
	Total	61.7	35.7	18.0

2.4.7. Prevalence of Alcohol Use By Grade Repetition

Table 26: Prevalence Of Alcohol Use Among Students, By Grade Repetition

Country	Repetition of Academic years	Lifetime Prevalence	Prevalence in the last year	Prevalence in the last month
Barbados	No data	76.3	52.7	28.2
	None	78.0	55.5	28.7
	One or more years	86.2	68.5	40.4
	Total	78.6	56.5	29.7
Belize	No data	73.7	53.5	33.3
	None	69.0	50.9	31.0
	One or more years	81.2	64.4	41.9
	Total	73.6	55.9	35.0
Guyana	No data	42.4	18.8	7.1
	None	59.6	33.7	17.0
	One or more years	72.1	45.2	23.2
	Total	61.7	35.7	18.0

Table 26 reveals that in all three countries included in this report, students who repeated one or more years have progressively higher percentages of alcohol use. For example, the prevalence in the past year among students who repeated one or more years was 40.4%, 41.9% and 23.2% for Barbados, Belize and Guyana, respectively. In contrast, the prevalence for those who never repeated was 28.7%, 31% and 17%, respectively.

2.4.8. Prevalence of Alcohol Use By Type Of Family

As can be seen in Table 27, students who live with both parents were much less likely to experiment with alcohol, to have taken a drink in the past year or in the past month. This was observed in each of the 3 countries. The highest levels of alcohol use were, in most instances, among the students who live in households with a stepfather or stepmother or from households with “other” arrangements.

Table 27: Prevalence Of Alcohol Use Among Students, By Type Of Family

Country	Type of family	Lifetime Prevalence	Prevalence in the last year	Prevalence in the last month
Barbados	Father and mother	74.0	54.4	28.9
	Father or mother	79.8	56.6	28.8
	Stepfather or stepmother	85.2	61.9	34.8
	Other	84.5	58.7	33.3
	Total	78.5	56.4	29.7
Belize	Father and mother	69.7	51.4	31.4
	Father or mother	74.6	57.3	35.6
	Stepfather or stepmother	78.3	64.0	39.6
	Other	89.9	70.8	47.4
	Total	73.3	55.5	34.4
Guyana	Father and mother	57.4	33.5	16.9
	Father or mother	64.8	38.3	20.0
	Stepfather or stepmother	68.9	36.4	17.6
	Other	67.6	38.9	17.4
	Total	61.7	35.8	18.0

2.5. Prevalence of Marijuana Use

2.5.1. Prevalence of Marijuana Use and Age of First Use

Marijuana use was more common among Barbadian students than among those from either Belize or Guyana. More specifically, a higher percentage of the Bajan students experimented with marijuana, as indicated by lifetime use, and more appeared to remain current users, having used within the past month. Lifetime prevalence rates for marijuana for students from Barbados, Belize and Guyana was 23.5%, 20.8% and 7.2%, respectively. The proportion using in the month preceding the survey was 7.9%, 6.7% and 1.9%, respectively (Figure 10).

The mean age at first use of Marijuana was 12.2 years for the students from Barbados and 12.9 years for those from Guyana. Students from Belize delayed the use of this drug the longest and had the highest average age at initiation for all students combined (14.0 years) as well as for both males (13.9 years) and females (14.5 years). The age at initiation for males and females in Barbados and Guyana were quite comparable. On average, males began at age 12.2 years and 12.7 years and females began at age 12.9 years and 13.1 years in Barbados and Guyana, respectively (Figure 11).

Figure 10

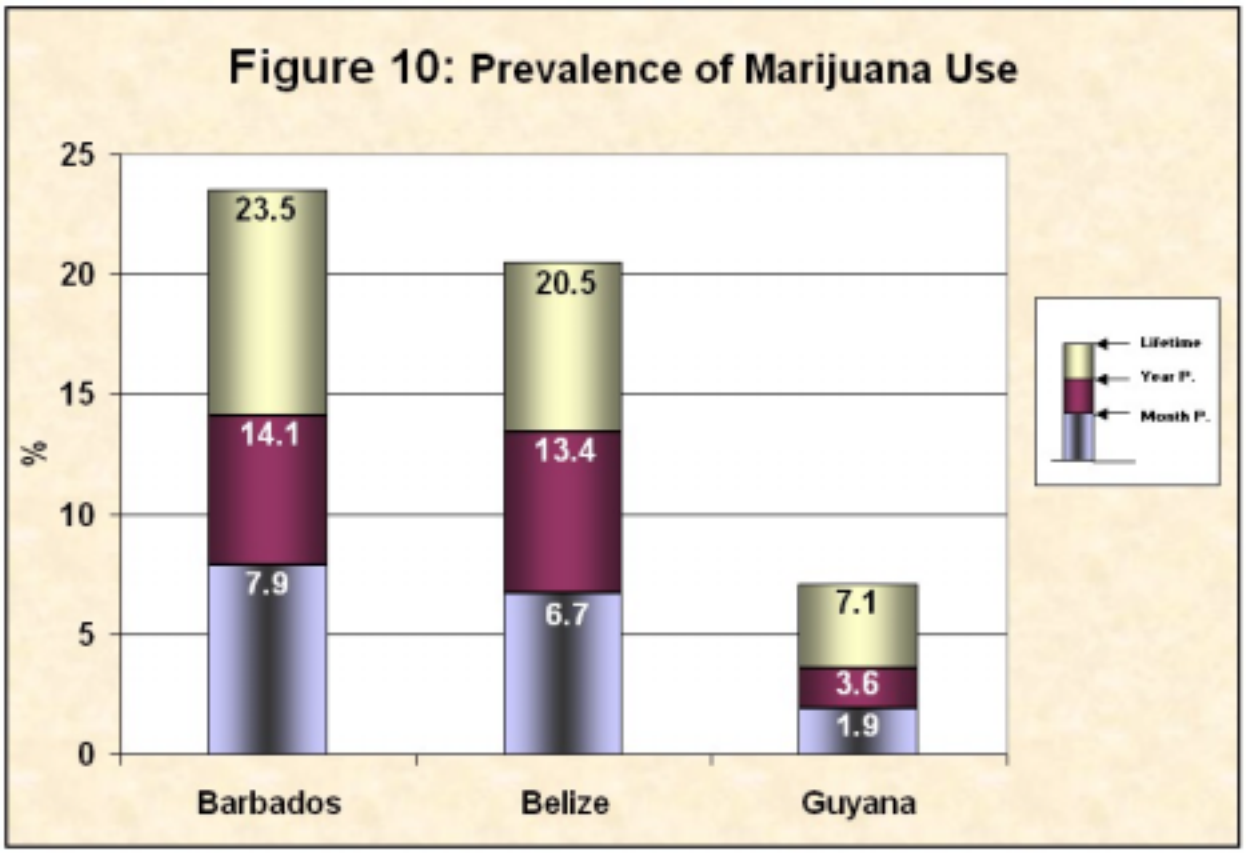
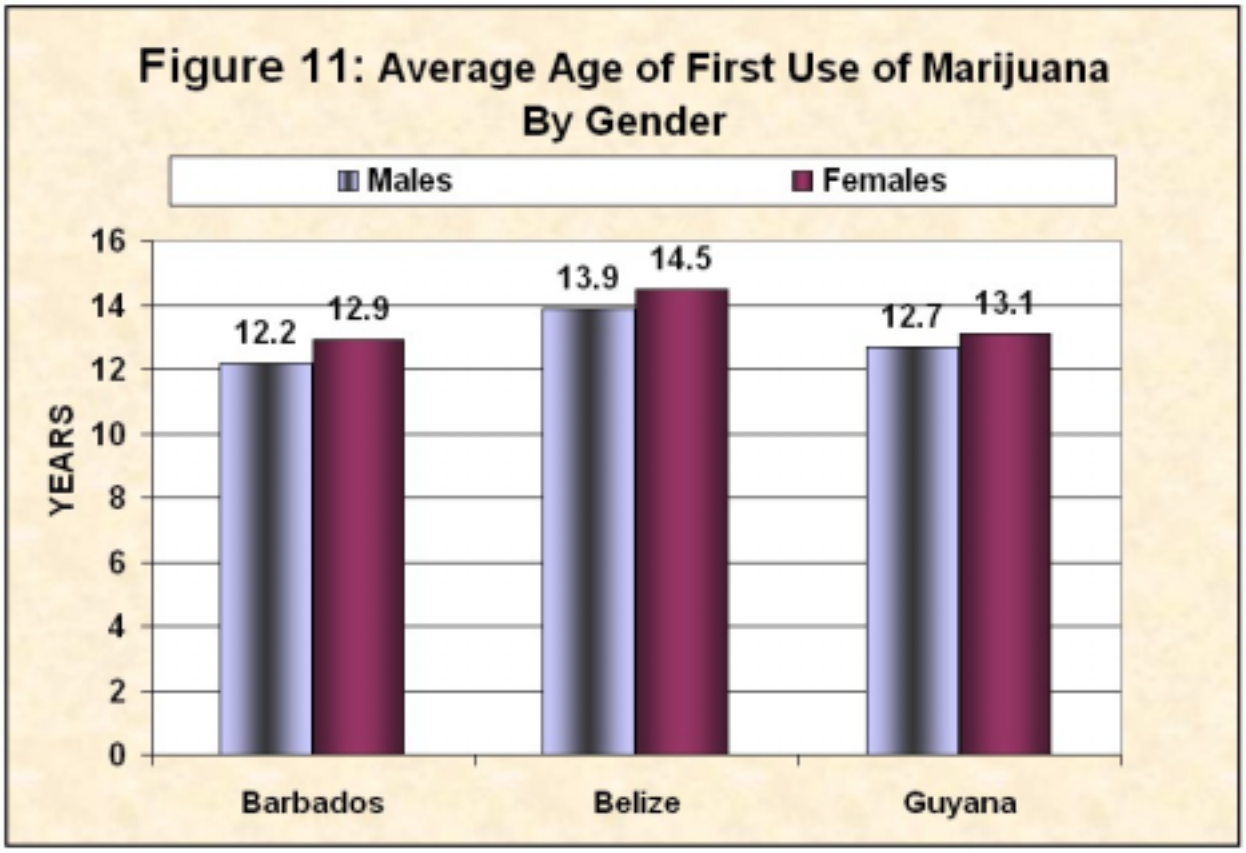


Figure 11



2.5.2. Prevalence of Marijuana Use By Gender

Marijuana use was observed to be higher among male secondary school students in all three countries and for each of the prevalence indicators. Guyana consistently had the lowest rates for both sexes while the female students from Barbados were observed to have the highest usage rates among females. For the 12-month period preceding the survey, 11.1% of the Barbadian female students had reportedly smoked marijuana, as compared to 6.9% of those from Belize and 1.8% from Guyana. For the male students, the prevalence rates for those from Barbados and Belize were quite comparable for lifetime use, use in the past year and in the past month (Table 28).

Table 28: Prevalence Of Marijuana Use, By Gender

Country	Gender	Lifetime Prevalence	Prevalence in the last year	Prevalence in the last month
Barbados	Females	21.3	11.1	5.5
	Males	26.1	17.4	10.5
	Total	23.5	14.1	7.9
Belize	Females	11.3	6.9	3.0
	Males	29.3	19.7	10.3
	Total	20.5	13.4	6.7
Guyana	Females	4.7	1.8	1.2
	Males	10.0	5.7	2.8
	Total	7.1	3.6	1.9

2.5.3. Prevalence of Marijuana Use By Age

With respect to age and the level of marijuana use, there was evidence of increasing usage rates with increasing age in each country. However, this was not always consistent. In Barbados, usage rates peaked in the group of 15-16 year olds for both lifetime use and use within the past month. In Guyana, rates peaked in the same group for use in the past year and past month. In Belize, the increase in the rate of marijuana use increased with each level of increase in age for each of the three prevalence parameters. In addition, the students from Barbados started using marijuana in greater numbers at a much earlier age than their counterparts from either Belize or Guyana. Prevalence rates for both the group of students under 15 years and between 15-16 years were higher in Barbados for all three prevalence indicators (Table 29).

Table 29: Prevalence Of Marijuana Use Among Students, By Age Groups

Country	Age	Lifetime Prevalence	Prevalence in the last year	Prevalence in the last month
Barbados	<15	13.2	7.6	3.4
	15 to 16	31.0	18.5	11.2
	17 and over	29.4	19.5	8.8
	Total	23.5	14.0	7.7
Belize	<15	10.9	6.6	1.6
	15 to 16	18.6	12.7	7.0
	17 and over	30.0	19.0	9.7
	Total	20.8	13.6	6.8

Guyana	<15	4.5	2.0	1.5
	15 to 16	12.6	7.1	3.1
	17 and over	19.1	7.5	3.0
	Total	7.2	3.6	2.0

2.5.4. Prevalence of Marijuana Use By Grade

The prevalence of marijuana use among students from both Barbados and Guyana peaked in the 10th grade before decreasing to slightly lower levels among the 12th graders for all three parameters. In Belize, where the sample was limited to students from the 8th and 10th grades, the higher grade had consistently higher prevalence rates. The lowest rates for lifetime use, use in the past year and in the past month was found among the Guyanese students at each grade level. In fact, the prevalence rates for the 8th graders from Barbados were higher than those from Guyana at all grade levels (Table 30).

Table 30: Prevalence Of Marijuana Use Among Students, By Grade

Country	Grade	Lifetime Prevalence	Prevalence in the last year	Prevalence in the last month
Barbados	Grade 8	11.1	6.0	2.8
	Grade 10	30.1	18.3	11.6
	Grade 12	28.5	17.4	8.5
	Total	23.5	14.1	7.9
Belize	Grade 8	16.8	10.5	5.3
	Grade 10	27.1	18.2	9.1
	Total	20.5	13.4	6.7
Guyana	Grade 8	4.8	2.2	1.4
	Grade 10	10.7	5.9	2.8
	Grade 12	6.9	1.0	1.0
	Total	7.1	3.6	1.9

2.5.5. Prevalence of Marijuana Use By Type Of School

If, as it is generally believed, private school students, as compared to public school students, do in fact have more expendable cash that can be used to buy drugs, then this “advantage” did not translate into higher marijuana usage rates in any of the three countries included in this report. The prevalence of marijuana use was found to be higher among the public school students for each of the three prevalence indicators in both Barbados and Belize. Comparisons were not possible for Guyana as there were no

private students included in the survey. This finding may speak to the affordability of this drug (Table 31).

Table 31: Prevalence Of Marijuana Use Among Students, By Type Of School

Country	Type of School	Lifetime Prevalence	Prevalence in the last year	Prevalence in the last month
Barbados	Public	24.0	14.7	8.2
	Private	18.0	7.2	4.9
	Total	23.5	14.1	7.9
Belize	Public	21.9	14.4	7.7
	Other	19.4	12.6	5.8
	Total	20.5	13.4	6.7
Guyana	Public	7.1	3.6	1.9

2.5.6. Prevalence of Marijuana Use By Behavioural Problems

As the data displayed in Table 32 reveals, a positive association between behavioural or disciplinary problems and marijuana use was observed for all three prevalence indicators in each of the countries without exception. As the reported number of behavioural problems increased from never to once to several times, the proportion of users increased accordingly. In the past month in Barbados, those students who had experienced one incident and several incidences of a behavioural nature were 2 and 6 times, respectively, more likely than those who have never had such an experience to have taken a smoke of marijuana. In Belize, similar comparisons revealed rates on the order of 2 and 7 times those of the group who had never had any behavioural or disciplinary problems.

Table 32: Prevalence Of Marijuana Use Among Students, By Behavioural Problems

Country	Discipline Problems	Lifetime Prevalence	Prevalence in the last year	Prevalence in the last month
Barbados	No data	29.2	19.4	12.5
	Never	15.5	8.5	4.0
	Once	27.4	14.2	7.6
	Several Times	52.2	38.0	24.9
	Total	23.5	14.1	7.9
Belize	No data	25.0	12.5	12.5
	Never	11.5	6.2	2.8
	Once	26.8	17.2	6.5
	Several Times	44.4	35.7	21.9
	Total	20.5	13.4	6.7

Guyana	No data	5.8	2.0	1.0
	Never	4.4	1.5	0.3
	Once	6.4	3.5	2.4
	Several Times	11.5	6.6	4.0
	Total	7.1	3.6	1.9

2.5.7. Prevalence of Marijuana Use By Grade Repetition

Table 33 reveals that in each of the three countries included here, students who repeated one or more years have progressively higher percentages of marijuana use. In Guyana, where the differential is the greatest, students who have not repeated a grade have a prevalence within the past year of 2.3%, compared to 7.7% for students who repeated one or more years. This is clear evidence of an association between academic performance, as represented by grade repetition, and marijuana use. Speculating as to the exact nature of this association, marijuana use is known to be related to attention, concentration and memory, which can hinder performance and increase the likelihood of failure.

Table 33: Prevalence Of Marijuana Use Among Students, By Grade Repetition

Country	Repetition of Academic years	Lifetime Prevalence	Prevalence in the last year	Prevalence in the last month
Barbados	No data	34.2	19.9	12.0
	None	21.7	12.7	7.0
	One or more years	32.1	22.0	13.0
	Total	23.5	14.1	7.9
Belize	No data	20.5	14.3	10.5
	None	15.5	11.0	4.8
	One or more years	28.8	17.2	9.2
	Total	20.5	13.4	6.7
Guyana	No data	4.8	3.2	2.4
	None	5.2	2.3	1.5
	One or more years	13.6	7.7	3.4
	Total	7.1	3.6	1.9

2.5.8. Prevalence of Marijuana Use By Accessibility To Illicit Drugs

Table 34: Prevalence Of Marijuana Use Among Students, By Accessibility

Country	Is it easy to get illicit drugs?	Lifetime Prevalence	Prevalence in the last year	Prevalence in the last month
Barbados	Very difficult	14.3	9.9	4.8
	Difficult	15.9	10.1	4.5
	Easy	21.8	12.3	6.2
	Very easy	32.9	19.8	12.8
Belize	Very difficult	9.3	5.5	1.8
	Difficult	14.4	8.9	4.2
	Easy	21.5	13.7	6.5
	Very easy	29.9	20.4	11.3
Guyana	Very difficult	4.0	1.5	0.8
	Difficult	5.8	2.8	1.5
	Easy	10.3	5.8	2.8
	Very easy	11.4	6.4	3.7

Data presented in Table 34 shows a clear association between the accessibility to illicit drugs and the use of marijuana and indicates the need for continuous attempts to limit access to this drug. As the students' opinion changed from very difficult to access drugs to very easy, the prevalence rates for lifetime use, use in the past year and in the past month increased consistently. As a result, the highest prevalence rates were found among those students who felt that it was very easy to get illicit drugs. Within the past year, students in Barbados, Belize and Guyana who felt that it was very easy to access drugs were 2, 4 and 4 times more likely to have smoked marijuana than those students who felt that it would be very difficult to access drugs.

2.5.9. Prevalence of Marijuana Use By Friends Who Use Illicit Drugs

The effect of having friends who used drugs on the students' own marijuana use is clearly reflected in the results displayed in Table 35. For both lifetime prevalence and prevalence within the past year, as the number of friends who used increased, so did the percentage of student users in all three countries. For use within the past month, the trend was not as consistent in Barbados and Belize, with the increase only observed in the group who reported several drug-using friends. These findings lend support to the need for the establishment of constructive programs that will allow students to congregate with positive individuals and which will build character and cultivate good decision-making skills.

Table 35: Prevalence Of Marijuana Use Among Students, By The Existence Of Friends Who Use Illicit Drugs

Country	Friends who use illicit drugs	Lifetime Prevalence	Prevalence in the last year	Prevalence in the last month
Barbados	None	8.6	5.1	2.9
	One	16.0	6.2	2.3
	Some	42.2	25.6	14.2
Belize	None	6.9	4.3	1.7
	One	12.9	6.6	0.8
	Some	34.8	23.3	12.5
Guyana	None	4.1	1.5	0.8
	One	7.2	2.7	1.8
	Some	18.8	11.5	5.5

3. Conclusions

Research that compares school-youths with those not in school indicate that prevalence rates for risk behaviours are generally lowest among in-school youth. As a result, while these findings may not be representative of the general population of Caribbean adolescents, particularly older youths and dropouts, they do provide valuable information on a high-risk population that is accessible and thus amenable to corrective action.

In addition to general prevalence rates, this report presents information that helps to clarify both those factors that increase the risk of drug use as well as protect against drug use in the English-speaking Caribbean.

The highest figures for illicit drug use for all three of the prevalence indicators, use at least once in a student's life, use in the past year and use in the past month, were found among students from Barbados, closely followed by those from Guyana.

The primary contributor to these indicators for all three countries is marijuana. However, there were high levels of solvent and/or inhalant use observed among students from Barbados and Guyana, and also high levels of tranquilliser use in students from Guyana and Belize.

The students from Guyana commenced the use of illicit drugs, on average, earlier than those from either of the other two countries. It is possible however that this may be the result of the larger proportion of students under age 15 years included in the Guyanese sample, as prevalence was positively associated with age.

Surprisingly, there were no major differences in the average age at first use based on gender in any of the three countries.

Evidence of the gateway phenomena, where users commence with the use of legal substances such as cigarettes and alcohol prior to experimenting with the illicit substances such as marijuana and cocaine, was seen in Barbados and Belize. For both males and females, cigarette and alcohol use began approximately 1-2 years earlier than the use of either marijuana or cocaine.

The surveys also revealed evidence that the age of first illicit drug use is getting progressively younger with subsequent cohorts of students in each of the countries. However, this distinction is not so clear after the 10th grade as students at this level appear to have begun using at the same age as those in grade 12, possibly indicating that this may be a recent trend.

With respect to those factors related to a decrease in risk, results revealed a clear protective effect when both father and mother were present as compared to other family structures. This was evident for all countries and all prevalence indicators with the exception of use in the past year and past month for Guyana.

The perception that the students had regarding the dangers of taking the various drugs was extremely important to their choice of whether to use or not. For both Guyana and Barbados, the more harmful the students felt that a particular drug was, the less likely they were to use that drug.

Regarding those factors that increase the likelihood of drug use, results revealed an increased risk in males, with increasing age and grade level, for students with behavioural problems and academic difficulties, and an increase in drug use for those students with easy access to drugs, and for those with friends who used drugs.

A look at prevalence of any illicit drug by gender revealed that, in Belize, the prevalence in males for all 3 indicators was approximately double that of females. In Barbados, the prevalence of illicit drug use was lower in females than it was for males for all 3 indicators, however, these differences were small. In Guyana, while there was an obvious increase in the level of illicit drug usage for males for lifetime use, for both use in the past year and in the past month the prevalence rate for females could be considered as equal to that of their male counterparts.

The increase in drug use as age increased was observed for the three indicators of lifetime use, use in the past year and in the past month. The exception was Barbados where, for those students in the 15-16 years age group, usage rates of illicit drugs for all three indicators were equal to or slightly greater than those in the oldest age category, 17 years and above.

For both the group of students from Belize and Guyana, as grade level increased, so did the usage rates for each of the three time periods. Similar to the situation observed for prevalence by age, the grade-specific prevalence for Bajan students increased only up to grade 10 and then fell off, resulting in lower prevalence rates for students in grade 12, for each indicator.

Results revealed that school officials have an excellent opportunity to identify high-risk individuals for the purpose of assigning them to appropriate risk reduction or prevention programs. In each of the three countries, although less obvious in Guyana, there was an association observed between male and female students who used illicit drugs and behavioural problems. Similarly, as the frequency of having repeated a course increased, so did the likelihood of having used an illicit substance at least once in their life, in the past year and in the past 30 days.

In addition, attempts to prevent or reduce the amount of active drug users must address peer pressure, which results show plays a significant role in the etiology of student drug use. As the number of drug-using friends the students reported increased, the more likely that they themselves were to both experiment with and continue using illicit substances.

Finally, the need for the authorities to continue and possible enhance efforts to limit access to and the availability of drugs is underscored as the prevalence of illicit drug use among students got progressively higher as the group opinions changed from very difficult to access illicit drugs to very easy. This trend was observed for each of the indicators and in all 3 countries.

In spite of the acknowledged limitations in the surveys, there were findings that increased the confidence placed in the surveys' results. These findings were consistent with and supported what has been observed elsewhere and what would not be seen if the students had been giving random answers or consistently dishonest answers. Hence, Regional drug prevention personnel should view this report as a valuable piece of literature that can be of great use in the efforts to plan, implement and evaluate drug prevention programs and projects.

4. Recommendations

While the majority of Caribbean students have abstained from illicit drug use, results presented in this report revealed several areas of concern, prompting recommendations with relevance to the entire region.

Firstly, drug use prevention, if it is to be successful, must be addressed at several levels: at the policy; community, including school; family; and individual levels. Ad hoc initiatives that are taken by selected institutions could be strengthened through the adoption of laws and/or policies at the national and institutional level that should serve to regularize and expand access to these initiatives. As an example, areas to be addressed may include: high-risk screening in schools and the availability of appropriate referral programs; and the association between drug use and the availability of drugs which mandates that countries, both unilaterally and as a block, continue to limit access at both the wholesale or trafficking level as well as access at the retail or street level. Respective governments must ensure that such initiatives receive the necessary political and funding support.

Secondly, efforts must be comprehensive and interdisciplinary, with a commitment from all sectors involved in the fight against drugs, and coordinated so that, as far as possible, goals and messages can be consistent and realistic given the local environs.

Evidence from the available literature suggests that the most promising approaches to developing interventions for drug prevention are through services and activities which are sensitive to different developmental issues during early and late adolescence and which are introduced before risk behaviours stabilizes; i.e., at an earlier age than most adults view it necessary or are willing to intervene. The focus should be on known risk factors; drug use interventions that have been proven to work; the enhancement of protective factors such as strengthening families and other support mechanisms; and on educational enrichment.

Within the Caribbean, as a result of the early exposure to drug use through friends and others, the accessibility of drugs and the subsequent early age of first use of illicit drugs, anti-drug education must begin early, preferably in primary school, with reinforcements of increasing intensity continuing throughout the school years. Efforts must take into consideration that different methods are successful at different stages and must offer practical methods on how to avoid or counteract the intrinsic and extrinsic pressures to use in addition to addressing the harmfulness of drugs. While the messages must be specific enough to address problem drugs, they must also be sufficiently broad to address the dangers of other less well-known drugs. Renewed efforts must be exerted to foster partnerships with parents through intensive parental education programs that address, among other issues, risk and protective factors and early warning signs.

While this initial effort has provided some much needed and useful data, it also served to highlight the broader need for consistency across countries in the use of a common instrument and a common methodology that will allow for like comparisons. As an

example, countries must ensure that the targeted populations are indeed given the opportunity to participate so as to ensure that comparisons can be made of samples that are similar in their socio-demographic make-up. Further, countries may wish to conduct more exploratory qualitative assessments of apparent new trends such as with the use of pharmaceuticals like inhalants or solvents and tranquillizers.

ANNEX

Table A1: Lifetime Prevalence By Drug Used, Country And Age Group

Country	Age group	Any illicit drug	Solvents or inhalants	Marijuana or hashish	Cocaine, Coca paste or crack	Ecstasy	Tranquillisers	Stimulants	Cigarettes	Alcoholic drinks
Barbados	12 to 14	29.8	13.4	13.2	2.3	0.8	3.5	3.0	20.0	72.7
	15 to 16	41.3	11.9	31.0	2.6	1.3	2.4	2.8	31.3	83.4
	17 and over	39.1	10.8	29.4	3.4	2.1	3.3	6.1	32.9	83.9
	Total	36.3	12.4	23.5	2.5	1.1	2.9	3.1	26.7	79.0
Belize	12 to 14	18.9	3.5	10.9	2.2	1.3	6.5	4.4	36.9	68.1
	15 to 16	25.6	2.8	18.6	2.0	0.9	6.0	4.3	41.0	71.9
	17 and over	35.2	3.6	30.0	3.0	1.8	8.3	5.4	49.8	79.6
	Total	27.5	3.2	20.8	2.4	1.3	6.9	4.7	43.1	73.7
Guyana	12 to 14	32.7	6.9	4.5	0.9	0.8	6.5	2.1	18.8	57.7
	15 to 16	40.1	7.9	12.6	1.3	1.4	6.8	2.5	32.2	70.9
	17 and over	44.9	10.8	19.1	0.0	0.0	11.9	3.0	35.8	77.9
	Total	35.1	7.3	7.2	1.0	0.9	6.7	2.2	23.1	62.0

Table A2: Last Year Prevalence By Drug Used, Country And Age Group

Country	Age group	Any illicit drug	Solvents or inhalants	Marijuana or hashish	Cocaine, Coca paste or crack	Ecstasy	Tranquillisers	Stimulants	Cigarettes	Alcoholic drinks
Barbados	12 to 14	17.4	5.9	7.6	1.3	0.5	2.2	1.5	7.1	45.1
	15 to 16	25.1	6.1	18.5	1.1	0.9	1.1	1.0	11.9	65.4
	17 and over	24.4	2.0	19.5	1.4	2.1	2.7	2.8	10.7	61.7
	Total	21.8	5.7	14.0	1.2	0.8	1.7	1.3	9.8	56.7
Belize	12 to 14	11.5	1.3	6.6	1.6	1.0	2.8	2.8	16.5	46.4
	15 to 16	17.3	1.6	12.7	1.0	0.3	2.9	2.8	21.9	53.5
	17 and over	23.7	2.2	19.0	1.4	1.0	4.1	2.9	25.6	65.9
	Total	18.3	1.7	13.6	1.3	0.7	3.3	2.8	22.1	56.2
Guyana	12 to 14	19.1	3.6	2.0	0.3	0.4	3.1	0.7	4.3	32.1
	15 to 16	24.5	3.1	7.1	0.8	0.9	3.7	1.1	7.2	43.0
	17 and over	26.1	4.7	7.5	0.0	0.0	7.5	1.5	5.9	57.4
	Total	20.8	3.5	3.6	0.4	0.5	3.4	0.8	5.1	35.9

Table A3: Average Age Of First Drug Use Among Students, By Type Of Drug And Gender

Country	Gender	Any Illicit Drug	Marijuana or hashish	Cocaine, Coca paste or crack	Cigarettes	Alcoholic Drink
Barbados	Male	11.5	12.2	12.1	11.1	11.2
	Female	11.8	12.9	12.7	11.8	11.3
	Total	11.6	12.6	12.4	11.5	11.3
Belize	Male	13.4	13.9	14.3	12.2	12.5
	Female	13.4	14.5	13.6	13.0	13.3
	Total	13.4	14.0	14.1	12.5	12.9
Guyana	Male	10.8	12.7	10.8	10.9	11.4
	Female	10.8	13.1	11.6	10.6	11.8
	Total	10.8	12.9	11.4	10.8	11.6

Table A4: Average Age Of First Use Of Any Illicit Drug Among Students, By Grade

Country	8th Grade	10th Grade	12th Grade
Barbados	10.1	12.0	12.3
Belize	12.7	14.2	
Guyana	10.3	11.6	10.2

Table A5: Average Age Of First Use Of Any Illicit Drug Among Students Who Currently Use (Within The Last Month), By Grade

Country	8th Grade	10th Grade	12th Grade
Barbados	9.8	11.5	11.9
Belize	12.4	13.7	
Guyana	10.1	11.2	10.7

Table A6: Average Age Of First Use Of Any Illicit Drug Among Students Who Currently Use (Within The Last Month), By Gender

Country	Male	Female	Total
Barbados	11.1	11.2	11.2
Belize	13.1	13.1	13.1
Guyana	10.9	10.4	10.6

Table A7: Prevalence Of Use Of Any Illicit Drug Among Students, By Age Groups And Gender

Country	Age	Lifetime Prevalence			Prevalence in the last year			Prevalence in the last month		
		M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Barbados	<15 Years	32.7	27.6	29.8	18.4	16.6	17.4	8.9	9.9	9.3
	15 to 16	42.5	40.4	41.3	28.2	22.7	25.1	18.8	10.8	14.4
	17 and over	45.0	35.4	39.1	28.3	21.9	24.4	16.7	11.5	13.5
Belize	<15 Years	23.1	15.1	18.9	13.1	10.1	11.5	6.3	3.9	5.0
	15 to 16	33.3	17.6	25.6	22.1	12.4	17.3	14.1	7.5	10.7
	17 and over	46.0	23.3	35.2	32.9	13.5	23.7	18.5	7.1	13.1
Guyana	<15 Years	36.7	29.7	32.7	19.8	18.7	19.1	11.0	11.0	11.0
	15 to 16	43.7	37.1	40.1	25.9	23.3	24.5	14.4	14.5	14.5
	17 and over	48.6	42.4	44.9	28.6	24.2	26.1	14.3	18.2	15.9

Table A8: Prevalence Of Use Of Any Illicit Drug Among Students, By Grade and Gender

Country	Grade	Lifetime Prevalence			Prevalence in the last year			Prevalence in the last month		
		M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Barbados	Grade 8	32.9	26.9	29.6	18.7	15.6	16.9	9.9	9.4	9.6
	Grade 10	43.1	40.4	41.8	28.5	22.9	25.7	18.4	11.9	15.4
	Grade 12	37.8	36.6	37.1	23.9	21.3	22.4	14.4	9.8	11.8
	Total	38.5	35.0	36.5	24.2	20.1	22.0	14.7	10.5	12.5
Belize	Grade 8	30.1	16.3	23.5	18.2	11.3	14.8	10.8	6.7	8.8
	Grade 10	44.3	23.2	33.5	33.7	14.0	23.7	19.4	6.4	12.9
	Total	35.2	19.0	27.2	23.7	12.4	18.1	13.9	6.6	10.3
Guyana	Grade 8	36.3	30.8	33.3	19.6	18.8	19.0	11.1	10.6	10.8
	Grade 10	43.1	31.7	36.5	24.1	20.7	22.2	12.8	13.2	13.1
	Grade 12	48.7	49.2	48.1	30.8	32.8	31.7	17.9	21.3	20.2
	Total	39.0	31.9	35.0	21.5	20.0	20.6	11.9	12.0	12.0

Table A9: Prevalence Of Use Of Any Illicit Drug Among Students, By Behaviour And Gender

Country	Discipline Problems	Lifetime Prevalence			Prevalence in the last year			Prevalence in the last month		
		M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Barbados	No data	45.1	28.6	40.0	27.5	10.7	22.5	17.6	3.6	13.8
	Never	32.4	27.3	29.4	17.6	14.8	16.0	9.3	7.4	8.3
	Once	34.2	44.3	39.0	19.8	23.9	21.7	12.3	11.0	11.5
	Several Times	60.3	71.6	64.1	48.0	53.9	49.8	32.4	34.3	33.1
	Total	38.5	35.0	36.5	24.2	20.1	22.0	14.7	10.5	12.5
Belize	No data	30.4	22.2	26.2	21.7	11.1	16.7	21.7	11.1	16.7
	Never	24.9	13.1	18.3	13.8	7.5	10.3	7.5	3.2	5.2
	Once	39.7	28.8	34.8	28.9	18.8	24.3	13.8	9.9	11.9
	Several Times	56.5	35.8	49.6	42.9	30.9	38.3	29.8	21.0	26.6
	Total	35.2	19.0	27.2	23.7	12.4	18.1	13.9	6.6	10.3
Guyana	No data	31.1	27.4	29.1	13.3	21.0	18.2	8.9	8.1	8.2
	Never	37.3	30.6	33.0	18.9	19.3	19.1	9.8	11.1	10.7
	Once	42.3	27.9	34.8	23.0	15.4	19.0	12.8	9.4	11.0
	Several Times	39.4	38.0	38.7	23.7	24.8	24.0	13.6	16.4	14.8
	Total	39.0	31.9	35.0	21.5	20.0	20.6	11.9	12.0	12.0

Table A10: Prevalence Of Use Of Any Illicit Drug Among Students, By Academic Performance And Gender

Country	Repetition of Academic years	Lifetime Prevalence			Prevalence in the last year			Prevalence in the last month		
		M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Barbados	No data	47.2	42.9	45.1	30.3	24.3	28.0	20.2	14.3	18.3
	None	37.7	33.9	35.5	22.8	19.4	20.9	13.6	10.0	11.7
	One or more years	37.5	43.5	39.7	28.3	26.1	27.5	17.5	13.0	15.9
	Total	38.5	35.0	36.5	24.2	20.1	22.0	14.7	10.5	12.5
Belize	No data	33.3	16.2	25.0	26.7	2.7	15.5	17.8	2.7	10.7
	None	28.8	17.2	22.6	19.4	11.8	15.4	11.9	5.0	8.2
	One or more years	44.4	22.9	35.0	29.4	14.8	22.8	16.2	10.3	13.7
	Total	35.2	19.0	27.2	23.7	12.4	18.1	13.9	6.6	10.3
Guyana	No data	32.8	11.9	21.8	19.7	10.4	15.0	9.8	6.0	7.5
	None	38.7	32.5	35.0	20.9	20.9	20.8	11.5	12.7	12.2
	One or more years	40.7	33.7	37.8	23.0	18.6	21.2	13.2	10.4	12.1
	Total	39.0	31.9	35.0	21.5	20.0	20.6	11.9	12.0	12.0

Table A11: Prevalence Of Any Illicit Drug By Gender And Type Of Family

Country	Type of family	Lifetime Prevalence			Last year prevalence			Last month prevalence		
		Females	Males	Total	Females	Males	Total	Females	Males	Total
Barbados	Father and mother	27.9	37.8	32.5	15.0	22.2	18.4	6.5	12.6	9.4
	Father or mother	37.2	38.8	37.9	20.9	25.2	22.9	10.9	15.9	13.3
	Stepfather or stepmother	44.7	30.6	39.9	27.7	18.4	24.5	16.0	8.2	13.3
	Other	41.7	45.2	43.1	27.3	31.0	28.7	16.7	20.2	18.1
	Total	35.0	38.6	36.6	20.1	24.2	22.0	10.4	14.7	12.4
Belize	Father and mother	16.8	31.1	24.2	10.3	19.7	15.1	5.5	10.5	8.1
	Father or mother	15.9	40.0	27.7	9.8	24.6	17.0	5.5	14.3	9.8
	Stepfather or stepmother	27.2	37.7	31.7	19.6	37.7	27.3	12.0	24.6	17.4
	Other	32.4	46.0	39.4	25.0	36.5	31.0	10.3	23.0	16.9
	Total	19.0	34.8	27.0	12.4	23.6	18.1	6.6	13.5	10.1
Guyana	Father and mother	29.2	38.9	33.7	19.4	22.0	20.6	11.2	12.0	11.6
	Father or mother	33.4	38.3	35.5	20.3	21.3	20.8	13.1	13.2	13.1
	Stepfather or stepmother	35.6	40.2	37.7	20.5	19.6	20.1	12.9	12.5	12.7
	Other	36.0	42.4	38.5	20.8	23.7	22.0	11.2	8.5	10.1
	Total	31.8	39.2	35.1	20.0	21.7	20.7	11.9	12.1	12.0

Table A12: Prevalence Of Any Illicit Drug By Grade And Parents' Marital Status

Country	Parents' marital status	8th Grade			10th Grade			12th Grade		
		Lifetime Prevalence	Last year prevalence	Last month prevalence	Lifetime Prevalence	Last year prevalence	Last month prevalence	Lifetime Prevalence	Last year prevalence	Last month prevalence
Barbados	Married	27.2	15.9	7.7	35.1	20.5	10.8	30.0	19.0	9.6
	Separated, divorced	28.6	13.1	6.9	43.4	29.0	17.1	40.2	22.1	12.4
	Widow(er)	36.4	27.3	9.1	30.0	20.0	0.0	26.7	19.6	4.4
	Living together	24.3	10.8	8.1	35.7	19.6	14.3	50.0	18.8	11.8
	Singles	33.3	23.0	13.9	47.8	27.7	16.5	38.6	24.3	14.2
	Total	28.9	16.5	9.1	41.0	24.9	14.2	36.3	21.3	11.7
Belize	Married	19.9	12.0	6.2	34.2	24.7	13.0	,	16.7	8.7
	Separated, divorced	33.8	22.2	14.5	34.0	23.1	13.6	,	22.6	14.2
	Widow(er)	31.0	16.7	4.8	35.3	35.3	11.8	,	25.0	7.9
	Living together	20.6	12.4	8.2	26.6	15.2	7.6	,	13.3	8.0
	Singles	22.7	18.2	11.4	24.0	20.0	16.0	,	18.8	13.0
	Total	23.8	14.9	8.6	32.8	23.5	12.5	,	18.0	10.0
Guyana	Married	33.2	19.1	10.8	35.5	21.7	11.7	49.0	20.8	11.4
	Separated, divorced	42.0	24.1	13.6	40.1	27.1	16.7	40.0	25.3	15.3
	Widow(er)	50.0	39.5	21.1	29.7	18.9	10.8	20.0	28.8	16.3
	Living together	27.9	14.1	9.2	36.2	18.1	12.3	41.7	15.8	10.4
	Singles	32.6	18.1	10.1	37.1	20.8	14.6	66.7	19.6	12.2
	Total	34.2	19.5	11.2	36.6	22.0	13.2	47.5	20.9	12.3

Table A13: Percentage Of Students, By Grade And Opinion About Accessibility To Illicit Drugs

Accessibility to illicit drugs	Country		
	Barbados	Belize	Guyana
8th Grade			
Very difficult	26.7	29.4	49.2
Difficult	17.3	14.1	16.3
Easy	31.1	24.3	18.2
Very easy	24.9	32.2	16.3
10th Grade			
Very difficult	11.0	10.4	34.6
Difficult	9.8	13.5	14.5
Easy	42.1	34.5	25.7
Very easy	37.1	41.7	25.2
12th Grade			
Very difficult	9.7	---	5.9
Difficult	14.1	---	5.9
Easy	42.0	---	48.5
Very easy	34.0	---	39.6

Table A14: Percentage Of Students, By Age And Opinion About Accessibility To Illicit Drugs

Country	Accessibility to illicit drugs	Age			No data
		<15	15-16	17+	
Barbados	Very difficult	23.70%	10.80%	3.50%	20.70%
	Difficult	16.00%	10.90%	13.20%	17.20%
	Easy	34.40%	41.40%	45.10%	33.30%
	Very easy	26.00%	37.00%	38.20%	28.70%
	Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Belize	Very difficult	25.50%	25.40%	16.20%	21.30%
	Difficult	14.10%	13.50%	14.00%	14.90%
	Easy	28.80%	26.30%	30.30%	27.70%
	Very easy	31.60%	34.80%	39.50%	36.20%
	Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Guyana	Very difficult	47.00%	32.00%	19.70%	50.00%
	Difficult	16.20%	13.70%	12.10%	6.30%
	Easy	20.20%	26.80%	24.20%	20.80%
	Very easy	16.70%	27.50%	43.90%	22.90%
	Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Table A15: Percentage Of Students, By Grade And Existence Of Friends Who Use Illicit Drugs

Friends who use illicit drugs	Country		
	Barbados	Belize	Guyana
8th Grade			
None	67.0	48.5	81.1
One	8.1	8.4	7.2
Several	24.9	43.0	11.7
10th Grade			
None	42.4	39.4	69.8
One	5.9	6.6	9.9
Several	51.7	53.9	20.3
12th Grade			
None	48.6	---	51.0
One	4.8	---	12.0
Several	46.6	---	37.0

Table A16: Percentage Of Students, By Age And Existence Of Friends Who Use Illicit Drugs

Country	Friends who use illicit drugs	Age			No Data
		<15	15-16	17+	
Barbados	None	63.00%	43.50%	45.70%	57.30%
	One	7.90%	5.40%	6.00%	4.20%
	Several	29.20%	51.10%	48.30%	38.50%
	Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Belize	None	50.10%	46.20%	40.70%	45.80%
	One	8.70%	8.00%	6.80%	8.30%
	Several	41.20%	45.80%	52.50%	45.80%
	Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Guyana	None	80.90%	65.30%	50.80%	82.80%
	One	7.00%	10.60%	18.50%	8.60%
	Several	12.10%	24.10%	30.80%	8.60%
	Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Table A17: Opinion Of Students On The Seriousness Of Using Illicit Drugs

Drug Practice	Opinion of drug	Barbados	Belize	Guyana
Sometimes inhaling solvents	Not serious or slightly serious	15.5	7.4	15.7
	Quite serious or very serious	68.1	66.1	64.6
	Don't know	16.4	26.4	19.7
	Total	100	100	100
Frequently inhaling solvents	Not serious or slightly serious	6.9	…	9.5
	Quite serious or very serious	76.9	…	71.8
	Don't know	16.2	…	18.7
	Total	100	…	100
Sometimes smoking marijuana	Not serious or slightly serious	23.1	…	8.3
	Quite serious or very serious	70.6	…	83.3
	Don't know	6.3	…	8.4
	Total	100	…	100
Frequently smoking marijuana	Not serious or slightly serious	12.0	…	4.6
	Quite serious or very serious	81.5	…	86.5
	Don't know	6.5	…	9.0
	Total	100	…	100
Sometimes taking cocaine	Not serious or slightly serious	5.7	…	4.3
	Quite serious or very serious	86.7	…	87.0
	Don't know	7.6	…	8.7
	Total	100	…	100
Frequently taking cocaine	Not serious or slightly serious	2.3	…	3.4
	Quite serious or very serious	89.3	…	87.2
	Don't know	8.3	…	9.4
	Total	100	…	100

Table A18: Prevalence Of Drug Use By Opinions On The Dangers Of That Drug

Drug Practice	Opinion of drug	Barbados			Guyana		
		Lifetime	Year	Month	Lifetime	Year	Month
Sometimes smoking marijuana	Not serious or slightly serious	53.9	37.1	23.5	28.0	17.2	10.6
	Quite serious or very serious	14.2	6.8	2.8	5.2	2.5	1.2
	Don't know	17.2	11.0	6.3	5.6	0.9	0.9
Frequently smoking marijuana	Not serious or slightly serious	67.2	53.1	37.7	29.4	17.8	9.3
	Quite serious or very serious	17.3	8.4	3.7	5.9	2.9	1.6
	Don't know	19.7	12.2	6.1	7.5	2.2	1.8
Sometimes taking cocaine	Not serious or slightly serious	17.9	12.5	10.7	4.3	1.7	1.7
	Quite serious or very serious	1.4	0.5	0.2	0.8	0.4	0.1
	Don't know	4.6	1.3	0.7	0.5	0.0	0.0
Frequently taking cocaine	Not serious or slightly serious	36.4	29.5	25.0	4.5	2.2	2.2
	Quite serious or very serious	1.5	0.5	0.3	0.9	0.4	0.1
	Don't know	4.8	1.8	0.6	0.4	0.0	0.0