



CISDUS Brief

July 2007

Trends in Any Illicit Drug Use by Students, 1998-2006

This brief focuses on the use of drugs, other than ganja, by students in 7th- to 12th-grade in the Cayman Islands, and trends in use between 1998 and 2006. The findings are based on data from the Cayman Islands Student Drug Use Survey (CISDUS), which was conducted in 1998, 2000, 2002, and most recently in 2006.

Lifetime Drug Use, 2006

Among the twelve drugs presented in Figure 1, inhalants (i.e., glue and other solvents) are the most commonly used, with just over one-in-ten (11.5%) students reporting use at least once in their lifetime. Stimulants are the next most common drug, with 5.5% ever using. The lifetime prevalence rates for the remaining drugs are 2% or less.

Key Highlights

- † In 2006, other than ganja, the most prevalent illicit drug used was inhalants, followed by stimulants.
- † About 7% of students in grades 7 to 12 used any illicit drug, excluding inhalants and ganja, at least once in the year prior to the survey.
- † Males and females are equally likely to use any illicit drug, excluding inhalants and ganja. There is no significant variation among the grades, or among the districts regarding any drug use.
- † Use of any illicit drug, excluding inhalants and ganja, has not significantly changed since 1998.
- † A small percentage (1%) of students may have a problem with their drug use.

Past Year Drug Use, 2006

As shown in Figure 1, the pattern of past year prevalence rates for the twelve drugs parallels that of lifetime use. Inhalants are the most commonly used drugs, with 8.4% of students reporting use at least once during the past year, followed by stimulants (3.0%). The 2006 past year prevalence rates for the remaining drugs do not exceed 2%.

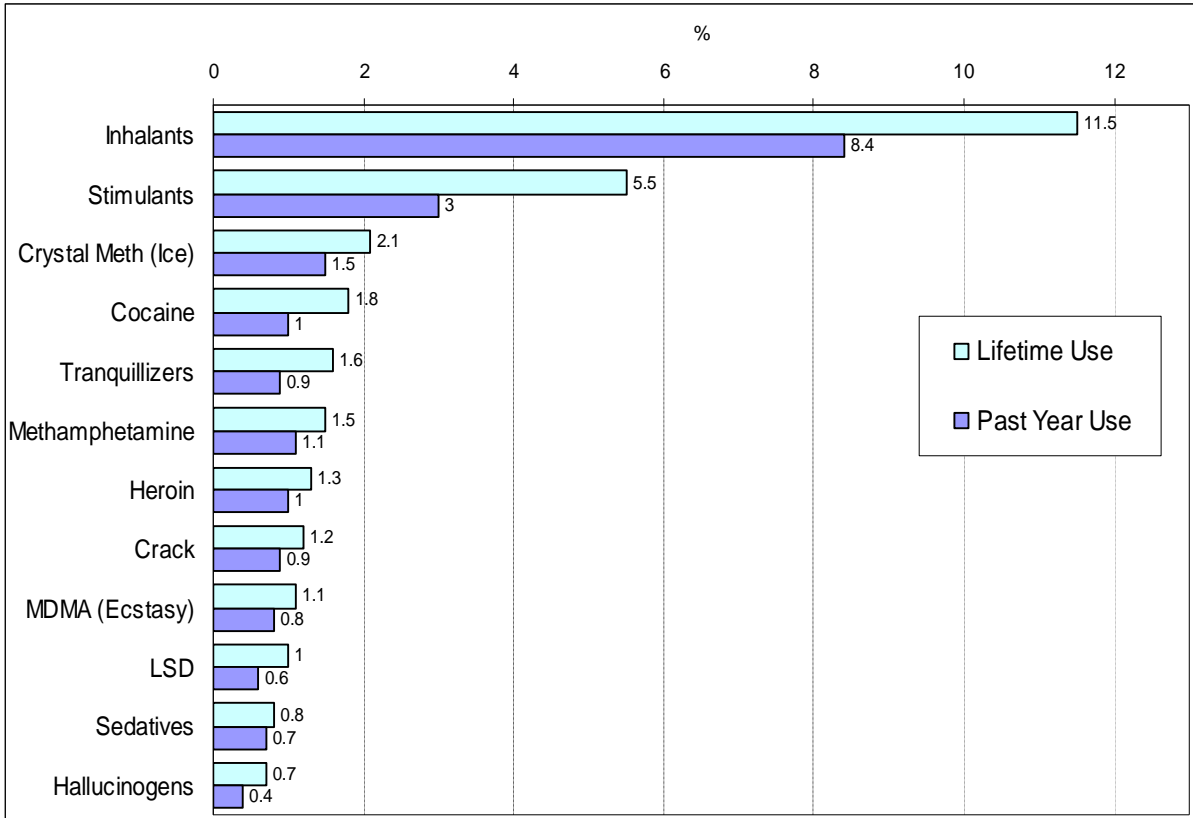
Any Drug Use, Excluding Inhalants and Ganja

Because of their low rates (i.e., under 3%), reports of the use of the following eleven drugs were combined to create a composite indicator: sedatives, heroin, methamphetamine, crystallized methamphetamine (“Ice”), stimulants, tranquilizers, LSD, other hallucinogens, cocaine, crack, and MDMA (“Ecstasy”). Excluded are inhalants and ganja.

In 2006, 6.9% of students used any drug, excluding inhalants and ganja, at least once in the year before the survey (see Table 1). There is no significant difference between males (6.8%) and females (7.8%). Despite some variation among the grades, and among the districts, these differences were not statistically significant.

Drug use has not significantly changed over time. As seen in Table 1, drug use, excluding ganja, among in 2006 (6.9%) does not differ from the rate found in 1998 (6.2%) or in 2002 (6.6%). Among the subgroups, there has been no change in drug use over time for either males or females. Seventh graders showed a significant increase in use between 1998 (5.0%) and 2006 (8.7%). Tenth graders showed a decrease between 2002 (9.8%) and 2006 (5.9%). No other grade showed a significant change between 1998 and 2006. No district showed a significant change in the use of any drug, excluding ganja (see Table 1).

Figure 1. Lifetime and Past Year Use (%) of Various Drugs, Grades 7 to 12, 2006 CISDUS (N=2,480)



Notes: "lifetime use" refers to ever using the drug at least once; "past year use" refers to use of the drug at least once during the 12 months before the survey; inhalants include glue and other solvents, such as nail polish remover.

Table 1. Trends in Any Illicit Drug Use, Excluding Inhalants and Ganja, in the Past Year (%), by Sex, Grade and District, 1998-2006

		1998 (N=)	2000 (2186)	2002 (2187)	2006 (2480)	Overall Change 1998 to 2006	Comparing 2006 vs 2002	Comparing 2006 vs 1998
Total		6.2	5.4	6.6	6.9	ns	ns	ns
Sex	Male	4.9	5.5	6.4	6.8	ns	ns	ns
	Female	7.4	5.4	6.7	7.0	ns	ns	ns
Grade	7	5.0	4.9	5.8	8.7	ns	ns	*
	8	4.5	4.0	7.1	6.3	ns	ns	ns
	9	6.4	6.1	4.4	6.0	ns	ns	ns
	10	5.2	6.2	9.8	5.9	ns	*	ns
	11	9.0	5.7	7.5	7.2	ns	ns	ns
	12	8.8	5.7	4.5	7.3	ns	ns	ns
District	West Bay	4.5	4.6	7.5	6.8	ns	ns	ns
	George Town	6.8	6.0	6.0	6.5	ns	ns	ns
	Bodden Town	5.9	4.3	6.9	6.4	ns	ns	ns
	East End	5.6	6.3	10.1	14.1	ns	ns	ns
	North Side	10.5	7.8	6.7	7.1	ns	ns	ns
	Cayman Brac	5.5	5.5	5.0	7.1	ns	ns	ns

Notes: (1) * p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001; ns=not significant; (2) sex*year interaction=ns, grade*year interaction=ns, district*year interaction=ns.

Potential Drug Use Problem

The CISDUS asked students four questions to assess the extent of a potential drug use problem. The four questions are: (1) “Are you always able to stop using drugs when you want to?”; (2) “Have you gone to anyone for help for a drug problem?”; (3) “Have you had blackouts or flashbacks due to your drug use?”; and (4) “Have you had any medical problems as a result of your drug use?” Experiencing two or more of these four symptoms was used as an indicator of a potential drug use problem.

Few Cayman Islands students report symptoms of a drug use problem. The most common symptom experienced is being unable to stop using drugs (uncontrolled use), reported by 3.4% of all students.

The next most common symptom is experiencing blackouts or flashbacks (2.6%), followed by seeking help for a drug problem (1.0%), and having medical problems due to one’s drug use (0.6%). Males are more likely than females to experience most of these symptoms.

A small percentage (1.2%) of students may have a problem with drug use in that they have experienced at least two of the four symptoms. There is no difference between males (1.5%) and females (0.8%). Despite some variation, there are no significant differences among the grades, or among the districts (data not shown).

There has been no significant change in the percentage of students who report a potential drug use problem. The percentage was 0.8% in 1998, 0.9% in 2000, 1.0% in 2002, and 1.2% in 2006.

Comparisons with Other Student Surveys

Table 2 compares estimates of any past year drug use, excluding ganja, among students in grades 8, 10 and 12 in the Cayman Islands, Ontario, Canada, and the United States. Drug use among 10th- and 12th-graders in the Cayman Islands is relatively lower than that among students in Ontario and the United States. Drug use by 8th-graders is similar in all three regions.

Table 2. Any Drug Use, Excluding Inhalants and Ganja, in the Past Year (%) for Grades 8, 10, and 12: Comparing the 2006 CISDUS, 2005 OSDUS, and the 2006 MTF Survey Findings

	CISDUS	OSDUS	MTF
Grade 8	6.3	7.2	7.7
Grade 10	5.9	14.2	12.7
Grade 12	7.3	17.0	19.2

Note: OSDUS is the *Ontario Student Drug Use Survey*, which was conducted in Ontario, Canada; MTF is the *Monitoring the Future* survey, which was conducted across the USA.

Methods

The CISDUS employs a census (i.e., a 100% sample) of students enrolled in grades 7 to 12. All twelve middle and high schools in the Cayman Islands participated in the 1998, 2000, 2002 and 2006 surveys. Of the 2,945 enrolled students, 2,480 completed questionnaires in 2006; 2,187 in 2002; 2,186 in 2000, and 1,946 completed questionnaires in 1998. Student participation rates were 84% in 2006, 88% in 2002, 94% in 2000 and 86.0% in 1998. The demographic composition of the sample did not significantly change between 1998 and 2006.

Because of the survey's complete sample (i.e., a census) there is no sampling error attached to an estimate (although estimates still have error based on non-sampling error, such as misreporting). Thus, no confidence intervals are required. Regarding the survey results, readers should bear in mind the following points:

- Since there is still the element of chance findings, the element of non-sampling errors, we cannot treat all absolute differences in percentages as meaningful and important.
- Small percentages are more unreliable than larger percentages.

Terminology

- **Any Drug Use, Excluding Inhalants and Ganja** is defined as use of one or more of the following 11 drugs at least once during the past 12 months: sedatives, heroin, methamphetamine, crystallized methamphetamine ("Ice"), stimulants, tranquilizers, LSD, other hallucinogens, cocaine, crack, and MDMA ("Ecstasy").
- **Significant Difference** refers to a difference between percentages that is not likely due to chance. For example, a difference found at the $p < .05$ level of statistical significance is one that is less than 5% likely to occur by chance alone. In this report, any difference is considered statistically significant if the probability is at the .05 level or lower.

Source

Miller, S.C., Paglia-Boak, A., & Adlaf, E.M. (2007). *Illicit Drug Use Among Students in The Cayman Islands: CISDUS Findings 1998 - 2006*. Cayman Islands: National Drug Council.

To obtain the CISDUS questionnaire or other CISDUS Reports, please call (345) 949-9000.