



CISDUS Brief

July 2007

Trends in Ganja Use by Students, 1998-2006

This brief discusses ganja use and problems among 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.

Ganja Use in 2006

In 2006, 5.8% of students in grades 7 to 12 reported using ganja at least once during the month before the survey, and 9.7% used at least once during the past year (Figure 1). About 4% of all students used once or twice in the past year, 1.2% used 3 to 5 times, and 4.3% used ganja 6 or more times in the past year.

Key Highlights

- † In 2006, about one-in-ten students (10%) in grades 7 to 12 used ganja at least once in the year prior to the survey.
- † Males are more likely than females to use ganja. Ganja use increases with grade. There is no significant variation among the districts.
- † Past-year ganja use is higher in 2006 (10%) compared to 1998 (7%) and 2000 (7%), but similar to use reported in 2002 (10%). Males showed a significant increase in use over time, but females' use remained stable. Only students in 10th- and 12th-grade showed an increase in ganja use since 1998.
- † Just over one-quarter of all students say that ganja is "easy" or "very easy" to obtain.
- † Over half of past-year ganja users report at least one symptom of a dependence problem.

Males are more likely than females to report past-month and past-year ganja use. For example, 8.6% of males used ganja in the past month compared to 3.1% of females (see Figure 1). Both past-month and past-year use significantly increase with grade. Between grades 7 and 12, past-month use increases from 1.6% up to 11.1%, while past-year use increases from 2.4% up to 18.4%. Despite some variation, there are no significant differences in ganja use among the six districts.

The 2006 CISDUS found that, among those reporting ever using ganja (N=355), the average age of first use was 12.9 years. About 22% of users reported an "early onset" of use – that is, they first used ganja between the ages of 6 and 11.

Trends in Past Year Ganja Use

Table 1 presents trends in past year ganja use between 1998 and 2006, for all students as well as among demographic subgroups. Among all students, ganja use in 2006 (9.7%) is significantly higher than the rate found in 1998 (6.6%) and 2000 (7.2%), but is similar to 2002 (9.5%). Among males, the 2006 prevalence is higher than that found in 1998. However, use among females has remained stable over time. Ganja use by students in grades 10 and 12 significantly increased between 1998 and 2006, while use among other grades remained stable. Among the districts, only students in George Town and Bodden Town showed significant increases in ganja use in 2006 compared to 1998. It is important to note that no subgroup showed a significant change in use between 2002 and 2006.

As seen in Figure 2, frequent ganja use – defined as using 6 or more times during the past year – significantly increased between 1998 (2.6%) and 2006 (4.3%).

Figure 1. Past Year and Past Month Ganja Use By Sex, Grade and District, 2006 (N=2,451)

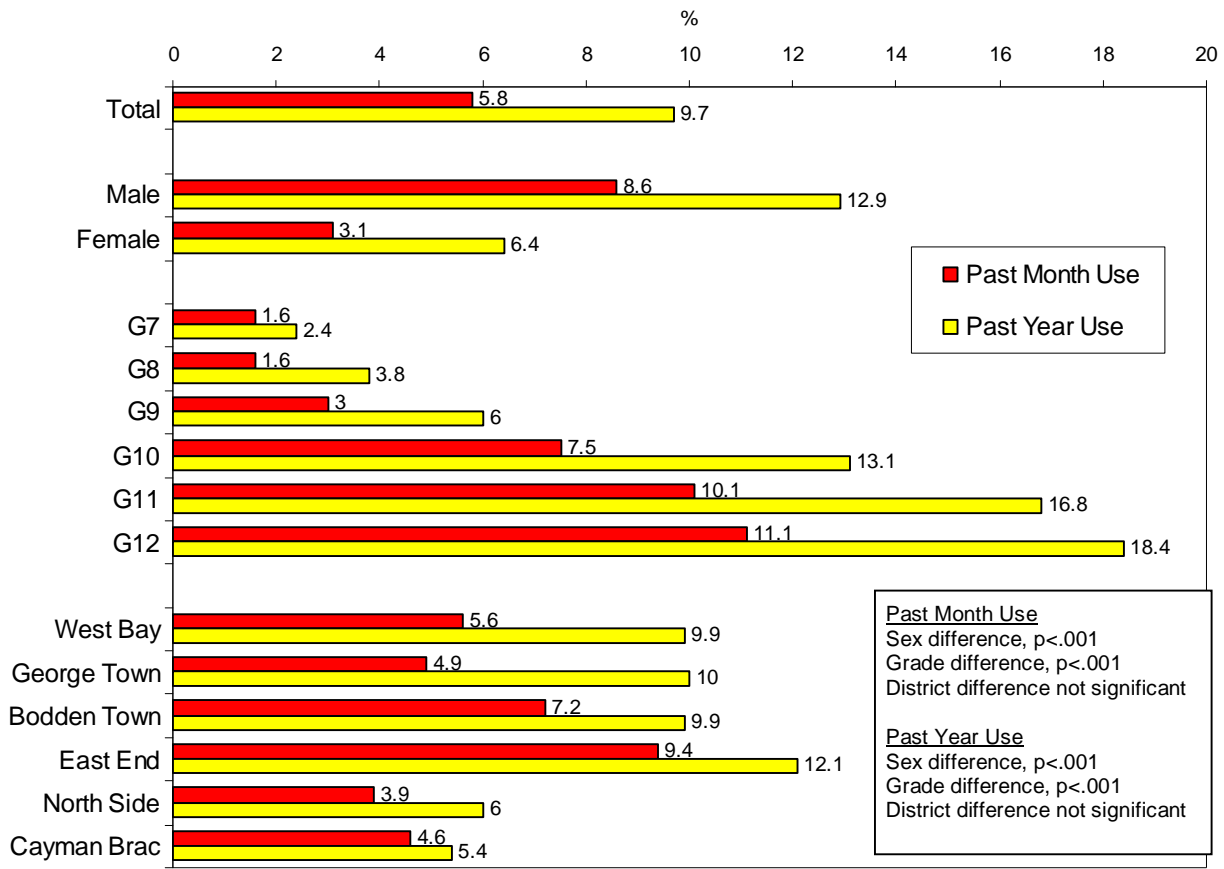


Figure 2. Frequency of Ganja Use in the Past Year, Grades 7-12, 1998-2006

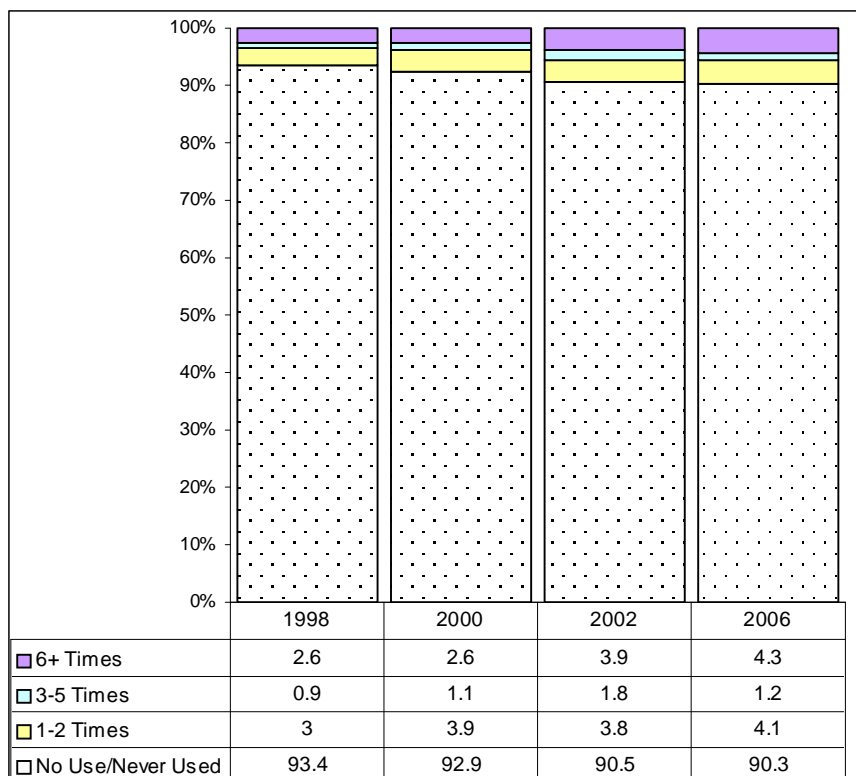


Table 1. Trends in Past Year Ganja Use (%), by Sex, Grade and District, 1998-2006

		(N=)	1998 (1946)	2000 (2186)	2002 (2187)	2006 (2451)	Overall Change 1998 to 2006	Comparing 2006 vs 2002	Comparing 2006 vs 1998
Total			6.6	7.2	9.5	9.7	***	ns	***
Sex	Male		8.5	8.3	11.8	12.9	***	ns	***
	Female		4.7	6.1	7.4	6.4	ns	ns	ns
Grade	7		1.7	1.2	1.9	2.4	ns	ns	ns
	8		2.9	2.4	3.6	3.8	ns	ns	ns
	9		5.8	5.3	6.5	6.0	ns	ns	ns
	10		6.4	9.4	13.9	13.1	**	ns	**
	11		14.0	10.9	18.8	16.8	*	ns	ns
	12		11.9	16.0	16.6	18.4	ns	ns	*
District	West Bay		10.6	6.8	10.1	9.9	ns	ns	ns
	George Town		6.5	7.6	9.8	10.0	**	ns	**
	Bodden Town		3.9	7.1	10.0	9.9	**	ns	***
	East End		5.7	7.8	3.8	12.1	ns	ns	ns
	North Side		4.0	7.8	6.8	6.0	ns	ns	ns
	Cayman Brac		4.5	3.9	10.0	5.4	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.

Perceived Availability of Ganja

In 2006, just over one-quarter (26%) of all students in grades 7 to 12 reported that it is “easy” or “very easy” to obtain ganja. Of course, this increases linearly with grade, from 4% of 7th-graders to 53% of 12th-graders.

Symptoms of Ganja Dependence

The CISDUS asked students two questions about problems with ganja use, which are considered key indicators of dependence. The first question addressed unsuccessful quit attempts, and the second question asked if they had attempted to reduce their ganja use in the past year.

In 2006, 16% of past-year ganja users (2.5% of all students) reported that they had tried to quit, but were not successful. Almost half (49%) of users (7% of all students) reported that they had tried to reduce their use in the past year. The percentage of ganja users reporting one or both of these symptoms in 2006 was 53% (8% of all students).

Comparisons with Other Student Surveys

Table 2 compares estimates of past year ganja use among students in grades 8, 10 and 12 in the Cayman Islands, Ontario, Canada, and the United States. Generally speaking, ganja use by Cayman Islands students is relatively lower than that by Ontario students and American students.

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

	CISDUS	OSDUS	MTF
Grade 8	3.8	9.7	11.7
Grade 10	13.1	33.6	25.2
Grade 12	18.4	46.2	31.5

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

- **Past Month Ganja Use** is defined as use of ganja (i.e., marijuana) at least once during the past 4 weeks.
- **Past Year Ganja Use** is defined as use of ganja (i.e., marijuana) at least once during the past 12 months.
- **Early Age of Onset** is defined as first using ganja between the ages of 6 and 11.
- **Perceived Availability** is defined as reporting that it is "easy" or "very easy" to obtain ganja if one wanted.
- **Unsuccessful Quit Attempts** was measured with the question "Have you ever tried to stop using ganja/herb or hashish but found you couldn't stop?"
- **Attempts to Reduce Use** was measured with the question "In the last 12 months, have you tried to cut down your use of ganja/herb or hashish?"
- **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

Chesnut, C.A., Adlaf, E.M., & Miller, S.C. (2006). *Drug Use Among Students in the Cayman Islands 1998-2006; Ganja Report*. Cayman Islands: National Drug Council.

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