

## Student Drug Use in LGL (2009)

### Highlights:

- Alcohol, cannabis and tobacco are the 3 most prevalent drugs used.
- Almost 19% of LGL students reported the non-medical use of prescription drugs.
- Almost 17% of LGL students reported using an illicit drug in their lifetime.

### Overview of Student Drug Use in LGL (2009)

This report on student drug use contains data from both elementary (Gr. 7-8) and secondary (Gr. 9-12) schools situated in Leeds, Grenville and Lanark counties. The data was gathered in May of 2009 from a total of 16 schools and 872 students. Schools were randomly selected to allow for the widest possible capture of the student population.

This report summarizes the use of alcohol, cannabis, tobacco, non-medicinal prescription drugs, and any illicit drugs

by both male and female respondents in grades 7 through 12.

The report contains analysis of drug use in the 12-month period prior to the survey as well as lifetime use. Data is presented overall, by sex, school type (elementary vs. secondary) and grade where numbers of respondents permit.

A more comprehensive analysis of Ontario-wide student drug use data can be found in the 2009 OSDUHS report<sup>1</sup>.



### The OSDUHS Survey

The Ontario Student Drug Use & Health Survey (OSDUHS) has been collecting health information on Ontario students for over 30-years. One purpose of the OSDUHS is to provide epidemiological surveillance of trends in substance use/misuse by Ontario students in grades 7 through 12.

The OSDUHS survey used in this report was instituted by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) in conjunction with the Institute for Social Research, the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit and five other Ontario health units. The OSDUHS survey employs a weighted complex probability stratified cluster design that accounts for unequally-

represented populations (e.g. older teen-age males tend to be under-represented in the OSDUHS).

Small numbers of respondents to a question tend to produce wide variability that renders them too unstable to use as a reliable estimate. As a rule of thumb, estimates based on samples of less than 30 respondents were suppressed. As well, estimates with sampling variability that gave Coefficient of Variation (CV) values greater than what has been determined acceptable by Statistics Canada<sup>2</sup> were either reported with a cautionary note indicated by an asterisk (\*) or were suppressed (see page 17 for more details about the OSDUHS survey).

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## Highlight Summary

### *Some Quick Facts*

#### Overall Drug Use:

- Alcohol, cannabis and tobacco were the three most prevalent drugs used by students in grades 7 through 12 in LGL in 2009.
- Patterns of drug use were similar in LGL and Ontario overall.
- Patterns of lifetime drug use were identical to past year drug use.

#### Alcohol Use:

- Overall, 37% of students reported never having drank alcohol ever, rarely or in the 12-months prior to the survey.
- Alcohol was the most commonly used drug reported by survey respondents (~61%).
- About 36% of secondary school students reported drinking two or more times per month.

#### Cannabis Use:

- Close to 70% of students reported never having used cannabis ever, or in the 12-months prior to the survey.
- More students reported using cannabis than tobacco in the 12-months prior to the survey.
- Almost 32% of students reported using cannabis at some point during their lives.
- Almost 60% of grade 12 students reported using cannabis at least once in their lives.

#### Tobacco Use:

- Close to 75% of students reported never having used tobacco.
- The prevalence of using tobacco at least once in their lives is significantly higher for students in grades 11 and 12 compared to students in LGL overall.

#### Non-Medical Prescription Drug Use:

- Almost one in five respondents had used a prescription drug for non-medical (NM) purposes in the 12-months prior to the survey.
- Almost a quarter of students in grades 10 through 12 reported using a prescription drug for NM purposes at least once during their lifetime.

#### Illicit Drug & Solvent Use:

- Over 12% of respondents reported using an illicit drug or solvent in the 12-months prior to the survey.
- Almost 15% of respondents reported using an illicit drug or solvent in their lifetime.
- Over 14% of students in secondary school reported using an illicit drug or solvent in the 12-months prior to the survey.

## Overview of Drug Use (2009)

### Past Year Drug Use

Alcohol was the most prevalent drug of choice amongst students in LGL in 2009 with 61.4% (95% CI: 57.3, 65.3) reporting its use in the 12-months prior to the survey (Figure 1). Cannabis was the second-most prevalent drug reported at 28.1% (95% CI: 23.5, 33.1) for past-year use and tobacco ranked third at 17.8% (95% CI: 13.5, 23.0). The use of opioid pain-relievers (Percocet, Percodan, Tylenol 3, Demerol, codein) for non-medical (NM) reasons was reported as 11.8% (95% CI: 7.6, 17.9). The use of over-the-counter (OTC) cold medications (e.g. Robitussin DM), NM use of stimulants (e.g. diet/stay awake pills) and NM use of OxyContin ranked 5th through 7th respectively.

Ontario data provided here<sup>1</sup> shows an almost identical pattern as that in LGL with similar rates of both alcohol and cannabis use, lower rates of tobacco (11.7%) and higher rates of NM pain reliever use (17.8%). As well, the Ontario rates of past year smoking rank 4th and NM opioid pain reliever use rank 3rd.

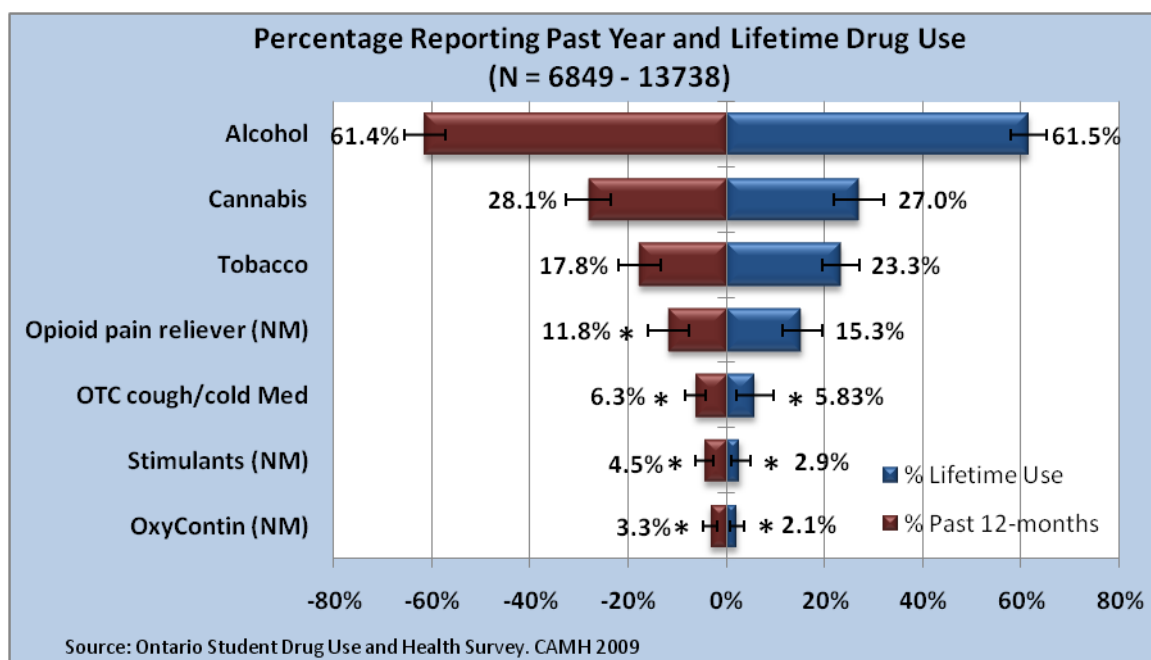
### Lifetime Drug Use

The pattern of lifetime drug use was identical to that of past year drug use (Figure 1) with alcohol, cannabis and tobacco use being the three most common drugs cited by survey respondents. However, lifetime use of tobacco was higher than the prevalence found in past year use suggesting that many students report trying tobacco but do not persist in smoking over time.

The pattern of lifetime drug use reporting for LGL students was identical to Ontario data<sup>1</sup>.

The remainder of this document will describe this data in greater detail by reporting it by alcohol, cannabis, tobacco, non-medicinal prescription drugs, and any illicit drug or solvent use.

**Figure 1:** Overall drug use

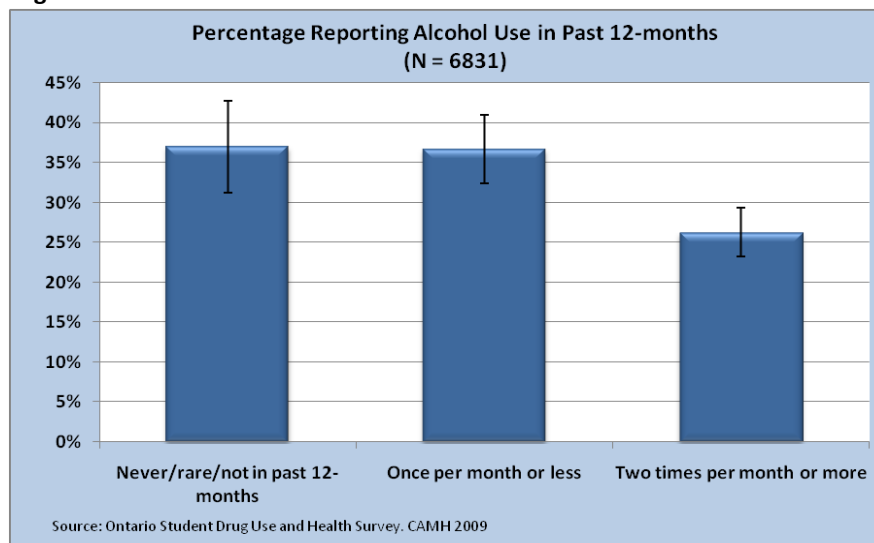


## Alcohol Use

### Past Year Alcohol Use

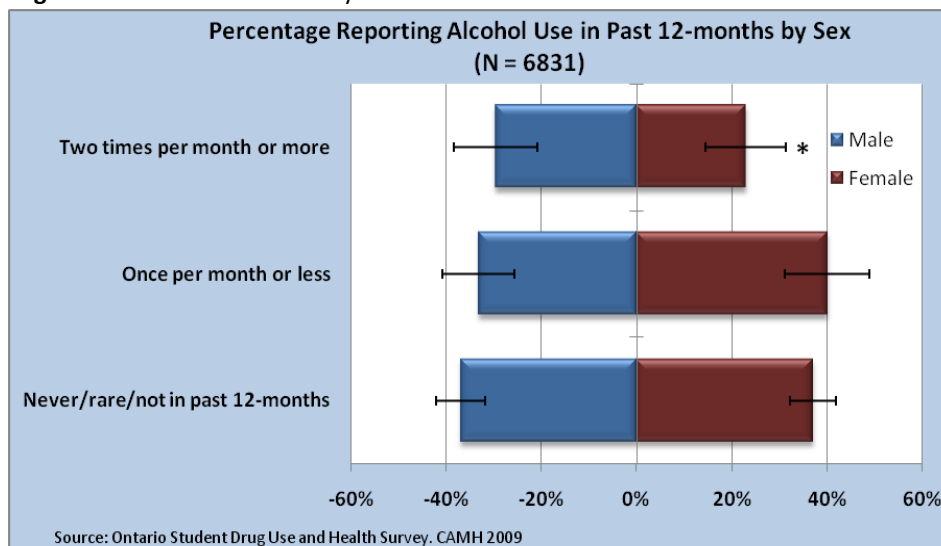
- Overall, 37% (95% CI: 34.1, 40.0) of students reported having never drank, rarely drank, or having not drank alcohol in the 12-months prior to the survey (Figure 2).
- A full 26% reported drinking more than once a month.
- 36.7% (95% CI: 29.3, 44.8) reported drinking once per month or less.

**Figure 2:** Overall alcohol use



- Equal proportions (37%) of males and females reported having never drank/rarely drinking alcohol or having not drank in the 12-months prior to the survey (Figure 3).
- Males were more likely to report drinking two or more times per month (29.7% vs. 22.9%), although the difference between the sexes was not statistically significant.

**Figure 3:** Overall alcohol use by sex

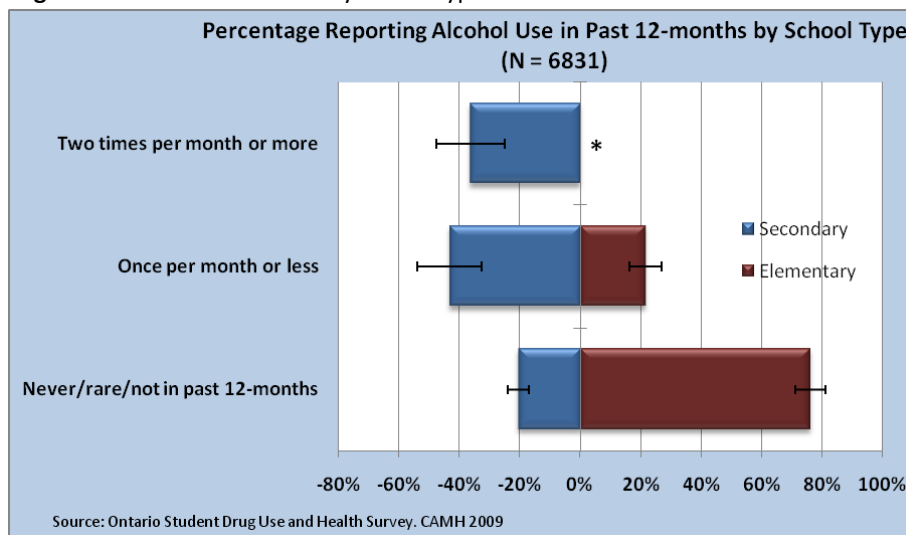


## Alcohol Use

### Past Year Alcohol Use

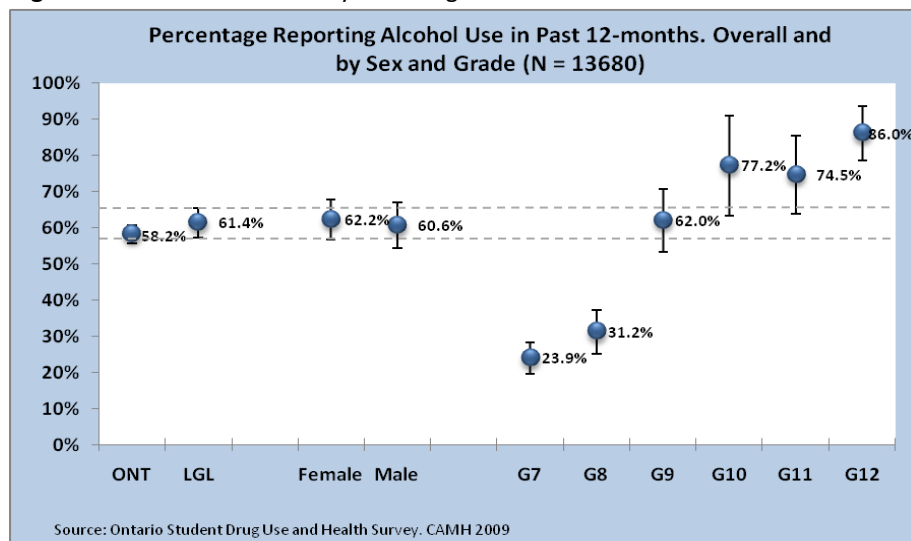
- As expected, 76.0% (95% CI: 71.1, 80.3) of elementary school students reported having never/rarely drank alcohol or having not drunk in the 12-months prior to the survey (Figure 4).
- 36.4% (95% CI: 25.1, 49.4) of secondary school students reported drinking more than once per month.

**Figure 4:** Overall alcohol use by school type



- Rates of past year drinking for students in LGL compared to Ontario overall were similar (Figure 5).
- Rates of past year drinking between males and females were similar.
- Statistically significant increases in past year drinking were associated with school grade. The average rate of increase was close to 13% per year with the largest jump occurring between grades 8 and 9.

**Figure 5:** Overall alcohol use by sex and grade

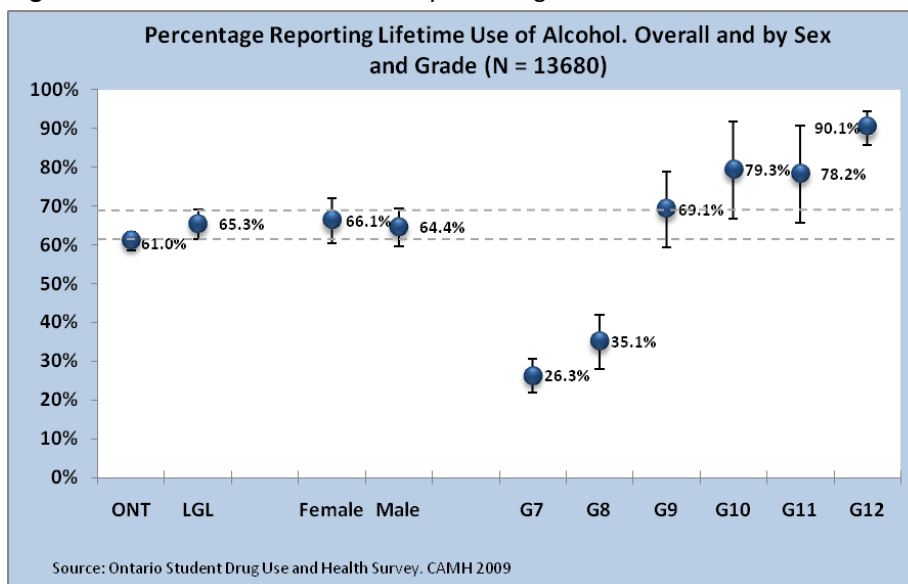


## Alcohol Use

### Lifetime Alcohol Use

- Rates of lifetime alcohol use were slightly higher than past year use in all categories (Figure 6).
- Overall Ontario rates were slightly lower than LGL but the difference was not statistically significant.
- Males and females reported similar lifetime rates of alcohol use.
- As with past year alcohol use, statistically significant increases in drinking were associated with school grade. The average rate of increase was close to 13% per year with the largest jump occurring between grades 8 and 9.
- By grade twelve, 90.1% (95% CI: 85.8, 93.2) of students report using alcohol at least once in their lifetime.

**Figure 6:** Overall lifetime alcohol use by sex and grade

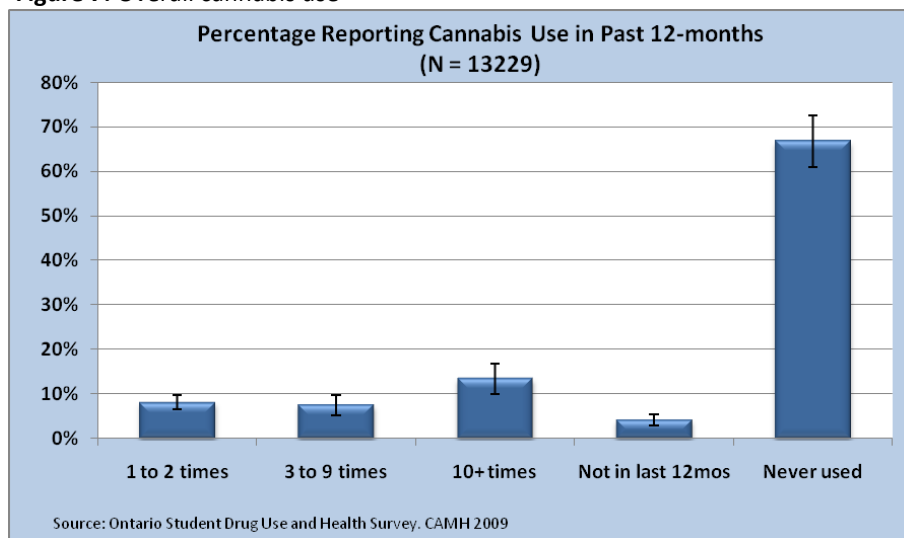


## Cannabis Use

### Past Year Cannabis Use

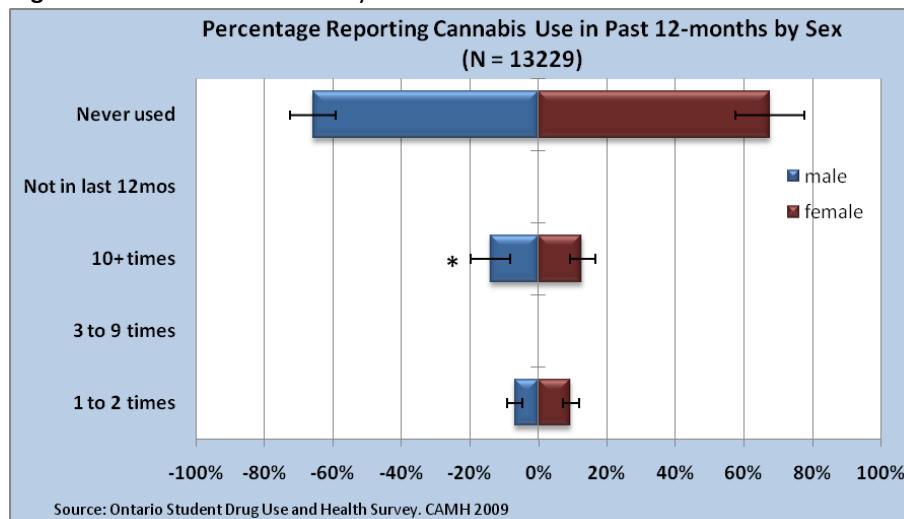
- Overall, 66.7% (95% CI: 60.9, 72.0) of students reported having never used cannabis in the 12-months prior to the survey (Figure 7).
- Another 4.2% (95% CI: 2.9, 5.9) reported using cannabis but not in the 12-months prior to the survey.
- A combined 13.7% reported using cannabis less than 9-times in the 12-months prior to the survey.
- 13.5% (95% CI: 10.0, 17.9) reported using cannabis 10 or more times in the 12-months prior to the survey.

**Figure 7:** Overall cannabis use



- About equal proportions (66%) of males and females reported having never used cannabis (Figure 8).
- Males were slightly more likely to report using cannabis (13.9% vs. 12.9%) 10 or more times during the 12-months prior to the survey, although the differences were not statistically significant.

**Figure 8:** Overall cannabis use by sex

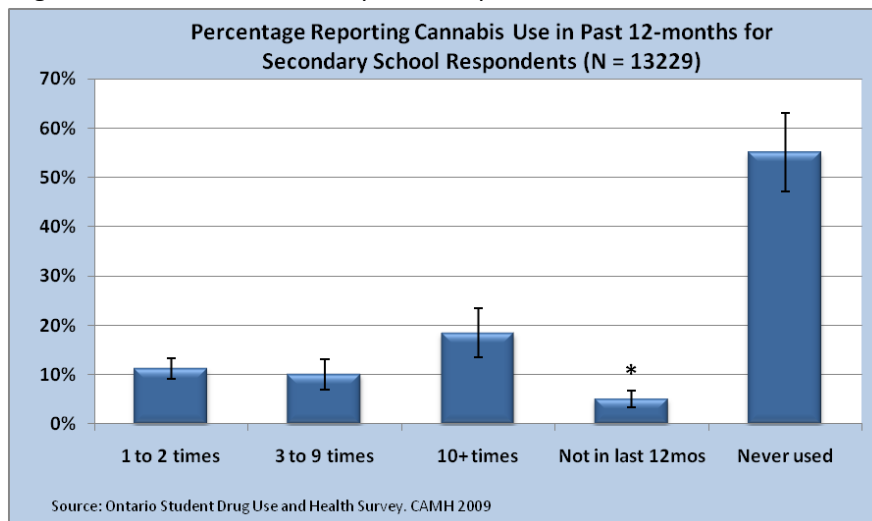


## Cannabis Use

### Past Year Cannabis Use

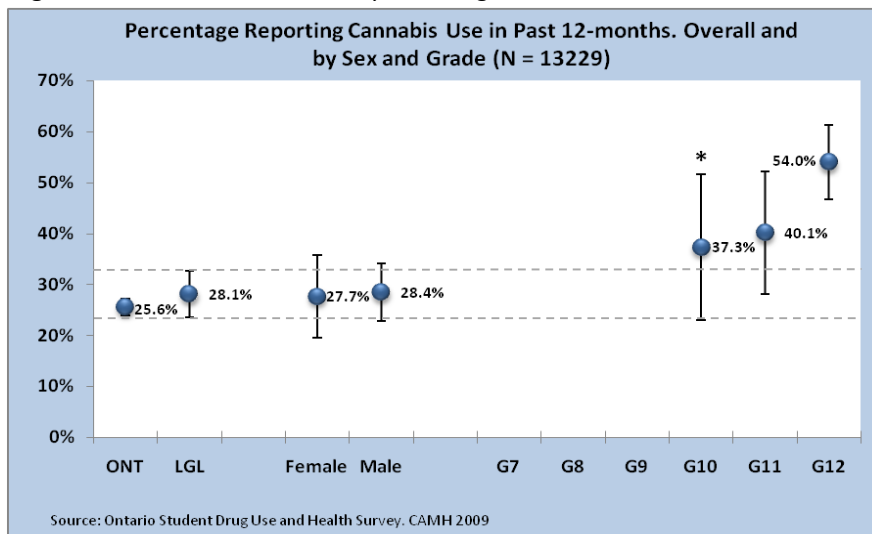
- 55.1% (95% CI: 47.1, 62.8) of secondary school students reported never having used cannabis (elementary school student data not reported due to high variability) (Figure 9).
- A further 5.1% (95% CI: 3.5, 7.6) reported not having used cannabis in the 12-months prior to the survey.
- 18.4% (95% CI: 13.5, 24.7) of secondary school students reported using cannabis 10 or more times in the 12-months prior to the survey.

**Figure 9:** Overall cannabis use by secondary school students



- Rates of past year cannabis use for students in LGL compared to Ontario overall were similar (Figure 10).
- Rates of past year cannabis use between males and females were similar.
- Statistically significant increases in past year cannabis use were associated with school grade when compared to LGL overall. The average rate of increase was 8.4% per year with the largest jump occurring between grades 11 and 12 (grades 7-9 not reported due to high variability).

**Figure 10:** Overall cannabis use by sex and grade



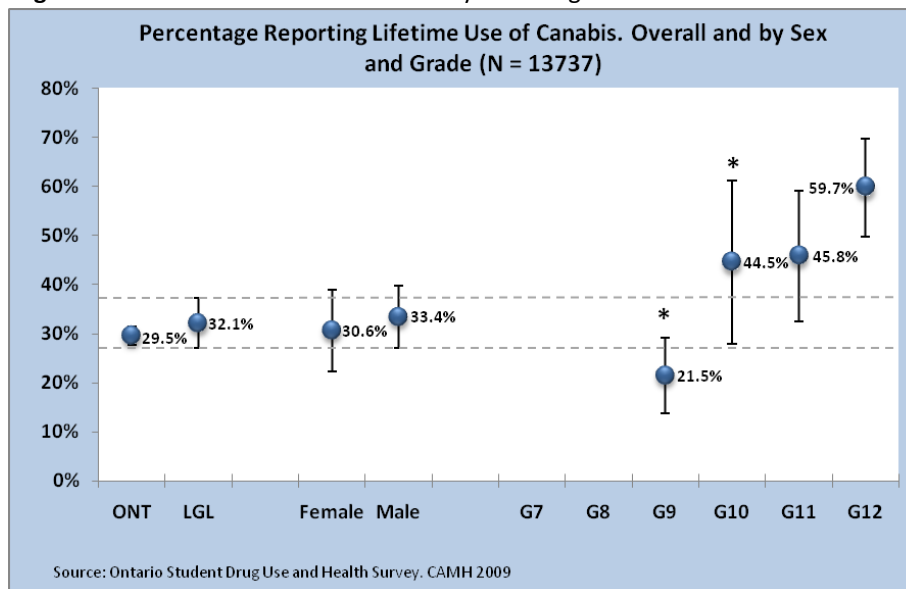


## Cannabis Use

### Lifetime Cannabis Use

- Rates of lifetime cannabis use were slightly higher than past year use in all categories (Figures 10 & 11).
- Overall Ontario rates were slightly lower than LGL but the difference was not statistically significant.
- Males and females were equally likely to report lifetime cannabis use.
- As with past year cannabis use, statistically significant increases in cannabis use were associated with school grade. The average rate of increase was close to 13% per year with the largest jump occurring between grades 9 and 10.
- By grade 12 almost 60% of students report using cannabis at least once in their lifetime.

**Figure 11:** Overall lifetime cannabis use by sex and grade

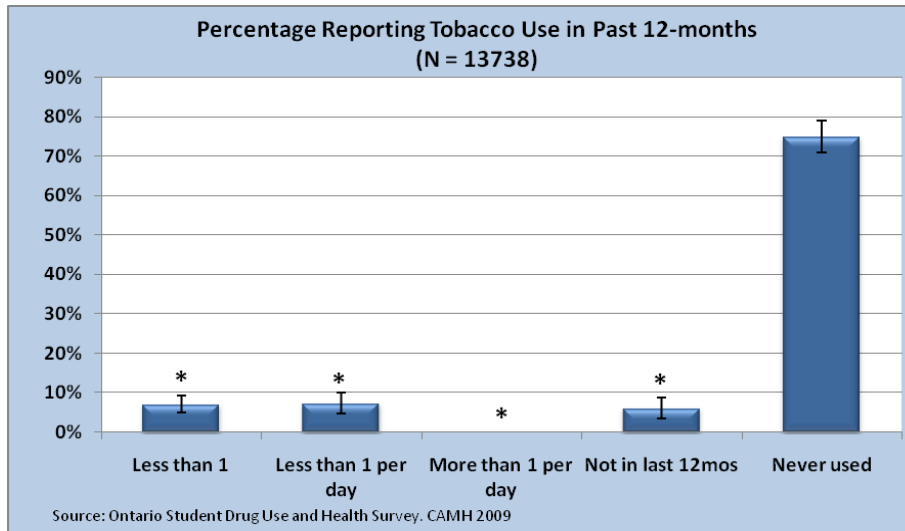


## Tobacco Use

### Past Year Tobacco Use

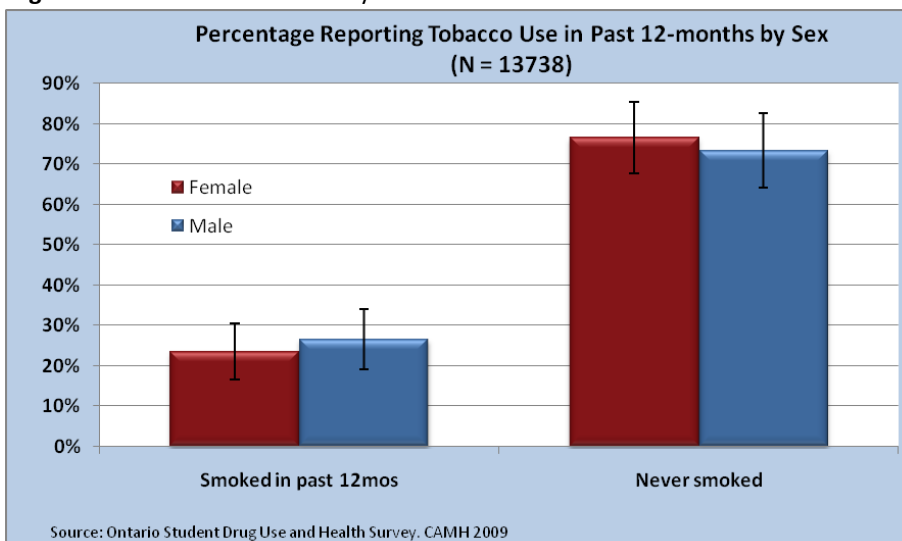
- Overall, 74.9% (95% CI: 71.0, 78.5) of students reported having never used tobacco (Figure 12).
- Another 6.1% (95% CI: 3.5, 10.5) reported using tobacco but not in the 12-months prior to the survey.
- 7.1% (95% CI: 4.9, 10.2) reported smoking less than one full cigarette in the 12-months prior to the survey.
- 7.3% (95% CI: 4.7, 11.2) reported smoking less than one cigarette per day in the 12-months prior to the survey.

**Figure 12:** Overall tobacco use



- Higher proportions of females reported having never used tobacco (76.6%) than males (73.4%) (Figure 13). However, these differences are not statistically significant.

**Figure 13:** Overall tobacco use by sex

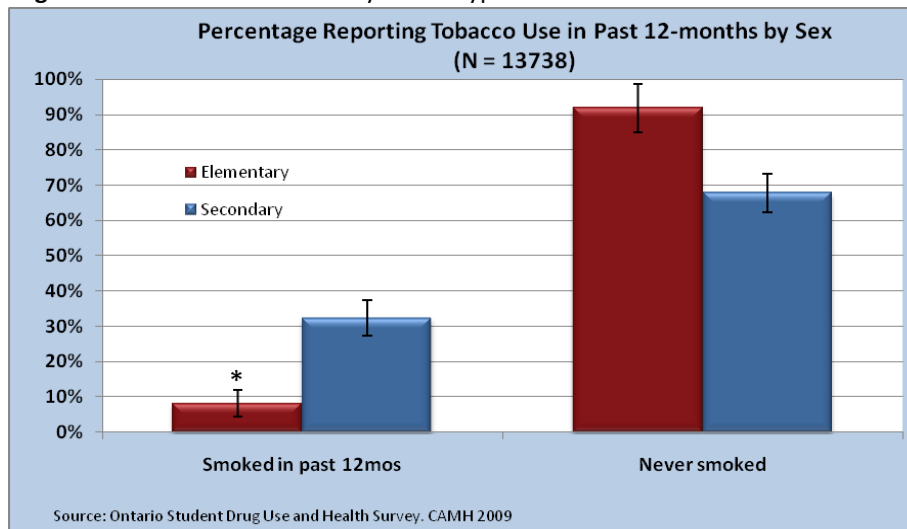


## Tobacco Use

### Past Year Tobacco Use

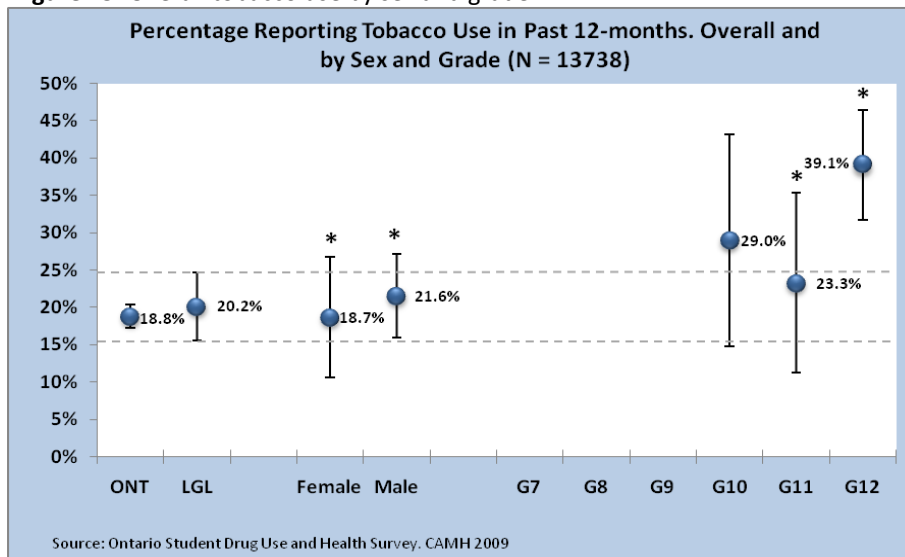
- 91.8% (95% CI: 85.1, 95.7) of elementary school students reported never having used tobacco (Figure 14). This is in contrast to 67.7% (95% CI: 62.2, 72.8) of secondary school students. This difference is statistically significant.

**Figure 14:** Overall tobacco use by school type



- Rates of past year tobacco use for students in LGL compared to Ontario overall were similar (Figure 15).
- Rates of past year tobacco use between males and females were higher for males but not statistically significant.
- An increasing trend in tobacco use associated with school grade was not evident (grades 7-9 not reported due to high variability).
- 39.1% (95% CI: 25.2, 55.0) of grade 12 students reported using tobacco in the 12-months prior to the survey, which was significantly higher than LGL overall.

**Figure 15:** Overall tobacco use by sex and grade

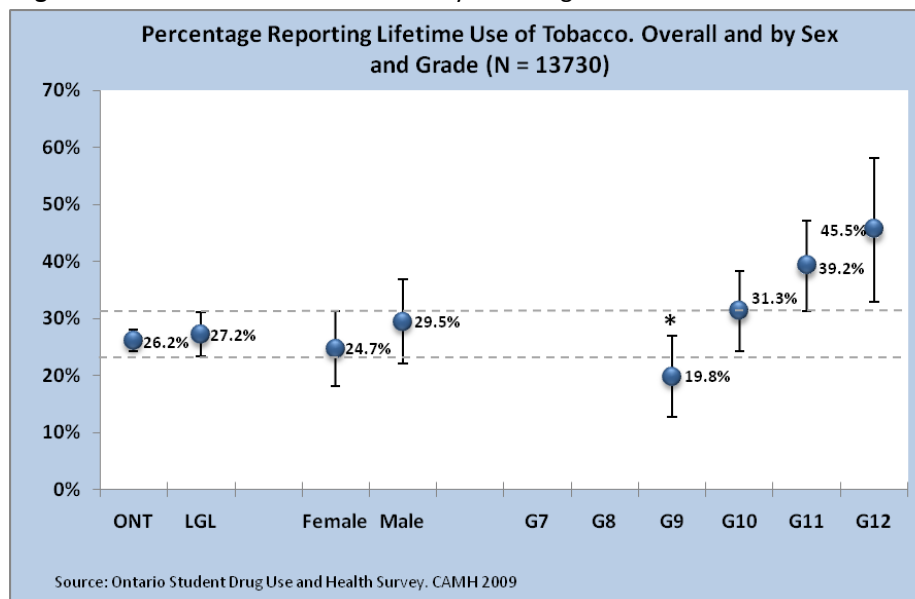


## Tobacco Use

### Lifetime Tobacco Use

- Rates of lifetime tobacco use were slightly higher than past year use in all categories (Figures 15 & 16).
- Overall Ontario rates were slightly lower than LGL but the difference was not statistically significant.
- Males reported higher lifetime tobacco use than females but not statistically significantly higher.
- A clear trend between lifetime tobacco use and school grade exists. Statistically significant increases in tobacco use were associated with school grade. The average rate of increase was close to 9% per year with the largest jump occurring between grades 9 and 10.
- By grade 12 almost 46% of students report using tobacco at least once in their lifetime.
- The rates of lifetime tobacco use by grade 11 and 12 students are significantly higher than the overall prevalence for LGL.

**Figure 16:** Overall lifetime tobacco use by sex and grade

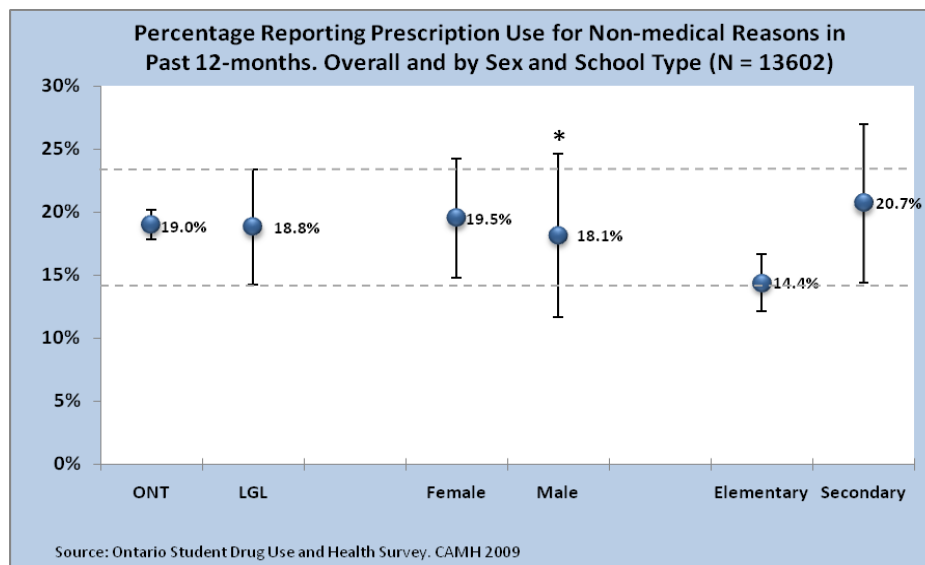


## Non-medical Prescription Use

### Past Year NM Prescription Use

- Rates of past year NM prescription use for students in LGL compared to Ontario overall were similar with 18.8% (95% CI: 14.2, 24.4) of LGL students responding that they had used prescription drugs for NM reasons in the 12-months prior to the survey (Figure 17).
- Rates of past year NM prescription use between males 18.1% (95% CI: 11.6, 27.1) and females 19.5% (95% CI: 14.8, 25.3) were similar but slightly higher for females. However, the differences were not statistically significant.
- An increasing trend in past year NM prescription use is associated with school type, with higher rates of usage reported in secondary school.
- 20.7% (95% CI: 14.4, 28.8) of secondary school students reported using a NM prescription in the 12-months prior to the survey compared to 14.4% (95% CI: 12.1, 17.0) of elementary school students.

**Figure 17:** Overall NM prescription use by sex and school type



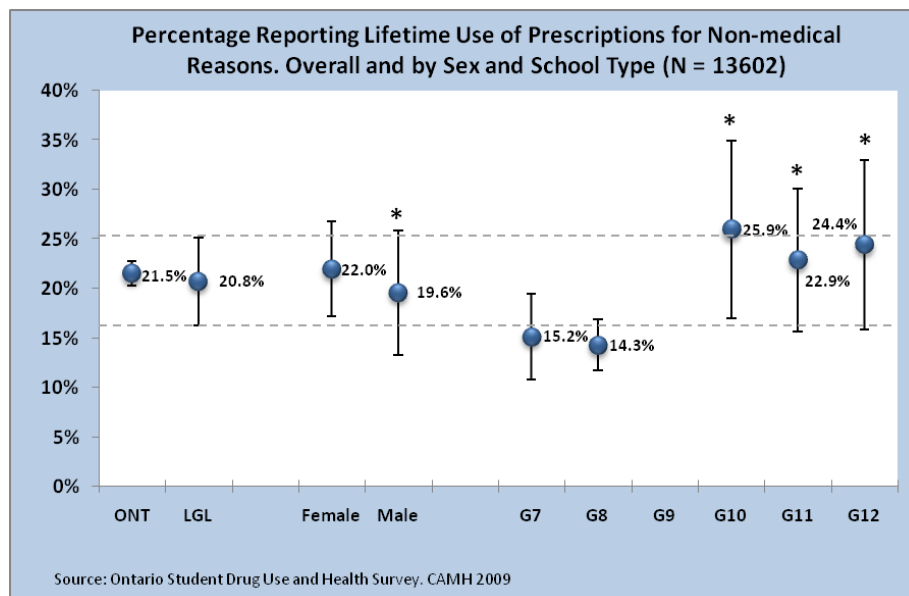
**Note:** This variable is derived from the combination of the non-medical use of: opioid pain relievers, oxycontin, ADHD drugs and sedatives/tranquilizers.

## Non-medical Prescription Use

### Lifetime NM Prescription Use

- Rates of lifetime NM prescription use were slightly higher than past year use in all categories (Figures 17 & 18).
- Ontario rates were slightly higher than LGL but the differences were not statistically significant.
- Females reported higher lifetime NM prescription use than males but not statistically significantly higher.
- No trend between lifetime NM prescription use and school grade existed, with grades 10-12 all reporting close to the same rates of use.
- Students in grades 7 and 8 were the least likely to report using a prescription drug for NM reasons during their lifetimes (grade 9 data unreportable due to high variability).
- By grade 10, almost 25% of students reported using a prescription for NM reasons at least once in their lifetime.

**Figure 18:** Overall lifetime NM prescription use by sex and grade



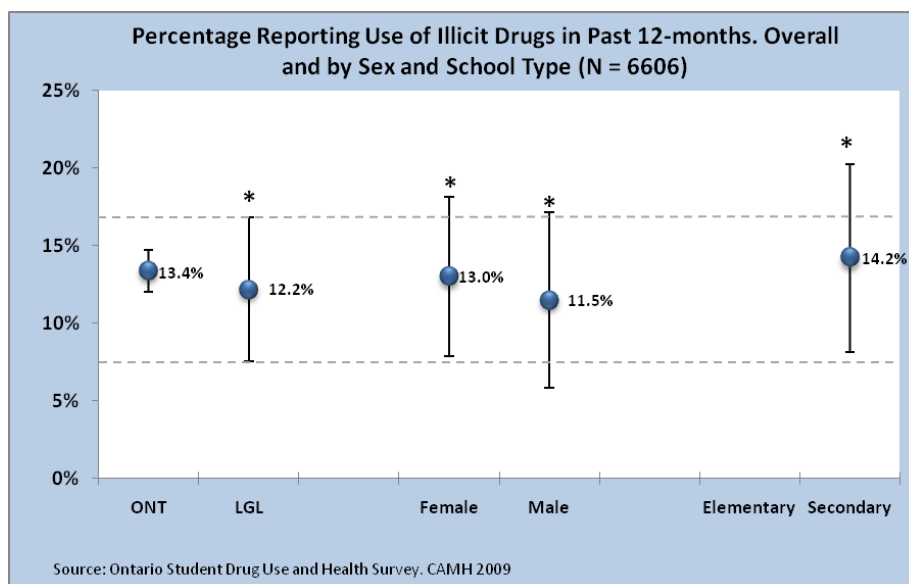
**Note:** This variable is derived from the combination of the non-medical use of: opioid pain relievers, oxycontin, ADHD drugs and sedatives/tranquilizers.

## Illicit Drug & Solvent Use

### Past Year Illicit Drug & Solvent Use

- Rates of illicit drug and solvent use for students in LGL compared to Ontario overall were similar with 12.2% (95% CI: 7.5, 19.1) of LGL students responding that they had used an illicit drug or solvent in the 12-months prior to the survey (Figure 19).
- Rates of illicit drug and solvent use were higher for females 13.0% (95% CI: 7.9, 20.7) than males 11.5% (95% CI: 5.9, 21.3). However, the differences were not statistically significant.
- 14.2% (95% CI: 8.1, 23.6) of secondary school students reported using an illicit drug or solvent in the 12-months prior to the survey.

**Figure 19:** Overall Illicit drug use by sex and school type



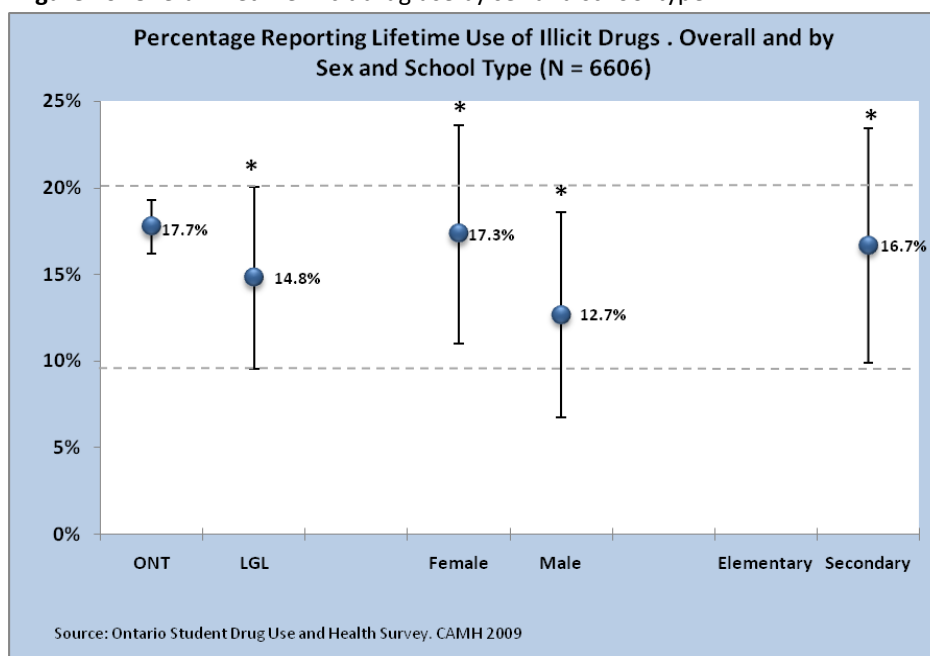
**Note:** This variable is derived from the combination of the following: sniffing of glue or solvents, heroin, methamphetamines, crystal meth, LSD, PCP, crack, cocaine, ecstasy, GHB, rohypnol, ketamine, jimson weed, and salvia divinorum, but excludes cannabis and non-medical prescription drug use.

## Illicit Drug & Solvent Use

### Lifetime Illicit Drug & Solvent Use

- Rates of lifetime illicit drug or solvent use were higher than past year use in almost all categories (Figures 19 & 20).
- Overall Ontario rates were higher than LGL but the differences were not statistically significant.
- Females reported higher lifetime illicit drug or solvent use than males but not statistically significantly higher.
- 16.7% (95% CI: 9.9, 23.6) of secondary school students reported using an illicit drug or solvent during their lifetime.

**Figure 20:** Overall lifetime illicit drug use by sex and school type



**Note:** This variable is derived from the combination of the following: sniffing of glue or solvents, heroin, methamphetamines, crystal meth, LSD, PCP, crack, cocaine, ecstasy, GHB, rohypnol, ketamine, jimson weed, and salvia divinorum, but excludes cannabis and non-medical prescription drug use.



## About the Data

The OSDUHS survey is an ongoing cross-sectional epidemiological study of Ontario students that is conducted bi-annually by CAMH. The aim of the survey is to describe the prevalence, incidence and trends for various mental and physical health and risk behaviours of Ontario students in grades 7 through 12 enrolled in both the public and Catholic school systems. In 2009, LGLDHU and several other health units participated in an oversampling of schools in our various jurisdictions that asked questions beyond what is traditionally included in the OSDUHS. Results related to drug use are presented in this document. LGLDHU oversampled 8 elementary and 8 secondary schools to obtain a sample of 872 students.

The OSDUHS data is robust in that it represents a weighted sample of almost 1-million Ontario students.

The survey design corrects the data to allow for stratification and to control for potential clustering. This allows for the sample obtained to properly represent the entire Ontario student population.

The analysis presented in this report is relevant to public health and education in general as it can be used to inform and guide drug prevention and health curricula that is more specific to LGL than the traditional regional OSDUHS reports generated by CAMH.

As this is the first time LGLDHU has participated in the oversampling of the OSDUHS there is no way to present prevalence data trends. Continued participation in the oversampling project will allow for trend analysis in the future.

## References:

1. Paglia-Boak, A., Mann, R.E., Adlaf E.M., and Rehm, J. 2009. Drug use among Ontario Students, 1977-2009: OSDUHS. (CAMH Research Document Series No. 28). Toronto, ON: Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. [http://www.camh.net/Research/Areas\\_of\\_research/Population\\_Life\\_Course\\_Studies/OSDUS/~Detailed\\_DrugReport\\_2009OSDUHS\\_Final.pdf](http://www.camh.net/Research/Areas_of_research/Population_Life_Course_Studies/OSDUS/~Detailed_DrugReport_2009OSDUHS_Final.pdf)
2. Canadian Community Health Survey 2008. Questionnaire and Reporting Guide. Statistics Canada. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/cgi-bin/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&SDDS=3226&lang=en&db=imdb&adm=8&dis=2>

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