

# **School Students and Drug Use**

*1996 Survey of Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Use Among Victorian  
Secondary School Students*

*Drug Treatment Services Unit  
Aged, Community and Mental Health Division*



## Acknowledgements

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## **Content**

Executive Summary

Introduction

Methodology

    Definitions

Survey Analysis

    Alcohol

    Tobacco

    Other Substance Use– Licit and Illicit

Comparative Use of Different Drugs

Comparison With the 1993 Victorian Survey

    Tobacco Use 1993–1996

    Alcohol Use 1993–1996

    Heavy Drinking 1993–1996

Comparison with the 1992 Victorian Survey

    Licit and Illicit Substances 1992–1996

    Danger Ratings for Various Levels of Substance Use 1992–1996

## Executive Summary

This report contains the findings of a survey conducted in Victorian secondary schools during 1996, regarding the prevalence of use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. The survey was the fifth in a series of three-yearly surveys. Comparisons of the results have been made with the *1993 Anti Cancer Council Survey* and the Department of Health and Community Services *1992 School Students and Drug Use Survey*.

The most widely and regularly used substances among Victorian secondary school students in 1996 were found to be the legal drugs tobacco, alcohol and pain relievers. In contrast the use of illicit drugs was low. Marijuana was the most frequently used illegal drug; it had been used recently by up to one-fifth of students and use increased with year level. Inhalants were widely used by young students. However this practice did not continue into later adolescence. Only a small percentage had used the remaining illicit drugs and use was mainly experimental. The results of the survey support the current emphasis of educational and preventive programs on legal drugs, especially tobacco and alcohol.

### Alcohol

The prevalence and frequency of drinking alcohol increased steadily with age with 15 per cent of year 7 students having had an alcoholic drink in the last week compared to 51 per cent of students in year 12. Males were more likely to drink regularly than females at all year levels.

Analysis of the 1996 data indicated few changes in the drinking behaviour of Victorian secondary students since the 1993 estimates. A greater proportion of males from the younger year levels reported drinking in the last month (48 per cent of males in years 7–10 in 1996, compared with 40 per cent in 1993) and in 1996 more older female students had ever had an alcoholic drink.

### Binge Drinking

Thirty eight per cent of students had engaged in one or more sessions of binge drinking in the two weeks preceding the survey. An age-related trend in the

incidence of binge drinking was apparent with approximately 50 per cent of students in years 11 and 12 having engaged in this behaviour within the two weeks before the survey, compared to 19 per cent of year 7 students. Significantly more females than males in years 7 and 12 reported one or more episodes of binge drinking.

The reported incidence of “heavy drinking” in the week before the survey was significantly higher for students in years 7–10 in 1996 (9 per cent) than in 1993 (6 per cent).

### Tobacco

Similar to alcohol use, older students were more likely to have used tobacco than younger students (41 per cent in year 7 and 79 per cent in year 12). A greater proportion of older females (years 11 and 12) reported smoking in the week before the survey, compared with males of the same group (10 per cent of females compared to 9 per cent of males).

There were few differences between students’ smoking behaviour in 1993 and 1996. However, students in years 7–10 reported a significantly greater prevalence of having smoked during the last month (26 per cent) and on the day before the survey (12 per cent) compared with the same year level grouping in 1993 (23 per cent and 10 per cent respectively).

### Marijuana

Use of marijuana in all recency categories increased across all year levels. The percentage reporting having ever used marijuana was 15 per cent in year 7 and 52 per cent in year 12.

Year 11 female students were more likely to have ever used marijuana (40 per cent) than males (30 per cent).

The prevalence of marijuana use had increased since the 1993 survey, particularly among younger students. In 1996 a greater proportion of years 7 and 9 students had ever used cannabis (15 per cent and 33 per cent compared to 6 per cent and 22 per cent respectively). This increase applied to both male and female students.

## **Pain Relievers**

An overwhelming 98 per cent of secondary students had ever used a pain reliever, with more students having reported ever using them with each year level.

Fifty per cent of female students in years 10 to 12 reported using pain relievers on a weekly basis, compared to 33 to 37 per cent of male students.

The reported “ever use” of pain relievers had also increased since 1992 (97 per cent compared to 94 per cent). This was especially relevant for males and year 7 females.

## **Sleeping Tablets/Sedatives**

Eighteen per cent of all students reported having ever used sleeping tablets/sedatives. The proportions were relatively stable across year levels ranging from 16 per cent of students in years 7 and 8 to 22 per cent in year 10. Use in the last week ranged between two and three per cent.

Approximately twice as many years 7 and 9 students had ever used sleeping tablets in comparison to 1992 figures. This was particularly true for boys. Reported use by males in years 7 and 9 increased from 8 and 11 per cent in 1992 to 14 and 20 per cent respectively, in 1996. Use in the last month among year 9 males doubled to 6 per cent in the current survey.

The proportion of year 7 females who had ever used sleeping tablets more than doubled from 8 per cent in 1992 to 19 per cent in 1996.

## **Inhalants**

Similar to the use of sleeping tablets, more younger rather than older students in 1996 reported having used inhalants. Thirty-four per cent of year 7 students had ever used an inhalant compared to 21 per cent in Year 10 and 12 per cent in Year 12.

A greater proportion of students in years 7 and 9 had used inhalants both in their lifetime and in the last month compared to 1992 (25 per cent in 1992; compared to 34 per cent of year 7 and 29 per cent

of year 9 students). A similar increase was seen for use in the last month in 1996. The 1996 figures show a doubling of inhalant use amongst year 7 students to 18 per cent and an increase of three per cent for year 9 students to 11 per cent. Year 7 male inhalant use in the last month increased from 10 to 16 per cent.

Female students in years 7 and 9 were the predominant users. Lifetime use and use in the last month rose considerably. In 1992, 23 per cent of year 7 females had ever used an inhalant compared with 34 per cent in 1996. Nearly one-fifth (19 per cent) of this same group had used inhalants in the last month compared with 9 per cent in the previous survey.

## **Other Substances**

Use of the other substances in 1996 was relatively low. In general, less than 10 per cent of students had ever used hallucinogens, amphetamines, steroids, opiates, cocaine or ecstasy. Use of these substances tended to be experimental.

In comparison with the 1992 patterns of use of these drugs, little change was observed. The reported level of use of amphetamines by years 7 and 9 females decreased to one-third of that reported in 1992 (to one per cent and two per cent respectively). Also, fewer year 9 females (two per cent) had ever used cocaine than had done so in 1992 (5 per cent).

## **Injecting Drugs**

The majority of students (95 per cent), had never injected a drug without a doctor’s prescription. Students of either sex were equally unlikely to have done so.

Very few students (two per cent) had reused a needle or syringe after it had been used by somebody else. More male students had engaged in this behaviour, and were more likely to have done so recently compared with the female students.

## Introduction

Young people are a major target group for policies and programs aimed at reducing the health risks associated with the use of substances such as alcohol, marijuana and other drugs. Adolescence is a critical time for developing attitudes and behaviour patterns that influence the use of substances, and the consequences of this use throughout later life. Given this, a wide range of media campaigns, school programs and general community drug abuse prevention initiatives have been directed at adolescents.

Regular monitoring of the prevalence of the use of various substances provides up-to-date information on the use of these substances. Trends in the use of substances can also be determined and this information can be used in the planning and implementation of interventions intended to reduce and/or prevent the use or abuse of licit and illicit substances.

The Department of Human Services in Victoria began monitoring the use of substances among secondary school students in 1985 (Health Commission Victoria) and has repeated its survey of substance use in 1989 (Health Department Victoria) and 1992 (Department of Health and Community Services)<sup>1</sup>. The data from these surveys indicated that the most widely used licit drugs among secondary students were analgesics, alcohol and tobacco. The most widely used illegal substance was cannabis. In general, the surveys showed that, similar to the use of tobacco and alcohol, the use of illicit drugs became more prevalent as students aged.

This report presents the prevalence of use of various substances among Victorian secondary students in 1996. The substances covered in the survey were: tobacco, alcohol, analgesics, sedatives, marijuana, amphetamines, cocaine, narcotics, steroids, inhalants, ecstasy and hallucinogens. The data reported here were collected from a survey of 4,729 secondary students in Government, Catholic and Independent schools at year levels 7 to 12 and was collected as

part of the 1996 Australian School Students' Alcohol and Drugs (ASSAD) Survey.

The Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria and the Victorian Department of Human Services funded the Centre for Behavioural Research in Cancer (CBRC) to undertake the Victorian component of the study. CBRC conducted this survey as the fifth in a series of highly successful national surveys covering the prevalence of tobacco and alcohol use among secondary students. Similar surveys took place in 1984, 1987, 1990 and 1993. The 1996 survey also followed the surveys of drug use among secondary students conducted by the Victorian DHS in 1985, 1989 and 1992. To ease the demands placed on schools by running these two surveys independently, the two questionnaires were combined for the 1996 study.

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<sup>1</sup> **These earlier surveys will be referred to in this report as having been conducted by the Department of Human Services (DHS).**

## Methodology

A total of 4729 year 7 to 12 students from 69 secondary schools were surveyed Victoria wide, during terms three and four of the 1996 school year. Secondary schools and students were randomly selected so as to provide a representative sample for the Victorian secondary school student population. Students were drawn from Government, Catholic and Independent schools.

The sampling procedure was identical to that of the previous studies conducted by CBRC. However, the earlier surveys conducted by the DHS used a different sampling method. In the DHS studies, the sample comprised students from years 7 to 11, and students were surveyed in intact classes. In the CBRC surveys students are surveyed in composite classes comprising groups of years 7 and 8 students, years 9 and 10 students, and years 11 and 12.

Table 1: The Number of Students Sampled in 1996 in Victoria  
by Gender and Year Level

Gender	Year level						Total
	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Male	452	449	438	421	380	316	2456
Female	394	403	392	382	366	333	2270
Total	846	852	830	803	746	649	4726

Two samples of schools were drawn to reflect the changes in the compositions of schools which began in the late 1980s, that is, the distinction between junior secondary (up to year 10) and senior secondary (years 11 and 12) campuses. Separate samples of schools were drawn for the lower secondary sample (years 7–10) and upper secondary sample (years 11–12).

Due to the sampling methods used in this survey, the results presented here can be generalised to the entire Victorian population of young people attending school in years 7 to 12.

The questionnaire consisted of two parts: a core and a supplementary survey. Questions related to smoking, drinking, sun-related behaviour and the use of other licit and illicit substances. This report will cover the prevalence of use of tobacco, alcohol and other substances. The core survey was identical to that administered to students throughout Australia, whereas the supplementary survey was completed only by Victorian students. Results from the supplementary survey will be published in a separate report by the CBRC.

The students completed a questionnaire under supervised conditions. As much effort as possible was made to ensure that students gave their own opinions and that all questionnaires were completed. The results obtained thus represent self-reported use.

In analysing the results of the survey, missing values (where a question has not been answered) have been excluded. Appropriate statistical tests were used (Chi Square, regression analysis), with the level of significance set at  $<.01$ .

In interpreting the trends in drug use over the period of the three surveys, it is important to note three important points. First, this survey is not a longitudinal study of the same students, rather it is based on cross-sectional samples of students at the same year levels at different points in time. Second, students were surveyed on different days during terms three and four. The 1992 school survey saw all Victorian secondary school students surveyed on the same day. Third, the 1996 survey differs from previous surveys because of the inclusion of year 12 students for the first time.

Further information on sampling methods, survey questionnaire, methods of analysis and confidence limits is included in the 1996 Australian School Students' Alcohol and Drugs (ASSAD) Survey Report.

## Definitions

### Categorisation of Substances

The drug categories used in this report are identical to the categories used in the questionnaire and follow the descriptions and examples provided to students, as follows:

<b>Alcohol</b>	Beer, wine, wine coolers, spirits, liqueurs, alcoholic apple cider, sherry or port.
<b>Amphetamines</b>	Amphetamines or speed, uppers, MDA, ox blood.
<b>Cocaine</b>	Cocaine or crack.
<b>Ecstasy</b>	Ecstasy or XTC, E, MDMA, Ecce, EX.
<b>Hallucinogens</b>	LSD, acid or trips.
<b>Inhalants</b>	Substance deliberately sniffed (inhaled) from spray cans, e.g.: glue, paint, petrol or thinners sniffed order to get high.
<b>Marijuana</b>	Marijuana, grass, hash, cannabis, dope, mull, pot or a joint.
<b>Opiates</b>	Heroin, smack, horse, skag, or other opiates (narcotics) such as methadone, morphine or pethidine.
<b>Pain Relievers</b>	Pain killers/analgesics such as "Disprin", "Panadol" or "Aspro".
<b>Sleeping Tablets</b>	Sleeping tablets, tranquillisers or sedatives.
<b>Steroids</b>	Steroids, muscle or roids without a doctor's prescription to better sporting performance and to increase muscle size or to improve your general appearance.
<b>Tobacco</b>	Cigarettes.

### Frequency of Drug Use

Students were asked how many times they had used a particular drug within specified time periods. In interpreting the survey results, recency of use is taken as a proxy measure of frequency or regularity of use. For example, those who reported using a

drug in the last week were interpreted as being weekly users.

For each of the substances the prevalence of use within mutually exclusive recency categories for males and females in each year level between year 7 to Year 12 is reported. That is, each student was allocated to one of the usage groups for each substance. The groups were based on responses to the questions regarding use in the last week, month, year and lifetime.

The common categories of use reported are:

<b>Never</b>	Those who had never used the substance.
<b>Ever</b>	Those who indicated any use of the substance, either in their lifetime, the last month, week or yesterday.
<b>Past</b>	Those who had used the substance within their lifetime or within the last year, <b>but not within the last four weeks or the last seven days.</b>
<b>Month</b>	For tobacco, alcohol, pain relievers, sleeping tablets and marijuana this included those who had used the substance within the previous four weeks <b>but not within the last seven days.</b> For the remaining illicit substances it included those who had used the substance within the previous four weeks.
<b>Week</b>	Those who had used the substance within the previous seven days, reported for tobacco, alcohol, pain relievers, sleeping tablets and marijuana.
<b>Yesterday</b>	Those who had used the substance yesterday, reported for tobacco only.
<b>Recent</b>	Use within the last week (including yesterday for tobacco, alcohol, pain relievers, sleeping tablets and marijuana; use within the last month (including the last week) for the remaining illicit substances.

## SURVEY ANALYSIS

### Student Drug Usage: 1996<sup>2</sup>

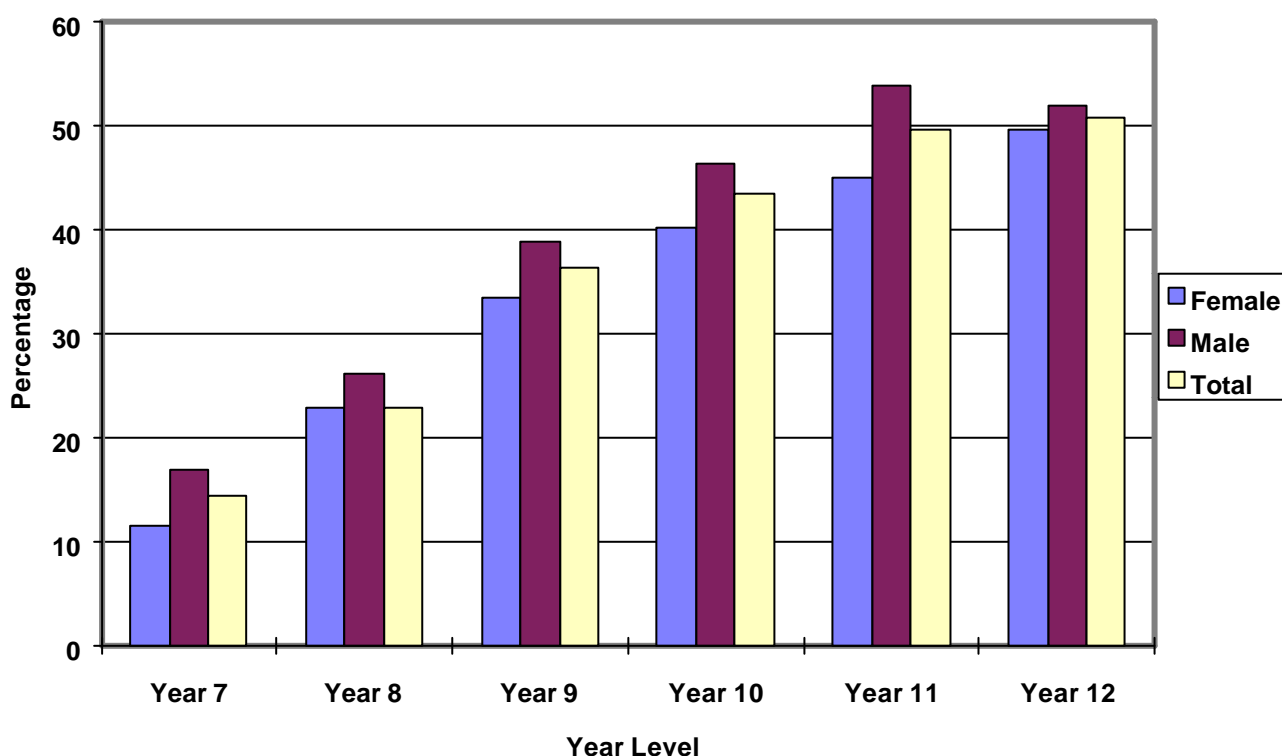
#### Alcohol

Assessment of students' lifetime experience with drinking alcohol was based on the question: "Have you ever had even part of an alcoholic drink?". Students also reported how recently they had consumed alcohol.

Excluding those who had only ever tried a sip or taste of alcohol, 80 per cent of secondary school students had consumed an alcoholic drink at some time in their life. The proportion who had tried alcohol increased significantly with year level, from over half of year 7 students (54 per cent) to 94 per cent of Year 12 students. There were no significant gender differences between male and female students who had ever consumed an alcoholic drink.

Eighteen percent of secondary students had consumed alcohol in the last month (but not the last week). Year 12 students were twice as likely to have done so as year 7 students (24 per cent and 12 per cent respectively).

**Fig.1 Alcohol Use in the Last Week by Year Level and Sex**



Over one-third of all students (36 per cent) had consumed alcohol in the last week. As shown in Figure 1 alcohol use in the last week increased with year level from 15 per cent of year 7 students to half of the students in years 11 and 12. The proportion of males who had drunk alcohol in the last week increased with year level from 17 per cent in year 7 to over 50 per cent in years 11 and 12. Significantly more Year 11 boys had consumed alcohol in the last week than year 11 girls (54 per cent and 45 per cent respectively).

<sup>2</sup>

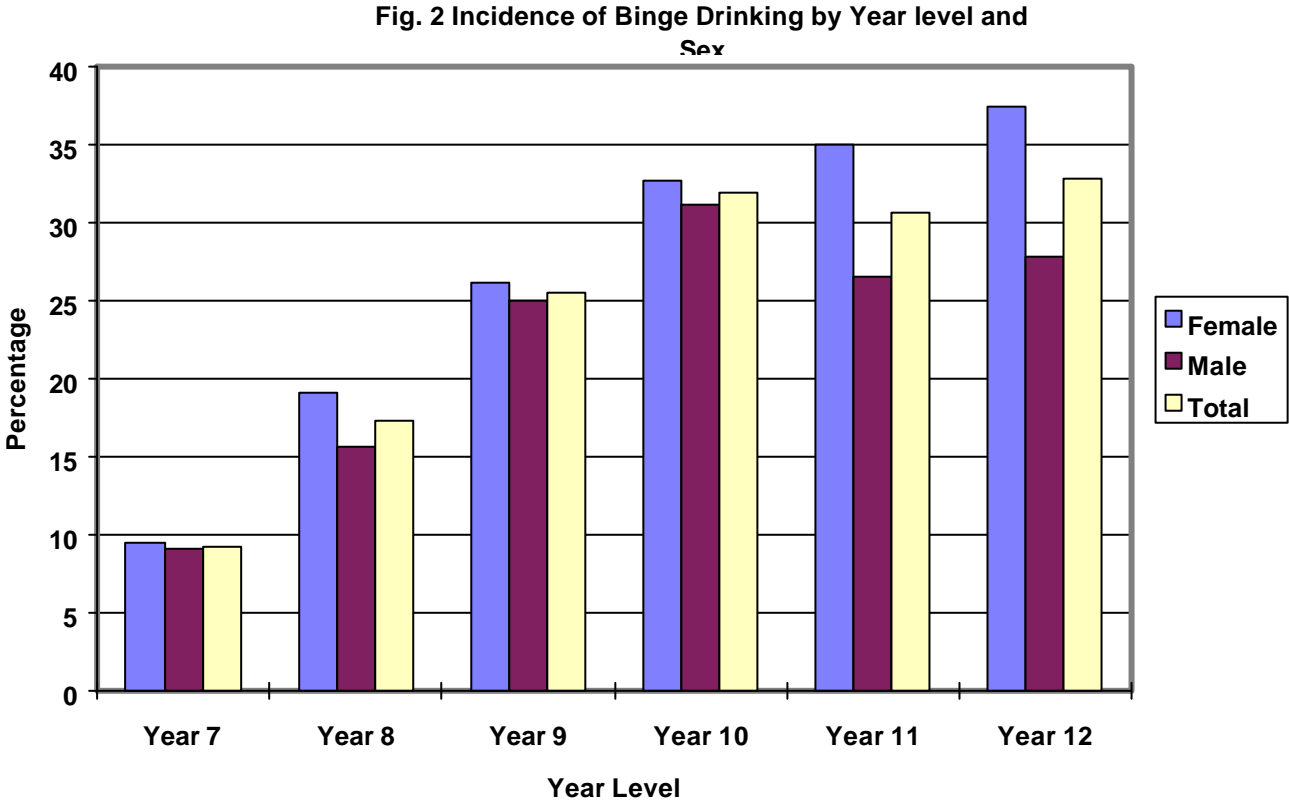
## Binge Drinking

Students were asked about the incidence of binge drinking. Binge drinking was defined as drinking three or more drinks on any one occasion in the last two weeks for females, and five or more drinks on any one occasion over the same period for males.

The majority of students (62 per cent) had not engaged in binge drinking during the two weeks preceding the survey; 28 per cent had engaged in binge drinking on one or two occasions over this period and the remaining 10 per cent reported three or more episodes of binge drinking.

As shown in Figure 2, year 7 students were notably less likely to have been involved in one or more recent episodes of binge drinking (19 per cent), than year 11 and year 12 students (50 per cent and 54 per cent respectively).

Among students in both year 7 and Year 12, a significantly greater percentage of female than male students reported involvement in binge drinking once or twice during the last fortnight. There were no significant gender differences in the other year levels.



## Tobacco

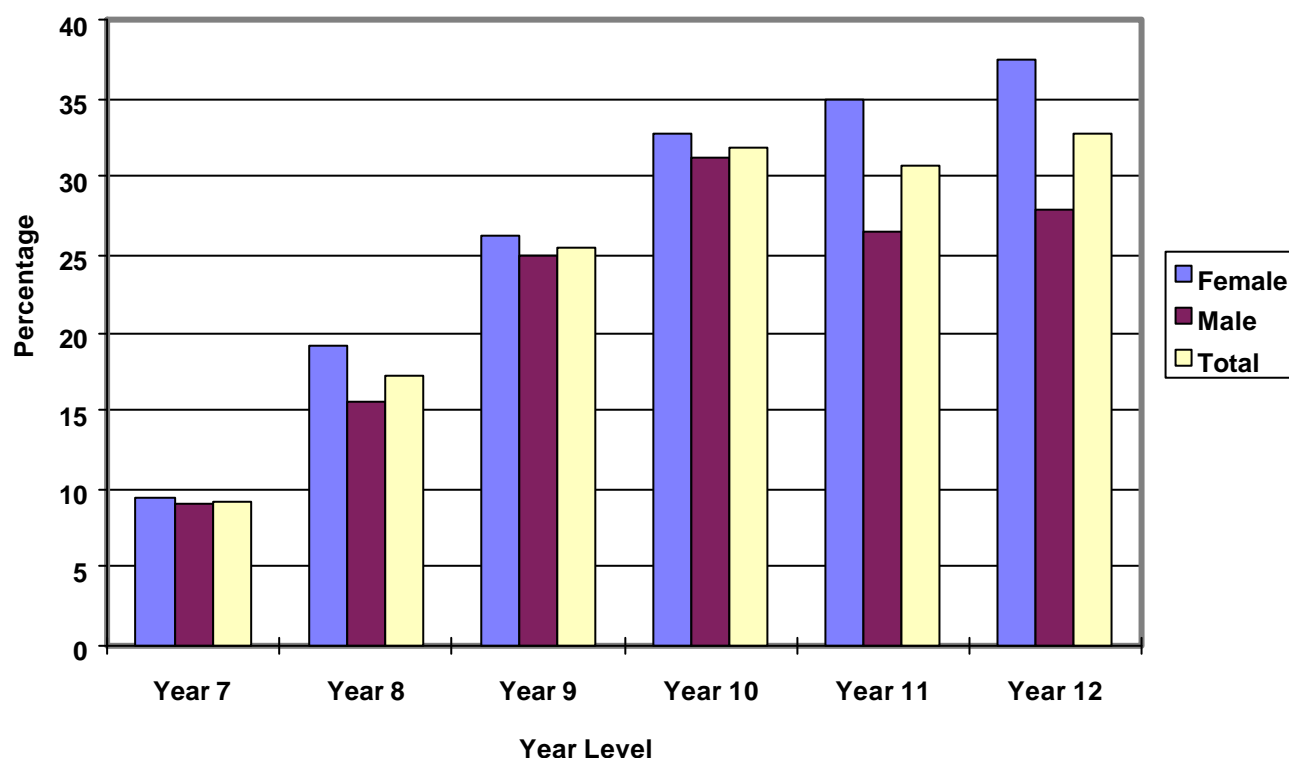
Almost two-thirds (65 per cent) of secondary students reported having ever smoked at least part of a cigarette. Significantly more students had ever smoked as year level increased, from 41 per cent in year 7 to 79 per cent in year 12. This was the case for both male and female students. Three-quarters of Years 10 and 11 students indicated they had ever tried a cigarette (75 per cent and 76 per cent respectively).

Usage also increased with year level within the recency categories of month, week and yesterday. Smoking during the last month (not including yesterday or last week) ranged from four to 8 per cent, with the highest prevalence being observed among students in year 11.

As shown in Figure 3, recent smoking (during the last week, including yesterday) was greatest among year 12 students (33 per cent) and only slightly lower at 32 and 31 per cent respectively for students in years 11 and 12.

Sixteen per cent of secondary students had smoked on the day preceding the survey; this ranged from four per cent of year 7 students to just under one-quarter (23 per cent) of those in year 12.

**Fig.3 Tobacco Use in the Last Week (including Yesterday) by Year level and Sex**



Patterns of smoking were also examined within each gender. As year level increased, an increasing proportion of males and females reported having ever smoked.

A significant gender difference for recent smoking (during the week preceding the survey) was observed among both the year 11 and year 12 students; a significantly greater proportion of females in each of these year levels had smoked in the last week compared with males.

The prevalence levels of tobacco use among secondary students in 1996 suggest high levels of smoking in adolescents at secondary school. Almost one-fifth of students had smoked on the day before the survey. Tobacco use during the month preceding the survey was substantial, increasing to more than one-third of the senior students. A greater proportion of females than males in the upper levels had smoked recently.

## **Other Substance Use – Licit and Illicit**

Students were asked about the extent of their use of the following groups of substances: pain relievers/analgesics, sleeping tablets/sedatives other than for medical reasons, marijuana, steroids without a doctor's prescription, amphetamines other than for medical reasons, ecstasy, cocaine, heroin/opiates/narcotics other than for medical reasons, hallucinogens and inhalants. Students were also asked about the incidence of injecting a drug without a doctor's prescription and/or re-using needles or syringes.

### **Pain Relievers**

Ninety-eight per cent of secondary school students reported having ever used pain relievers. The proportions of students who had ever used pain relievers increased with year level from 97 per cent of year 7 students to 99 per cent of those in Year 12. Use in the last month ranged from 30 per cent of year 9 students to 34 per cent in years 8 and 10.

Recent (weekly) use increased from 37 per cent of year 7 students to 44 per cent in years 9 and 10, and decreased only slightly to 43 and 42 per cent in years 11 and 12 respectively.

While similar proportions of females and males reported having used pain relievers at some time in their life and within the last month, recent use was consistently higher among females. Female students in Years 10 to 12 were significantly more likely (at around 50 per cent) to have used a pain reliever in the seven days prior to the survey than their male counterparts (34–37 per cent).

These results indicate that while most students have taken pain killers in their lifetime, current use is higher among the older students and is more likely among female students.

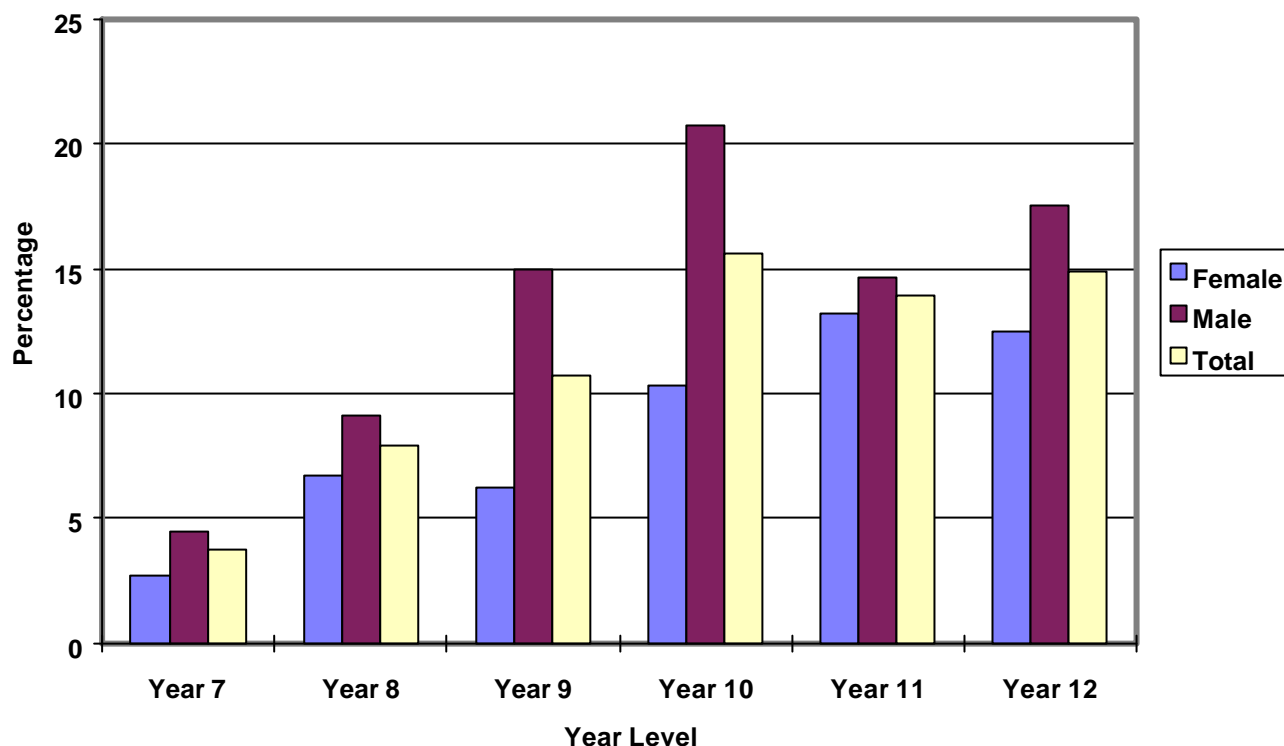
### **Marijuana**

Marijuana was the most prevalent illicit substance among secondary students at the higher year levels, with over one-third (35 per cent) of all secondary students reporting having ever used marijuana. Usage in all recency categories increased across year levels. The proportion of students having ever used increased significantly from 15 per cent of students in year 7 to 47 per cent in year 11 and 52 per cent in year 12.

Regular (weekly) use, and use in the last month was highest among year 10 students at 16 per cent and 10 per cent respectively. Past use also increased substantially across year levels, from 9 per cent of year 7 to 29 per cent of year 12 students.

More marijuana users were male than female. A greater proportion of male students had used marijuana during the week before the survey, however this difference was only significant for males in years 9 and 10. At these year levels, recent usage by males was over twice that of females. Past usage was higher for male students in all year levels except year 12, where 32 per cent of females reported past use compared with 26 per cent of males.

Fig. 4 Marijuana Use within the Last Week by Year Level and Sex



### Sleeping Tablets/Sedatives

Eighteen per cent of secondary school students had ever used sleeping tablets or tranquillisers. This ranged from 16 per cent of those in years 7 and 8 to 22 per cent of year 10 students.

Recent (weekly) use was around two per cent for most year levels and was highest in year 9 at three per cent. Similar levels of use were observed for use in the last month (not including the preceding week).

Twelve per cent of secondary students had used sedatives at some time in the past. This figure was higher among females than males (14–11 per cent). Once again there was little difference in the past use of sleeping tablets across year levels.

Generally the use of sleeping tablets in each recency category was slightly higher among female students than male students. However these differences were not significant, and showed no pattern across the six year levels.

### Inhalants

Almost one-quarter of school students (24 per cent) had deliberately sniffed inhalants at least once during their lives. Nine per cent of students had done so within the last month, while 15 per cent had used inhalants at some time in the past (during the last year or their lifetime, but not in the last month).

While there were few gender differences in the use of these substances, there is a striking difference in the proportions of younger and older students reporting recent use and ever use of inhalants. Year 7 students were nine times more likely than those in year 12 to report use in the last month (18 per cent compared to two per cent) and nearly three times more likely to report having ever used inhalants (34 per cent compared to 12 per cent).

## Hallucinogens

While seven per cent of secondary students had ever used this type of drug, the proportions increased significantly from two per cent of year 7 students to 12 per cent of those in year 12. Generally slightly more males had ever used these substances than females, with greater differences observed at the younger levels. However, these differences were significant only among the year 9 students, (9 per cent of males compared to five per cent of females).

Slightly more male students than females used hallucinogens recently at all year levels except for year 8; use by males during the last month ranged from two–five per cent, while female usage ranged from fewer than one to two per cent. Again these differences were only significant among year 9 students.

The pattern of results indicates a very low, and mainly experimental, level of hallucinogen use among secondary students.

## Amphetamines

Five per cent of secondary school students reported having had ever used amphetamines. Students in years 10, 11 and 12 were significantly more likely to have ever used these substances (7 per cent) than year 7 students (two per cent). Recent use of amphetamines ranged from one per cent of year 7 to two per cent of year 12 students.

Considering use of amphetamines among males and females separately, a greater proportion of year 12 males (four per cent) had used these substances during the last month than any other group of students. This was followed by three per cent of year 9 males. Generally males were more likely to have ever used amphetamines, and past and recent use among male students was higher than among females. Among students in year 12, males were four times more likely to have used recently (four per cent compared with 1 per cent of year 12 females). This difference was statistically significant.

The pattern of results found in the survey suggests that there is a low level of experimental use of amphetamines among secondary students, with only a few students having used amphetamines recently.

## Steroids

One per cent of secondary students had ever used steroids, and past use (use in the last year or lifetime, not including the last month) ranged from zero to two per cent. Males in years 10 and 11 were significantly more likely than their female colleagues to have ever used steroids. Two per cent of males in year 11 have used steroids in the past month whilst females used none.

## Opiates

Three per cent of secondary students had ever used opiates or narcotics such as heroin or morphine other than for medical reasons. Fewer than one per cent of female students at all year levels indicated recent use, compared to up to 3 per cent of males (year 9). A significantly greater proportion of males than females in year 9 had ever used opiates.

The level and pattern of reported usage would seem to indicate that a very small number of students, especially males, were experimenting with opiates during their high school years.

## Cocaine

Three per cent of students reported having had ever used cocaine or crack, with males and females using at similar rates. Recent use was slightly higher among the younger year levels, as was past use. There were no trends across the year levels for lifetime use of cocaine, although year 12 students showed the lowest level at two per cent.

These results may suggest that experimentation with cocaine among the lower levels at school is a more recent phenomenon, and generally occurs among males. A more accurate indication of the trends in cocaine use may be available following the next school students survey.

## **Ecstasy**

Three per cent of secondary students in 1996 reported having ever used ecstasy. The proportion of students who had ever used this drug increased significantly as students progressed through secondary school, with five per cent of year 11 students having used in their lifetime. More males than females reported ever using ecstasy, however the difference was not significant.

Recent use of ecstasy (in the past month) was consistently lower than past use and did not increase significantly as students progressed through secondary school. Year 11 male students were significantly more likely to report having used ecstasy recently (two per cent) than year 11 females (less than one per cent).

The results suggest that the use of ecstasy among secondary students in 1996 was not a widespread practice and is mainly experimental.

## **Injecting Drugs Without a Doctor's Prescription**

Most secondary students (95 per cent) had never injected a drug without a doctor's prescription (not including injecting for medical reasons such as diabetes). More males (7 per cent) had done so than females (four per cent). Fewer years 11 and 12 students (four per cent) had done so than students in years 7–10 (5–6 per cent).

Across all year levels slightly more male students than female students indicated both past and recent use of a drug by injection. In only one category (past use by year 10 students) was the proportion of female students higher (five per cent to four per cent of males).

## **Re-using Needles or Syringes**

Less than two per cent of secondary school students had ever used a needle or syringe after it had been used by someone else.

The proportion of students indicating that they had used a needle or syringe after it had been used by someone else decreased across the six year levels, (two per cent of year 7 to less than one per cent of year 12 students).

Males consistently reported higher levels (two–three per cent) of this behaviour. Two per cent of year 7 females reported using a needle or syringe after it had been used by someone else, compared to less than one per cent of females in all other year levels.

Of the less than two per cent of secondary students who had used a needle after someone else, almost one–third (31 per cent) had done so during the last week. The proportion re–using needles within the last month was 18 per cent, while just under one–quarter (23 per cent) had done so in the last year. One–fifth of the students who had shared a needle had done so more than five years ago. This figure did not include any year 12 students and involved only 10 students.

Females were more likely to have shared a syringe during the last year, or more than five years ago, compared to most males who shared a syringe during the last week, last month or last year. Thus more males than females had shared needles and were more likely to have done so recently.

## Comparative Use of Different Drugs

As in 1992 licit drugs, including pain relievers, alcohol and tobacco, were the most common and frequently used drugs. Pain relievers were used by the highest percentage of students at each year level with a slight increase in prevalence over year levels. As observed in 1992, the prevalence of alcohol and tobacco use increased steadily as year level increased. A greater percentage of students reported having ever used alcohol compared with tobacco. This was the case across all year levels, unlike in 1992 where more students in years 7 and 8 had ever smoked tobacco than had drunk alcohol.

As in 1992, the most commonly used drugs after pain relievers, alcohol and tobacco were inhalants and marijuana. Once again, marijuana use increased substantially with age, while the reverse pattern emerged for inhalant use.

While 67–69 per cent of students in years 7 and 8 had never used inhalants, this increased to 79–89 per cent of years 10–12 students, suggesting that more older students had never used inhalants. This finding could indicate that the use of inhalants among younger students is a recent phenomenon. This explanation is weakened as the 1992 survey results also show that use of inhalants was more prevalent among the lower year levels than the higher levels.

Another explanation of this inverse relationship may lie in the reliability of the question. It is possible that the question was understood differently, with older students answering the question as it was stated – "deliberately sniffed things [like glue...] in order to get high" while younger students may have included in their "Yes" responses times when they had deliberately sniffed textas or white out even if this did not get them "high." If this is the case, then it may be safe to assume that the five per cent of year 10 students who had deliberately sniffed inhalants in the month prior to the survey is accurate, while the 18 per cent of year 7 students who had deliberately sniffed inhalants is an overestimation.

The prevalence of use of other illicit drugs was generally low. As observed in 1992, hallucinogens and amphetamines were the most frequently used of these substances. Very few students reported using opiates, cocaine, ecstasy or steroids. The patterns of use seen for each of the substances suggest that their use is mainly experimental.

## Comparisons with the 1993 Victorian Survey

### Tobacco use 1993–1996

Analyses were conducted to determine the extent to which the prevalence of tobacco use differed between 1993 and 1996. For the purpose of these analyses, the year levels were collapsed into two categories. These comprised years 7 to 10 students, and years 11 and 12 students. For the purpose of the significance tests, the category of *smoking in the last month* included *last week* and *yesterday*; and *smoking in the last week* included *yesterday*, in order to make the data comparable with the 1993 data.

Table 2 illustrates the proportions of students who reported using tobacco in 1993 and 1996, together with the significance levels for the differences between the estimates for each year. The proportion of secondary school students in both age categories who reported having ever used tobacco was not significantly different between 1993 and 1996. No significant change was seen for either males or females in each of the two age categories.

**Table 2 Prevalence of tobacco use by students in 1993 and 1996 by year level grouping and gender**

Recency of Use	Gender	years 7–10			years 11–12		
		1993	1996	sig	1993	1996	sig
Ever Used	Total	56.4	58.8	.05	75.8	77.8	.32
	Male	56.8	60.8	.02	75.1	76.7	.59
	Female	56.1	56.7	.82	76.5	79.1	.39
Month	Total	22.6	25.6	<.01	37.8	38.3	.84
	Male	20.8	24.7	<.01	37.5	34.1	.12
	Female	24.2	26.5	.16	38.1	42.8	.06
Week	Total	18.7	20.4	.06	32.1	31.5	.82
	Male	17.6	19.9	.10	31.4	27.7	.10
	Female	19.7	21.1	.37	32.8	35.6	.17
Yesterday	Total	10.4	12.2	<.01	20.6	22.0	.44
	Male	9.1	11.7	<.01	19.9	18.6	.34
	Female	11.6	12.8	.32	21.3	25.7	.04

Analysis of the reported levels of smoking within the four weeks preceding the survey showed some increase between 1993 and 1996. A significantly higher proportion of students in year levels 7–10 indicated they had smoked within the last four weeks in 1996 compared with 1993. This increase was significant for male but not female students. There were no significant differences in the proportion of year 11 and 12 students (overall and male or female) smoking in the last four weeks, between 1993 and 1996.

There were no significant differences in students' smoking behaviour in the week preceding the survey between 1993 and 1996.

Among the students in years 7–10, a significantly higher proportion had smoked yesterday in 1996 when compared with the proportions found in 1993. This difference is attributed to a significant increase in the smoking prevalence of male students in this age and recency category, while no significant difference is observed either for females in this age group nor for males or females in years 11 and 12.

There has been little change between 1993 and 1996 in tobacco use among secondary students. The only significant differences were observed among males in the lower year levels. A greater percentage of males in years 7–10 in 1996 reported having smoked during the last month and on the day preceding the survey than when compared with prevalence estimates in 1993, while female students showed no significant change in smoking behaviours. There were no significant changes in any of the smoking behaviours reported by students in the upper year levels.

### Alcohol Use 1993–1996

In examining differences in the prevalence of alcohol use between 1993 and 1996, students were grouped into year level categories as described above for the tobacco data. For the purpose of the significance tests, the category of *drinking in the last month* included *last week* to make the data comparable with the 1993 data.

As shown in Table 3, the prevalence estimates of ever drinking were higher for all categories in 1996 than in 1993. Significantly more years 7 to 10 students in 1996 than in 1993 reported ever having had a drink. This difference was significant for males but not females in this age category. Amongst the upper year levels, females were significantly more likely to have ever had an alcoholic drink than their counterparts in 1993 (94 per cent compared to 90 per cent).

**Table 3 Prevalence of alcohol use by students in 1993 and 1996 by year level grouping and gender**

Recency of Use	Gender	years 7–10			years 11–12		
		1993	1996	sig	1993	1996	sig
Ever used	Total	69.6	74.2	<.01	91.3	93.3	.01
	Male	70.4	76.9	<.01	92.3	93.1	.36
	Female	68.7	71.4	.06	90.3	93.6	<.01
Month	Total	39.0	45.2	<.01	70.9	72.3	.20
	Male	39.5	48.3	<.01	74.4	72.8	.73
	Female	38.4	41.8	.04	67.2	71.7	.04
Week	Total	27.3	29.3	.09	52.9	48.9	.06
	Male	28.4	31.7	.06	56.5	52.0	.12
	Female	26.0	26.7	.66	49.1	45.5	.27

The only significant difference observed in the prevalence of drinking in the last month between 1993 and 1996 was that of males in years 7–10 who in 1996 reported (48 per cent) a greater prevalence of drinking in the last month period compared with 1993 (40 per cent). The drinking behaviour of students in years 11 and 12 did not change over time.

The prevalence of drinking alcohol in the last week was not significantly different between the two surveys for either of the age categories, nor for males or females within these categories.

The above analyses indicate that in 1996 little had changed in the drinking behaviour of Victorian secondary students since 1993. The only significant difference observed was that a greater proportion of males from the younger year levels reported drinking in the last month and in 1996 more older female students had ever had an alcoholic drink.

## Heavy Drinking 1993–1996

Data from the 1993 CBRC survey were used to make comparisons of the prevalence of heavy drinking with that of the 1996 survey. The 1992 DHS survey question did not differentiate between definitions of high levels of drinking for female students compared with male students as was done in the 1996 survey.

For the current analyses, male students who indicated they had drunk five or more drinks on at least one day and females who indicated drinking three or more drinks on at least one day were classified as heavy drinkers, rather than binge drinkers. This was to avoid classifying students who reported one heavy drinking day during the last seven days as binge drinkers. The following discussion will therefore refer to heavy drinking rather than binge drinking.

The proportions of students reporting heavy drinking during the last week for 1993 and 1996, by year level grouping and gender are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4: Proportion of students reporting heavy drinking in the last week for 1993 and 1996 by year level grouping and gender**

Gender	years 7–10			years 11–12		
	1993	1996	sig	1993	1996	sig
Total	6.3	9.3	<.01	31.3	28.7	.18
Male	4.9	8.6	<.01	30.7	29.6	.73
Female	7.5	9.9	=.01	32.0	27.7	.11

In 1996 the proportion of students in years 7 to 10 who were drinking heavily was significantly greater than in 1993. This was observed for both male and female students. The proportion of heavy drinkers among older students had decreased between the two surveys, but this difference was not statistically significant.

## Comparisons With the 1992 Victorian Survey

### Licit and Illicit Substances 1992 – 1996

The questions regarding use of illicit substances, analgesics, sedatives and inhalants used in the 1996 survey were similar to those used in the surveys of secondary students the DHS conducted in 1992, 1989 and 1985. In this section the prevalence estimates of the use of various substances in 1992 and 1996 are compared.

It should be noted that questions concerning the use of pain relievers/analgesics, sedatives and cannabis differed slightly between the two surveys. In 1992 only students who indicated they had ever used these substances went on to answer questions about the frequency of their use. In 1996 all students were asked to indicate their use of each of these substances in the previous week, month, year and life time. In both surveys students who indicated they had never used the substance in their lifetime were classified as never users while those who had used the substance in their lifetime were classified as ever users.

For pain relievers, sedatives and cannabis in 1992 and 1996, the prevalence of ever use, use in the last month and use in the last week are compared. For other substances, prevalence of lifetime use and use in the last month are compared across the time periods. For these analyses, *ever use* included the proportions of students using in the *last month* or the *last week* and *use in the last month* included students who had used in the *last week*. In contrast to the analyses just presented which compared overall prevalence estimates for students in junior years (years 7–10) and senior years (years 11 and 12), for 1993 and 1996, this section will follow previous reports from the Department of Human Services surveys and compare the prevalence of substance use in year levels 7, 9 and 11 in 1992 and 1996. The data tables relating to the results presented below are provided in Appendix 2.

#### Ever Use

Compared with 1992, in 1996 a greater proportion of students had ever used pain relievers, sleeping tablets, cannabis and inhalants. This increase was particularly strong among the younger students. While these increases may reflect a real change in students' behaviours between 1992 and 1996, it is noted that the assessment of ever use of these substances differed slightly between the surveys.

Among year 7 students more males and females had used pain relievers, sleeping tablets and marijuana in their life time. A significantly greater proportion of females in year 7 reported having deliberately sniffed substances in the current survey than had done so four years ago.

The proportion of students in year 9 reporting ever use of pain relievers, sleeping tablets, marijuana, and inhalants increased in 1996. Apart from the increase in ever use of cannabis which was seen among both males and females, the increases in the use of other substances was mainly due to significant increases in use among year 9 males.

Among year 11 students there was a significant increase in the proportion of all students and males who had who had ever used pain relievers and the proportion of females who had ever used cannabis. The use of other substances among year 11 students in 1996 was at similar levels to those seen in 1992.

### Use in the Last Month

Between 1992 and 1996 more year 7 and year 9 Victorian students were using marijuana and inhalants within the last four weeks. Marijuana use within the last four weeks by year 7 females and year 9 males was significantly more prevalent than it had been in 1992, as was inhalant use by both male and female students in year 7. The proportions of secondary students using pain relievers, hallucinogens, amphetamines, cocaine, ecstasy and opiates within the last month, had not changed between the two surveys.

### Use in the Last Week

While the proportions of students using pain relievers or sedatives in the week before the survey in 1992 and 1996 had not changed, the proportions of years 7 and 9 students using cannabis had increased during this time period. The proportion of year 11 students using cannabis during the week prior to the survey had not changed.

### Summary

The above analyses indicate that between 1992 and 1996 little had changed in the proportion of secondary students using hallucinogens, amphetamines, cocaine, ecstasy and opiates. The use of substances by secondary students over this period involved an increase in the number of students who had ever used of pain relievers, sedatives and marijuana; and among younger students the monthly use of marijuana. Given that the proportions of students using pain relievers and sedatives within the month and week before the survey had not changed from the levels seen in 1992, the likely explanation for the increase in the ever use of these substances is the change in the question assessing ever use between 1992 and 1996. Asking students a screening question about having ever used these substances reduced the proportion of students indicating that they had used them, resulting in lower prevalence estimates for ever use from the 1992 survey.

Given that the proportions of students using marijuana in the month before the survey increased between 1992 and 1996, it seems that the increase in ever use of this substance was not entirely due to the change in the question. The pattern of results suggest that between 1992 and 1996, marijuana use became significantly more prevalent among the younger secondary students. The prevalence of weekly and monthly use of marijuana increased between 1992 and 1996 among students in years 7 and 9. While the proportion of year 11 students using marijuana in the week and month before the survey did not change significantly between 1992 and 1996, it is of interest to note that the results suggest this behaviour was increasing among females more so than males.

## Danger Ratings for Various Levels of Substance use 1992 – 1996

In 1992 and 1996, students were asked to indicate the level of danger they associated with engaging in various levels of substance use. The items asked in both survey years are shown in Table 2.4, Appendix 2, together with the mean scores for students in years 7, 9 and 11 for 1992 and 1996. Students rated these items on a scale of 1 to 4; 1 indicated the behaviour was seen as very dangerous, 2 indicated the behaviour was a little dangerous, 3 indicated the students didn't know how dangerous the behaviour was, and 4 indicated the behaviour was not dangerous.

Apart from *smoking one or two cigarettes occasionally*, all behaviours were seen as being very dangerous or a little dangerous by students in both time periods. Between 1992 and 1996, the danger year 7 students associated with *using cocaine; taking heroin once or twice; smoking one or two cigarettes occasionally* and *trying amphetamines occasionally* increased. Year 9 students in 1996 thought *taking heroin once or twice; smoking one or two cigarettes occasionally; trying amphetamines occasionally* and *trying LSD once or twice* were more dangerous than their year 9 counterparts in 1992. Year 11 students in 1996 thought *smoking 10 cigarettes everyday; using cocaine; trying heroin once or twice; trying amphetamines occasionally* and *trying LSD once or twice* were more dangerous activities than did year 11 students in 1992.

Although still seen as dangerous, students in years 7, 9 and 11 in 1996 did not see *taking two or three aspirins nearly every day* or *smoking marijuana regularly* to be as dangerous as did students in 1992. Compared with year 11 students in 1992, students in year 11 in 1996 were more likely to think *smoking one or two cigarettes occasionally* was not dangerous at all.

## Conclusion

The results from this 1996 survey of secondary students show that the use of pain relievers, alcohol and tobacco are a large part of the experience of adolescents in Victoria. In 1996 a far greater proportion of students were using licit substances than were using illicit substances. Of the illicit substances included in this survey, marijuana was the one most widely used. However, it is noted that fewer students reported using marijuana on a regular basis than were using tobacco or alcohol.

In 1996, the number of students smoking continued to be unacceptably high. As the majority of students who reported smoking in the last month had smoked on the day before the survey, adolescent smoking should be seen as a regular rather than an occasional behaviour. Although the increase in recent tobacco use among younger males is a concern, the lack of change among other groups is encouraging, as it suggests that trends towards increased smoking levels indicated in 1993 have not occurred. Despite these findings the results show that efforts to reduce the prevalence of smoking had not had a major impact between 1993 and 1996.

Alcohol use continues to be a common behaviour among secondary students. Binge drinking in the two weeks before the survey was common amongst year 11 and 12 students. While fewer of the younger students indicated they had binged on alcohol, it is of concern that nearly 20 per cent of students in year 7 had binged. Of equal concern was the finding that the proportion of younger students engaging in heavy drinking over a period of a week had increased between 1993 and 1996. Given the broad acceptance of alcohol in Australia, education programs should encourage responsible drinking and focus on preventing adolescents from getting too drunk.

The use of marijuana among secondary students continued to increase. Trends in the use of marijuana, particularly by those in years 7 and 9 and to some extent older female students, suggest that marijuana use is a behaviour engaged in by female and male students. Over half of the students who had used marijuana in the month prior to the survey had used it in the last week. It would therefore seem that in 1996, use of marijuana among secondary students was more of a regular, than an occasional, behaviour. The increase in marijuana use was associated with a decrease in the perception of danger associated with the regular use of this substance. This pattern of results gives cause for concern. Marijuana is still illegal, and the potential danger its use poses to health and social functioning presents a challenge to those working with young people.

All levels of inhalant use were more common among younger students. This pattern may suggest that the use of inhalants is a relatively recent phenomenon but is seen by older students as immature behaviour. If the increase in inhalant use is true, and is not a reflection of having misinterpreted the question, the results would suggest that this issue needs to be addressed.

The results suggest that any use of hallucinogens, amphetamines and other illicit substances by secondary students is likely to be experimental rather than regular. The prevalence of use of these substances did not vary between 1992 and 1996. Few students had used a needle to inject drugs and even fewer students had re-used a needle or syringe. It seems reasonable to conclude that the use of needles to inject drugs and the practice of re-using needles was rare among secondary students in 1996.

In summary, the most widely and regularly used substances among Victorian secondary school students in 1996 were found to be the legal drugs tobacco, alcohol and pain relievers. In contrast the use of illicit drugs was low. Marijuana was the most frequently used illicit drug; it had been used recently by up to one-fifth of students and use increased with year level. Inhalants were widely used by young students. However this practice did not continue into later adolescence. Only a small percentage had used the remaining illicit drugs and use was mainly experimental. The results of the survey support the current emphasis of educational and preventative programs on legal drugs, especially tobacco and alcohol.

## Appendix 1: Drug Usage Prevalence Tables

**Table 1.1: Alcohol: Recency of Use by Year Level and Gender ( per cent ) (N=4703 )**

		Never	Past	Month	Week
year 7	Total	46.2	27.6	11.7	14.5
	Male	40.4	29.5	13.1	17.0
	Female	52.9	25.3	10.2	11.6
Year 8	Total	28.1	33.9	13.5	24.6
	Male	26.2	32.6	15.0	26.1
	Female	30.1	35.2	11.8	22.9
year 9	Total	16.8	28.3	18.5	36.3
	Male	16.0	26.5	18.7	38.8
	Female	17.7	30.4	18.4	33.5
Year 10	Total	10.6	26.3	19.8	43.4
	Male	9.1	25.9	18.7	46.3
	Female	12.1	26.7	21.1	40.1
Year 11	Total	6.8	21.5	22.3	49.5
	Male	6.3	20.8	19.0	53.8
	Female	7.2	22.1	25.7	44.9
Year 12	Total	5.5	20.1	23.8	50.7
	Male	6.0	19.7	22.4	51.9
	Female	5.1	20.4	25.1	49.5

**Table 1.2 Tobacco: Recency of Use by Year Level and Gender ( per cent ) (N=4700)**

		Never	Past	Month	Week	Yesterday
year 7	Total	59.4	27.0	4.3	5.1	4.1
	Male	56.5	29.5	4.9	5.0	4.1
	Female	62.8	24.1	3.7	5.3	4.1
Year 8	Total	44.0	34.6	4.2	6.7	10.6
	Male	43.0	36.8	4.5	7.3	8.3
	Female	45.0	32.2	3.7	5.9	13.2
year 9	Total	32.7	36.5	5.2	9.2	16.3
	Male	31.5	38.8	4.7	8.9	16.1
	Female	34.1	33.8	5.9	9.7	16.5
Year 10	Total	25.3	36.4	6.4	11.6	20.3
	Male	23.6	40.1	5.2	11.3	19.9
	Female	27.1	32.5	7.8	11.9	20.8
Year 11	Total	24.2	37.6	7.5	9.7	21.0
	Male	23.5	42.7	7.3	9.4	17.1
	Female	25.0	32.3	7.7	10.0	25.0
Year 12	Total	21.1	40.5	5.5	9.8	23.0
	Male	23.6	42.9	5.6	9.3	18.6

	<b>Female</b>	18.8	38.3	5.4	10.4	27.1
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**Table 1.3: Pain Relievers: Recency of Use by Year Level and Gender ( per cent) (N=4559)**

		Never	Past	Month	Week
year 7	<b>Total</b>	3.2	28.9	31.0	36.9
	<b>Male</b>	3.3	31.3	29.8	35.6
	<b>Female</b>	3.1	26.3	32.3	38.3
Year 8	<b>Total</b>	2.9	25.8	33.9	37.3
	<b>Male</b>	2.9	29.4	34.7	32.9
	<b>Female</b>	3.0	21.9	33.1	42.0
year 9	<b>Total</b>	2.4	23.7	30.2	43.7
	<b>Male</b>	2.8	31.0	26.2	40.0
	<b>Female</b>	2.0	16.2	34.3	47.5
Year 10	<b>Total</b>	1.7	20.1	34.0	44.2
	<b>Male</b>	1.6	26.6	35.0	36.8
	<b>Female</b>	1.7	13.4	33.0	51.8
Year 11	<b>Total</b>	1.4	22.6	33.0	43.0
	<b>Male</b>	1.6	28.9	32.3	37.1
	<b>Female</b>	1.2	16.0	33.7	49.1
Year 12	<b>Total</b>	1.1	23.9	32.9	42.0
	<b>Male</b>	1.5	32.2	32.4	33.9
	<b>Female</b>	0.8	16.1	33.3	49.7

**Table 1.4: Sleeping Tablets: Recency of Use by Year Level and Gender ( per cent) (N=4526)**

		Never	Past	Month	Week
year 7	<b>Total</b>	83.6	12.4	1.7	2.3
	<b>Male</b>	85.8	10.7	0.9	2.6
	<b>Female</b>	81.2	14.2	2.6	2.0
Year 8	<b>Total</b>	84.0	12.5	1.3	1.8
	<b>Male</b>	84.9	12.2	1.1	1.8
	<b>Female</b>	83.8	12.8	1.5	1.8
year 9	<b>Total</b>	80.3	13.8	2.4	3.4
	<b>Male</b>	79.6	14.4	1.5	4.4
	<b>Female</b>	81.1	13.2	3.4	2.3
Year 10	<b>Total</b>	78.2	16.4	3.0	2.4
	<b>Male</b>	78.8	15.8	3.5	1.8
	<b>Female</b>	77.5	17.1	2.4	3.0
Year 11	<b>Total</b>	82.6	12.6	2.7	2.1
	<b>Male</b>	81.5	14.2	2.6	1.7
	<b>Female</b>	83.7	11.0	2.9	2.4

<b>Year 12</b>	<b>Total</b>	80.9	15.3	1.9	1.8
	<b>Male</b>	83.9	12.5	1.3	2.3
	<b>Female</b>	78.1	18.1	2.5	1.3

**Table 1.5: Marijuana: Recency of Use by Year Level and Gender ( per cent) (N=4546)**

		<b>Never</b>	<b>Past</b>	<b>Month</b>	<b>Week</b>
<b>year 7</b>	<b>Total</b>	85.5	8.5	2.3	3.7
	<b>Male</b>	83.4	9.7	2.3	4.5
	<b>Female</b>	87.6	7.3	2.3	2.7
<b>Year 8</b>	<b>Total</b>	74.4	13.2	4.5	7.9
	<b>Male</b>	71.6	15.0	4.3	9.1
	<b>Female</b>	77.3	11.4	4.6	6.7
<b>year 9</b>	<b>Total</b>	66.9	14.4	8.0	10.7
	<b>Male</b>	60.9	15.5	8.6	15.0
	<b>Female</b>	73.2	13.3	7.3	6.2
<b>Year 10</b>	<b>Total</b>	56.1	18.6	9.7	15.6
	<b>Male</b>	50.6	18.8	9.9	20.7
	<b>Female</b>	61.8	18.5	9.5	10.3
<b>Year 11</b>	<b>Total</b>	53.2	24.3	8.7	13.9
	<b>Male</b>	51.4	26.7	7.2	14.6
	<b>Female</b>	55.0	21.7	10.2	13.2
<b>Year 12</b>	<b>Total</b>	48.1	29.2	7.8	14.9
	<b>Male</b>	48.0	25.9	8.5	17.5
	<b>Female</b>	48.1	32.2	7.2	12.5

**Table 1.6: Inhalants: Recency of Use by Year Level and Gender ( per cent) N=4530)**

		<b>Never</b>	<b>Past</b>	<b>Month</b>
<b>year 7</b>	<b>Total</b>	66.5	15.9	17.6
	<b>Male</b>	67.1	16.8	16.1
	<b>Female</b>	65.8	15.0	19.1
<b>Year 8</b>	<b>Total</b>	69.4	16.8	13.8
	<b>Male</b>	71.2	16.1	12.7
	<b>Female</b>	67.5	17.5	14.9
<b>year 9</b>	<b>Total</b>	70.8	18.1	11.1
	<b>Male</b>	73.8	15.0	11.1
	<b>Female</b>	67.6	21.3	11.1
<b>Year 10</b>	<b>Total</b>	79.4	15.5	5.2
	<b>Male</b>	81.1	13.8	5.1
	<b>Female</b>	77.6	17.2	5.2
<b>Year 11</b>	<b>Total</b>	82.5	14.6	2.9

	Male	81.8	14.5	3.7
	Female	83.3	14.6	2.1
Year 12	Total	88.5	9.3	2.2
	Male	87.5	10.3	2.1
	Female	89.5	8.3	2.2

**Table 1.7: Hallucinogens: Recency of Use by Year Level and Gender ( per cent) (N=4530)**

		Never	Past	Month
year 7	Total	98.4	0.7	0.9
	Male	97.2	1.3	1.5
	Female	99.7	0.0	0.3
Year 8	Total	95.0	2.8	2.1
	Male	94.8	3.1	2.1
	Female	95.3	2.6	2.1
year 9	Total	93.3	4.4	2.3
	Male	91.2	5.0	3.8
	Female	95.4	3.9	0.7
Year 10	Total	90.8	8.2	1.0
	Male	89.0	9.4	1.5
	Female	92.7	6.9	0.5
Year 11	Total	91.8	6.3	1.9
	Male	91.7	5.6	2.7
	Female	92.0	6.9	1.1
Year 12	Total	87.9	8.5	3.7
	Male	87.5	7.5	5.0
	Female	88.3	9.3	2.4

**Table 1.8: Amphetamines: Recency of Use by Year Level and Gender ( per cent) (=4526)**

		Never	Past	Month
year 7	Total	97.6	1.3	1.1
	Male	96.6	1.9	1.5
	Female	98.7	0.7	0.6
Year 8	Total	96.1	2.4	1.5
	Male	95.6	2.9	1.4
	Female	96.7	1.8	1.5
year 9	Total	95.4	2.8	1.8
	Male	93.0	4.4	2.6
	Female	98.0	1.1	0.9
Year 10	Total	93.3	5.2	1.4
	Male	91.9	6.3	1.9
	Female	94.8	4.2	1.0

<b>Year 11</b>	<b>Total</b>	93.2	5.2	1.5
	<b>Male</b>	93.0	5.3	1.7
	<b>Female</b>	93.5	5.2	1.3
<b>Year 12</b>	<b>Total</b>	92.9	4.7	2.4
	<b>Male</b>	91.3	5.1	3.6
	<b>Female</b>	94.4	4.3	1.3

**Table 1.9: Steroids: Recency of Use by Year Level and Gender ( per cent) (N=4539)**

		<b>Never</b>	<b>Past</b>	<b>Month</b>
<b>year 7</b>	<b>Total</b>	98.9	0.5	0.5
	<b>Male</b>	98.5	0.5	1.1
	<b>Female</b>	99.4	0.6	0.0
<b>Year 8</b>	<b>Total</b>	98.7	0.1	1.1
	<b>Male</b>	98.8	0.0	1.2
	<b>Female</b>	98.7	0.2	1.1
<b>year 9</b>	<b>Total</b>	98.3	1.0	0.7
	<b>Male</b>	98.2	1.0	0.8
	<b>Female</b>	98.4	1.0	0.5
<b>Year 10</b>	<b>Total</b>	98.3	1.9	0.7
	<b>Male</b>	97.3	1.7	1.0
	<b>Female</b>	99.3	0.2	0.4
<b>Year 11</b>	<b>Total</b>	98.4	0.8	0.7
	<b>Male</b>	97.4	1.2	1.5
	<b>Female</b>	99.6	0.4	0.0
<b>Year 12</b>	<b>Total</b>	99.2	0.0	0.8
	<b>Male</b>	98.7	0.0	1.3
	<b>Female</b>	99.7	0.0	0.3

**Table 1.10: Opiates: Recency of Use by Year Level and Gender ( per cent) (N=4530)**

		<b>Never</b>	<b>Past</b>	<b>Month</b>
<b>year 7</b>	<b>Total</b>	97.4	1.8	0.8
	<b>Male</b>	97.8	1.2	1.1
	<b>Female</b>	97.0	2.4	0.6
<b>Year 8</b>	<b>Total</b>	96.6	2.4	1.0
	<b>Male</b>	96.8	2.0	1.2
	<b>Female</b>	96.4	2.8	0.8
<b>year 9</b>	<b>Total</b>	96.3	1.9	1.7
	<b>Male</b>	95.0	2.3	2.7
	<b>Female</b>	97.7	1.5	0.7

<b>Year 10</b>	<b>Total</b>	96.7	3.0	0.3
	<b>Male</b>	97.7	2.1	0.2
	<b>Female</b>	95.8	3.9	0.3
<b>Year 11</b>	<b>Total</b>	97.3	2.3	0.4
	<b>Male</b>	96.3	2.9	0.8
	<b>Female</b>	98.3	1.7	0.0
<b>Year 12</b>	<b>Total</b>	97.2	1.8	0.9
	<b>Male</b>	96.6	1.8	1.6
	<b>Female</b>	97.9	1.9	0.3

**Table 1.11: Cocaine: Recency of Use by Year Level and Gender ( per cent) (N=4525)**

		<b>Never</b>	<b>Past</b>	<b>Month</b>
<b>year 7</b>	<b>Total</b>	97.0	2.1	1.0
	<b>Male</b>	96.7	1.7	1.6
	<b>Female</b>	97.3	2.4	0.3
<b>Year 8</b>	<b>Total</b>	95.7	3.1	1.3
	<b>Male</b>	95.2	3.3	1.5
	<b>Female</b>	96.2	2.8	1.1
<b>year 9</b>	<b>Total</b>	96.8	1.5	1.7
	<b>Male</b>	95.5	1.8	2.7
	<b>Female</b>	98.2	1.1	0.7
<b>Year 10</b>	<b>Total</b>	96.4	3.3	0.4
	<b>Male</b>	96.2	3.2	0.5
	<b>Female</b>	96.5	3.3	0.2
<b>Year 11</b>	<b>Total</b>	97.5	1.9	0.6
	<b>Male</b>	95.9	3.3	0.8
	<b>Female</b>	99.1	0.4	0.4
<b>Year 12</b>	<b>Total</b>	98.1	1.4	0.5
	<b>Male</b>	97.7	1.2	1.1
	<b>Female</b>	98.5	1.5	0.0

**Table 1.12: Ecstasy: Recency of Use by Year Level and Gender ( per cent) (N=4525)**

		<b>Never</b>	<b>Past</b>	<b>Month</b>
<b>year 7</b>	<b>Total</b>	98.9	0.6	0.5
	<b>Male</b>	98.8	0.6	0.5
	<b>Female</b>	98.9	0.6	0.5
<b>Year 8</b>	<b>Total</b>	97.4	1.6	1.0
	<b>Male</b>	96.9	2.1	0.9
	<b>Female</b>	98.0	1.0	1.0
<b>year 9</b>	<b>Total</b>	97.2	1.5	1.3

	<b>Male</b>	96.7	1.5	1.8
	<b>Female</b>	97.8	1.5	0.7
<b>Year 10</b>	<b>Total</b>	96.8	2.5	0.7
	<b>Male</b>	96.2	2.5	1.3
	<b>Female</b>	97.4	2.6	0.0
<b>Year 11</b>	<b>Total</b>	95.5	3.0	1.5
	<b>Male</b>	94.2	3.3	2.4
	<b>Female</b>	96.9	2.7	0.4
<b>Year 12</b>	<b>Total</b>	96.0	2.7	1.3
	<b>Male</b>	94.9	3.3	1.8
	<b>Female</b>	97.1	2.1	0.9

## Appendix 2: Comparison of Drug Usage Between 1992 and 1996 – Significance Tables

**Table 2.1: Percentage of students in 1992 and 1996 who had ever used each substance by year level and gender**

Substance	Gender	year 7			year 9			Year 11		
		1992	1996	sig	1992	1996	sig	1992	1996	sig
Pain Relievers	Total	92	97	<.01	95	98	<.01	96	98	<.01
	Male	91	97	<.01	93	97	<.01	94	98	<.01
	Female	93	97	<.01	97	98	.11	99	98	.92
Sleeping Tablets	Total	8	16	<.01	12	20	<.01	14	17	.10
	Male	8	14	<.01	11	20	<.01	13	18	.03
	Female	8	19	<.01	13	19	.08	16	16	.84
Marijuana	Total	6	15	<.01	22	33	<.01	41	47	.05
	Male	7	17	<.01	24	39	<.01	46	49	.24
	Female	4	13	<.01	19	27	<.01	36	45	<.01
Inhalants	Total	25	34	<.01	25	29	<.01	21	18	.02
	Male	26	33	.02	23	26	.07	22	18	.10
	Female	23	34	<.01	28	33	.05	21	17	.12
Hallucinogens	Total	2	2	.28	7	7	.96	10	8	.06
	Male	3	3	.99	7	9	.25	13	8	.03
	Female	2	–	.03	7	5	.17	8	8	.87
Amphetamines	Total	2	2	.79	5	5	.38	8	7	.08
	Male	2	3	.20	5	7	.13	9	7	.11
	Female	3	1	.24	6	2	<.01	7	7	.57
Cocaine	Total	3	3	.49	5	3	.06	4	2	.03
	Male	3	3	.54	5	5	.83	5	4	.59
	Female	3	3	.72	5	2	<.01	3	1	<.01
Ecstasy	Total	2	1	.67	2	3	.29	3	5	.24
	Male	2	1	.38	2	3	.06	4	6	.19
	Female	1	1	.64	2	2	.64	2	3	.63
Opiates	Total	3	3	.79	4	4	.84	4	3	.19
	Male	3	2	.59	3	5	.05	5	4	.51
	Female	2	3	.35	5	2	.02	3	2	.18

**Table 2.2: Percentage of students in 1992 and 1996 who had used each substance in the last month by year level and gender**

Substance	Gender	year 7			year 9			Year 11		
		1992	1996	sig	1992	1996	sig	1992	1996	sig
Pain Relievers	Total	68	68	.42	75	74	.83	76	76	.69
	Male	67	65	.66	71	66	.63	69	69	.87
	Female	70	71	.48	79	82	.36	82	83	.73
Sleeping Tablets	Total	3	4	.04	4	6	.22	4	5	.55
	Male	3	4	.38	3	6	<.01	4	4	.74
	Female	3	5	.05	6	6	.47	4	5	.53
Marijuana	Total	3	6	<.01	12	19	<.01	22	23	.86
	Male	4	7	.02	14	24	<.01	27	22	.04
	Female	3	5	.01	10	14	.16	18	23	.04
Inhalants	Total	9	18	<.01	8	11	<.01	5	3	.01
	Male	10	16	<.01	8	11	.02	5	4	.24
	Female	9	19	<.01	8	11	.06	5	2	.03
Hallucinogens	Total	1	1	.25	2	2	.82	2	2	.38
	Male	1	2	.12	2	4	.07	3	3	.74
	Female	1	–	.74	2	1	.03	2	1	.34
Amphetamines	Total	1	1	.14	2	2	.46	2	2	.11
	Male	1	2	.05	2	3	.41	3	2	.17
	Female	1	1	.97	2	1	.03	2	1	.45
Cocaine	Total	1	1	.96	2	2	.99	2	1	.09
	Male	1	2	.08	2	3	.20	2	1	.08
	Female	2	–	.11	2	1	.08	1	–	.67
Ecstasy	Total	1	1	.99	1	1	.28	1	1	.39
	Male	1	1	.60	1	2	.04	1	2	.08
	Female	–	1	.43	1	1	.43	1	–	.31
Opiates	Total	1	1	.46	1	2	.49	1	1	.02
	Male	1	1	.70	1	3	.01	2	1	.11
	Female	–	1	.49	2	1	.08	1	–	.04

**Table 2.3: Percentage of students in 1992 and 1996 who had used each substance in the last week by year level and gender**

Substance	Gender	year 7			year 9			Year 11		
		1992	1996	sig	1992	1996	sig	1992	1996	sig
Pain Relievers	Total	35	37	.07	43	44	.76	43	43	.89
	Male	34	36	.26	39	40	.36	35	37	.63
	Female	36	38	.16	48	48	.61	51	49	.44
Sleeping Tablets	Total	1	2	.02	2	3	.04	2	2	.93
	Male	1	3	.01	1	4	<.01	1	2	.70
	Female	1	2	.34	3	2	.58	2	2	.86
Marijuana	Total	1	4	<.01	6	11	<.01	12	14	.33
	Male	2	5	.01	8	15	<.01	16	15	.57
	Female	1	3	<.01	4	6	.30	8	13	.02

**Table 2.4: Average danger ratings for items relating to various substances for students in 1992 and 1996**

Item	year 7			year 9			Year 11		
	1992	1996	sig	1992	1996	sig	1992	1996	sig
Smoking less than 10 cigarettes every day	1.9	1.8	.52	1.9	1.9	.95	1.8	1.7	<.01
Using cocaine	1.5	1.3	<.01	1.4	1.3	.03	1.2	1.1	<.01
Trying drugs like heroin or morphine (narcotics) once or twice	1.7	1.5	<.01	1.8	1.4	<.01	1.6	1.4	<.01
Smoking one or two cigarettes occasionally	2.7	2.5	<.01	3.1	2.8	<.01	3.1	3.8	<.01
Using needles and syringes to inject drugs	1.3	1.3	.92	1.2	1.2	.43	1.2	1.1	.06
Taking amphetamines (speed) occasionally	2.0	1.5	<.01	2.0	1.4	<.01	1.8	1.3	<.01
Taking drugs like heroin or morphine (narcotics) regularly	1.3	1.3	.99	1.3	1.2	.84	1.1	1.1	.33
Sniffing glue, thinners or petrol to get high or for the way it makes you feel	1.6	1.7	.15	1.5	1.5	.93	1.3	1.3	.02
Taking two or three aspirins nearly every day	1.7	1.8	<.01	1.8	1.9	<.01	1.7	1.9	<.01
Smoking marijuana regularly	1.3	1.5	<.01	1.5	1.8	<.01	1.7	1.8	<.01
Trying LSD once or twice	1.9	1.8	.08	1.9	1.7	<.01	1.7	1.6	<.01
Having four or five drinks of beer, wine or spirits nearly every day	1.6	1.5	.11	1.6	1.5	.78	1.5	1.5	.40