

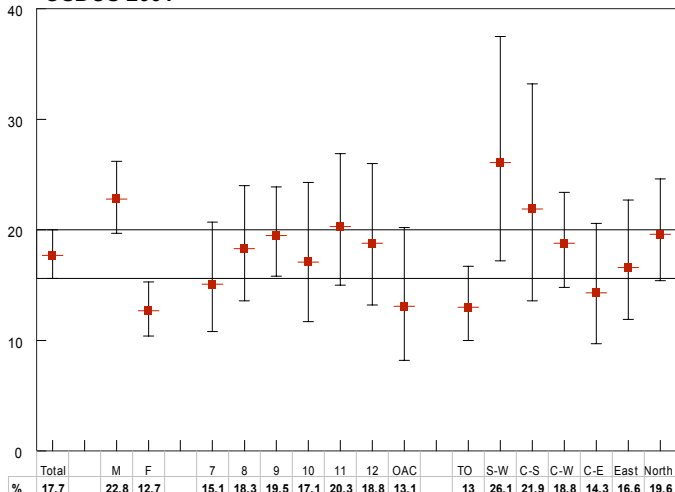
Rave Attendance Stabilizes Among Ontario Students

Raves are large all-night dance parties attended mainly by youth. Much media attention has been given to these parties, largely due to concerns about drug use and related overdoses. This bulletin describes rave attendance among Ontario students in grades 7 to OAC, as measured in the 2001 *Ontario Student Drug Use Survey (OSDUS)*. It also presents trends in rave attendance since 1995.

Rave Attendance in 2001

Just under one-fifth (17.7%) of students in grades 7 to OAC reported attending a rave during the 12 months before the survey (95% CI: 15.6%-20.0%). This estimate represents about 162,200 Ontario students. Significantly more males attend raves than females (22.8% vs 12.7%, respectively; see Figure 1). Surprisingly, there is no significant grade variation, although attendance ranges from 15.1% of 7th-graders to 20.3% of 11th-graders. There is no significant difference by public health region, although attendance ranges from 13.0% of Toronto students to 26.1% of students in the Southwest region.

Figure 1. Percentage Reporting Attending a Rave During the Past 12 Months by Sex, Grade, and Public Health Region, OSDUS 2001



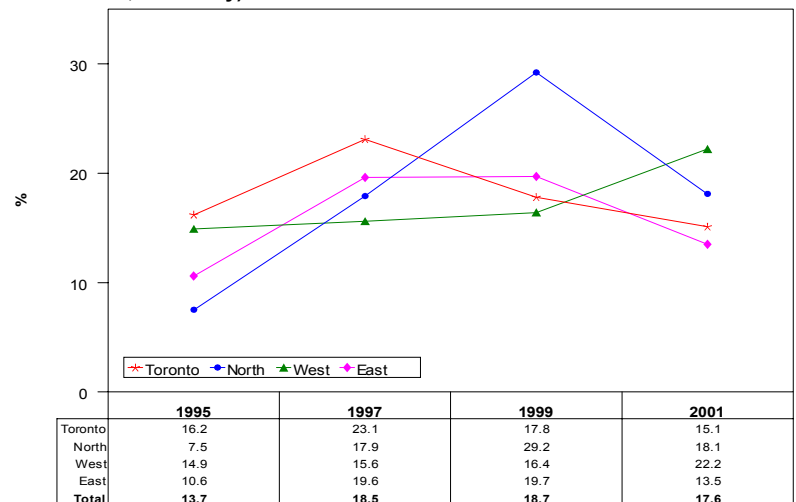
Vertical bars represent 95% Confidence Intervals; horizontal bar represents the CI for the total estimate.

Trends in Rave Attendance, 1995 – 2001 (Grades 7, 9, 11, OAC only)

The *OSDUS* began asking students about rave attendance in 1995. That year, 13% of students (limited to grades 7, 9, 11, and OAC) attended a rave in the 12 months before the survey. In 1997, this percentage significantly increased to 18%, and in 1999 it remained stable at 19%. There was no change in 2001, as 18% of students in grades 7, 9, 11, and OAC attended a rave.

Figure 2 presents trends in rave attendance by region. Although each of the four regions shows a change in rave attendance, the only statistically significant change was found for the East, where attendance dropped in 2001 compared to 1999 (13.5% vs 19.7%).

Figure 2. Percentage Reporting Attending a Rave During the Past 12 months by Region, OSDUS 1995 – 2001 (Grades 7, 9, 11, OAC only)



Rave Attendees, 1995 – 2001 (Grades 7, 9, 11, OAC only)

In addition to examining the percentage of students who attend raves, we can also look at any changes in the characteristics of attendees. The average age of students who attended a rave has slightly declined since 1995, with the age hovering around 15-years (Table 1). In 2001, the percentage of rave attendees who were in grade 7 was significantly higher than in 1995 (23.3% vs 13.4%, respectively), although most of this change occurred between 1995 and 1997. The sex profile has fluctuated over these years, but has not significantly changed.

Drug use among rave attendees since 1995 is also presented in Table 1. Although there are fluctuations in drug use over the years, no drug showed a statistically significant change, including ecstasy.

Rave Attendees, 2001 (Grades 7 - OAC)

While the majority (58%) of rave attendees did not use an illicit drug, other than cannabis, in 2001, they are more likely to report the use of most drugs compared to non-attendees (data not shown). Despite this difference, rave attendees' use of drugs is similar to those attending other activities, such as a bush party. We found no significant difference for cannabis use (49% of rave attendees vs 51% of bush party attendees); for ecstasy (19% of rave attendees vs 14% of bush party attendees); for cocaine (10% of rave attendees vs 8% of bush party attendees); and for hallucinogens (27% of rave attendees vs 23% of bush party attendees). Thus, there is nothing unique about raves and drug use. It is likely that both these recreational venues – raves and bush parties – tend to attract adolescents who use alcohol and other drugs.

**Table 1. Characteristics of Rave Attendees, 1995 – 2001
(Grades 7, 9, 11, OAC only)**

	1995	1997	1999	2001
N=	256	362	269	209
Mean Age	15.7	15.2	15.2	15.1
% in Grade 7	13.4	20.7	23.8	23.3
% Female	42.9	49.6	40.2	37.2
% used Cannabis	51.6	46.8	46.0	46.7
% used Ecstasy	12.3	14.9	18.9	19.2
% used Hallucinogens	22.3	25.1	31.3	26.0
% used Cocaine	10.1	8.0	14.1	9.6
% Heavy Drinking	47.4	47.1	49.0	46.8

Note: All drug use refers to any use in the past 12 months. Heavy Drinking refers to drinking at least 5 drinks on one occasion in the past 4 weeks.

Methods:

The *Ontario Student Drug Use Survey (OSDUS)* is an Ontario-wide survey of elementary (grades 7 and 8) and secondary (grades 9-OAC) school students conducted every two years since 1977.

The 2001 survey, which used a two-stage cluster design (school, class) included 4,211 students in grades 7 to OAC from 41 public and Catholic school boards, 106 schools, and 273 classes. The survey sample of 4,211 represents about 916,200 students in Ontario. Self-administered questionnaires, which promote anonymity, were administered by staff from the Institute for Social Research, York University on a classroom basis in the Spring of 2001. The student completion rate was 71%. All estimates were weighted, and variance and statistical tests were corrected for the complex sampling design. The rave question was asked of a random half sample of students, N=2,243.

Note that prior to the 1999 survey, only students in grades 7, 9, 11, and OAC were included. Therefore, trend data comparisons are limited to these four grades.

Terminology:

- **Rave Attendance** was measured with the question “Raves are large all-night dance parties that are quickly organized and promoted by word of mouth. How often in the last 12 months have you been to a rave?” Response options were never, once, 2 times, 3 or more times. The prevalence reported here refers to at least once in the past 12 months.
- **Public Health Region:** Ontario currently has 7 public health regions: *Toronto* (amalgamated); *Southwest*; *Central-South*; *Central-West*; *Central-East*; *East*; and *North*.¹
- **Region:** For the survey, Ontario was divided into 4 regions using the following boundaries: *Toronto* (schools within the amalgamated Toronto); *North* (schools within the North Bay and Sudbury areas and farther north); *West* (schools within Peel Region and farther west); and *East* (schools within York Region and farther east).
- **Bush Party Attendance** was measured with the question “About how much alcohol did you usually drink in the last 12 months when you were at a field or bush party?” One of the response options was “not been to a bush party,” which was used to indicate attendance.
- **95% Confidence Interval:** The 95% confidence interval can be crudely interpreted as being 95% likely to include the “true” percentage if every student in Ontario was surveyed.
- **Significant Difference** refers to a difference between two percentage values 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.

Source:

Adlaf, E.M., & Paglia, A. (2001). *Drug Use Among Ontario Students: Findings from the OSDUS, 1977-2001*. CAMH Research Document Series No. 10. Toronto: Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.

References:

1. Ontario Ministry of Health. (1999). *Ontario Health Survey 1996-1997: Derived Variables Document*. Toronto: Ontario Ministry of Health.

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To receive future issues of the *eBulletin*, please contact Maureen Kothare at maureen_kothare@camh.net

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Media Enquiries: Tel: 416-595-6015