

Drug Use Among Students Who Live in More Than One Family Home

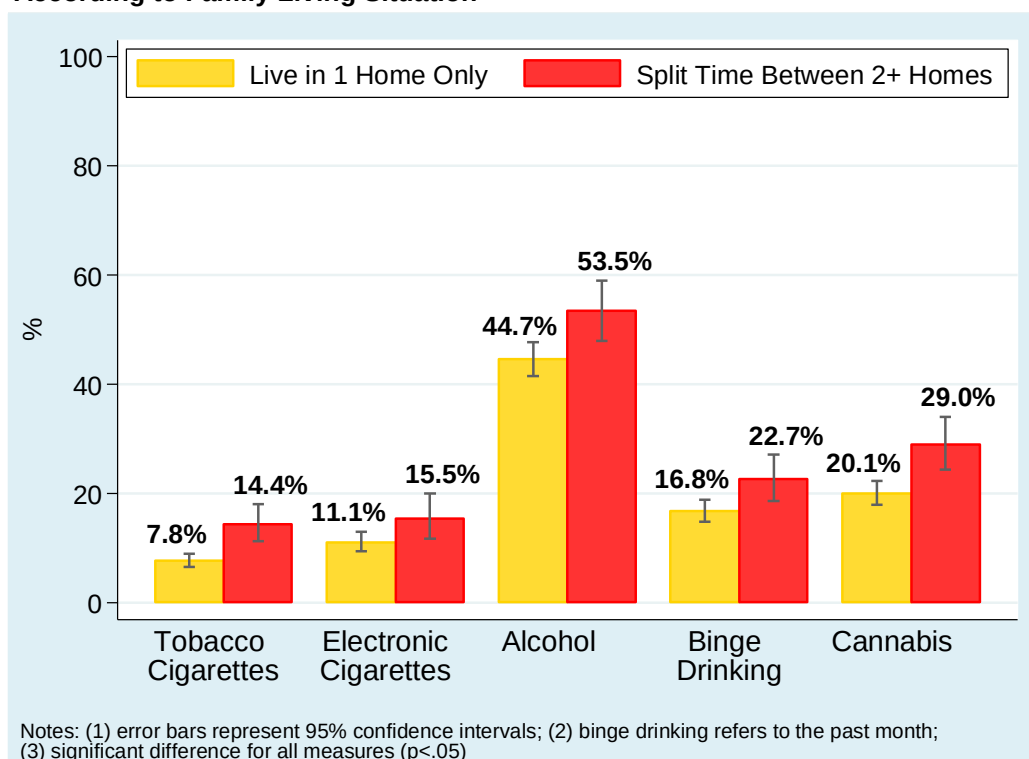
This *eBulletin* looks at differences in drug use between students who report that they live in only one family home and those who split their time between two (or more) homes due to shared parental custody or other circumstances. Data are from the 2015 Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey (OSDUHS). The OSDUHS is a repeated, cross-sectional, anonymous survey of students in grades 7 through 12 in Ontario, with the purpose of monitoring drug use, mental and physical health, gambling, and other risk behaviours. Conducted every two years since 1977, the OSDUHS is the longest ongoing school survey in Canada and one of the longest running in the world.

Among the total sample of students in grades 7 to 12, 12.8% (95% CI: 11.5%-14.4%) report living in more than

one home. This estimate represents about 122,800 Ontario students. There is no significant difference in reported living situation between males and females, or among the six grades. However, there is a significant difference among the four regions, with Toronto students (7.3%) least likely to split their time living in more than one family home, and students in the North (18.2%) and East (14.9%) regions most likely. Students in the West fall in between at 12.8%.

As seen in Figure 1, students who report living in more than one family home are significantly more likely than students living in only one home to smoke tobacco cigarettes, use electronic cigarettes, drink alcohol, binge drink, and use cannabis. These differences held even after statistically controlling for sex, grade, and region.

Figure 1
Percentage of Ontario Students in Grades 7–12 Reporting Past Year Drug Use According to Family Living Situation



Methods

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health's Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey (OSDUHS) is an Ontario-wide survey of elementary/middle school students in grades 7 and 8 and secondary school students in grades 9 through 12. This repeated cross-sectional survey has been conducted every two years since 1977. The 2015 survey, which used a stratified (region by school level) two-stage (school, class) cluster design, was based on **10,426 students in grades 7 through 12** in 750 classes, in 220 schools, in 43 public and Catholic school boards. Self-completed questionnaires, which promote anonymity, were group administered by staff from the Institute for Social Research, York University in classrooms between November 2014 and June 2015. Sixty-three percent (63%) of selected schools, 88% of selected classes, and 59% of eligible students in participating classes completed the survey. The 2015 total sample of 10,426 students is representative of just under one million students in grades 7 to 12 enrolled in Ontario's publicly funded schools. All estimates were weighted, and variance and statistical tests were accommodated for the complex survey data.

Measures & Terminology

- **Living in more than one family home** (split time) was measured with the question *"Not everyone lives with both parents in one home. Some people spend part of their time in one home, and the other part of their time in another home. Please choose one of the following statements that best describes your living situation.(1) I live in one home only, or (2) I split my time between 2 or more homes."*
- **Past year tobacco cigarette smoking** and **electronic cigarette use** includes occasional use, but excludes "a few puffs" to try it. These cases were classified as non-users.
- **Past year alcohol use** is defined as drinking any type of alcohol during the 12 months before the survey. Past year use includes drinking on special occasions, but excludes a sip just to try it.
- **Binge drinking** is defined as drinking five or more drinks on the same occasion at least once during the four weeks before the survey.
- **Past year cannabis use** is defined as using marijuana or hashish at least once during the 12 months before the survey. Cases that responded "don't know what cannabis is" were classified as non-users.
- **Region:** The survey design divides the province into the following four regions: Toronto; Northern Ontario (Parry Sound District, Nipissing District and farther north); Western Ontario (Peel District, Dufferin County and farther west); and Eastern Ontario (Simcoe County, York County and farther east).
- **95% CI** (confidence interval) shows the probable accuracy of the estimate – that is, with repeated sampling, 95 of 100 sample CIs would contain the "true" population value. Design-based confidence intervals account for characteristics of the sample design (i.e., stratification, clustering, weighting).
- **Statistically significant difference** refers to a difference between (or among) estimates that is statistically different at the $p < .01$ level, or lower, after adjusting for the sampling design. A finding of statistical significance implies that any differences are not likely due to chance alone; it is not necessarily a finding of public health importance.

Source

Boak, A., Hamilton, H. A., Adlaf, E. M., & Mann, R. E. (2015). *Drug use among Ontario students, 1977–2015: Detailed OSDUHS findings* (CAMH Research Document Series No. 41). Toronto, ON: Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. [Available online at <http://www.camh.ca/research/osduhs>]

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