



Prince Edward Island Student Drug Survey 2007

Highlights Report



2007 PEI STUDENT DRUG SURVEY

HIGHLIGHTS REPORT

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The 2007 PEI Student Drug Survey is a collaborative initiative involving the PEI Department of Health, the PEI Department of Education, and Dalhousie University.

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We gratefully acknowledge the enthusiasm and help of the Eastern, Western and French Language School Boards, and participating principals and teachers across Prince Edward Island. Most importantly, we thank the students who played a major role in ensuring the success of this project.

Overview

The *2007 PEI Student Drug Survey* is part of a coordinated Atlantic Canada initiative, using a standard protocol. This is the fourth wave of surveys in Atlantic Canada that are providing comparable information throughout the region. In general, the 2007 survey findings demonstrate similar rates of drug use found by the 2002 survey.

Approximately 3000 PEI students in grades 7, 9, 10, and 12 were surveyed. **This report provides the best estimates currently available to describe the size of drug-use in the adolescent PEI student population.** All percentages in this report are likely to be under-estimated, since under-reporting is a larger problem for self-report surveys than over-reporting.

The drugs most commonly used by adolescent students in PEI are alcohol, cannabis, and tobacco.

■ **Alcohol** is the drug of choice, with half of adolescent students reporting its use in the past year. This rate is stable when compared to 2002 and to the other Atlantic provinces. Drinking rates in PEI climb from 8% of Grade 7 students to 77% of Grade 12 students.

■ **Cannabis** use in the past year was reported by about one in four students in PEI. This is similar to 2002, and lower than use in the other Atlantic provinces. Rates of use in PEI climb from 3% of Grade 7 students to 37% of Grade 12 students.

■ 15% of students smoked **cigarettes** in the past year. Student smoking rates in PEI continue to decrease since 2002, and are similar in the other Atlantic provinces. Smoking rates climb from 3% of Grade 7 students to 24% of Grade 12 students. Across all grades 50% of smokers have tried to quit.

■ About 5% of PEI students reported using stimulants, magic mushrooms or inhalants. Other illicit drugs are reported by less than 3% of PEI students.

■ Patterns of **multiple drug use** for adolescent PEI students in 2007 demonstrate that alcohol use overlaps almost all other drug use. Half of students abstained from drug use.

■ The most common consequence of student use of alcohol and/or drugs is **unplanned sex**. The rates of sexual activity climb from 13% of Grade 9 students to 53% of Grade 12 students.

■ 60% of students participated in **gambling** in the past year. This rate is stable when compared to 2002 and to the other Atlantic provinces.

■ The prevalence of probable **depression** in students is 6%. This rate is stable when compared to 2002 and to the other Atlantic provinces.

2007 PEI Rates of Drug Use by Gender and Grade Level

(% of students using drug at least once in past year)

Drug	PEI	Male	Female	7	9	10	12
Alcohol	46	47	46	8	37	60	77
Cannabis	21	24	19	3	17	28	37
Tobacco ¹	15	16	13	3	13	17	24
Stimulants ²	6	6	7	2	5	10	8
Psilocybin/Mescaline (Magic Mushrooms)	5	6	4	1	3	7	8
Inhalants	4	10	3	4	6	4	1
LSD	3	3	2	1	3	3	3
Tranquilizers ²	2	2	2	1	2	3	4
MDMA (Ecstasy)	3	4	3	0	4	4	5
Anabolic steroids	2	2	1	1	2	1	2
Cocaine	3	4	3	1	3	4	6

¹ more than one cigarette

² non-medical use without a doctor's prescription

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SURVEY PROCEDURE

This report combines qualitative and quantitative methods **to describe the extent and patterns of drug use among PEI adolescent students**. The trend sections compare the 2007 PEI results to previous PEI student drug surveys (1998, 1996, 2002) and the 2007 Atlantic Provinces' surveys.

The survey uses a standardized scannable questionnaire, administered in all four Atlantic provinces in May of 2007. In PEI, 161 classes were randomly selected, and all students in those classes were asked to participate. The classes were in rural and urban settings in the Eastern, Western and French Language School Boards. Students in grades 7, 9, 10 and 12 were anonymously surveyed.

Participation rates varied by grade. 70% of Grade 7 students participated; this was influenced by the return rate of the parental consent form. 85% of Grade 9 to 12 students participated; this was influenced by absentee rates. This report uses the validated surveys of 2974 PEI students in grades 7, 9, 10, and 12.

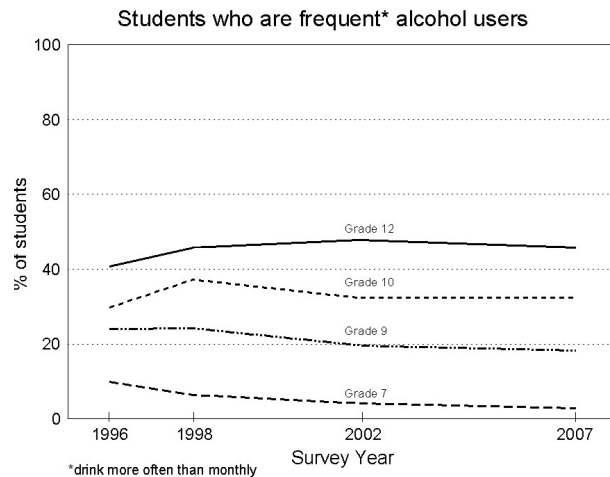
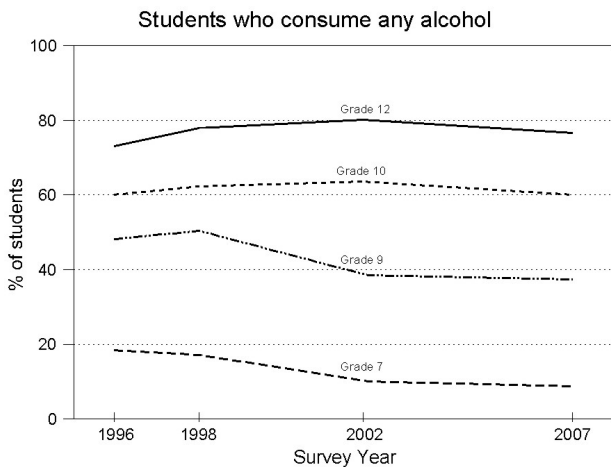
Excluded by design are students attending private school, students who are home schooled, students absent from school on the day of the survey, and school drop outs. Dropouts and adolescents frequently absent from school are at higher risk of alcohol and other drug use than are adolescents in school; they are not captured by this survey. However, this survey does capture a wide spectrum of adolescent drug users (unlike enforcement data and treatment data). This survey reflects current drug use and risk behaviours in the population of adolescent students in school.

An open-ended question at the end of the survey allowed students to express their opinions and concerns regarding alcohol and other drug use. Student comments, taken verbatim, have been included in this report based on their pertinence to the topic being addressed.

Drug use is defined as use (in any location) at least once in the year prior to the survey; any alcohol use excludes "just a sip", and any cigarette use excludes "tried one cigarette". This survey is based on self-reports. There is a potential for individual students to exaggerate or deny their drug use. One of the validity checks for over-reporting is elimination of students statistically defined as exaggerators; for under-reporting an anonymous setting was used. Overall, the estimates of drug use in this survey should be viewed as conservative.

Past Year Drinking of ALCOHOL

	Drinking in 2007	Trends in Drinking
Total Sample	<p>■ Overall, 46% of students surveyed report drinking alcohol at least once during the 12 months before the survey. 26% of students are frequent users of alcohol.</p>	<p>■ About half of students have reported alcohol use since 1996.</p>
Gender	<p>■ Rates of drinking in 2007 are similar between males (47%) and females (46%).</p>	<p>■ Male and female drinking rates have been similar since 1996.</p>
Grade/Age	<p>■ Drinking increases with age of student:</p> <p>Gr. 7: 8%</p> <p>Gr. 9: 37%</p> <p>Gr.10: 60%</p> <p>Gr.12: 77%.</p>	<p>■ The biggest increase in alcohol use occurs between Grade 7 and Grade 9 (consistence since 1996).</p>



Alcohol consumption increases as students get older. By grade 12:

- 77% have consumed alcohol in the past year
- 45% drink frequently (more often than monthly)
- 50% binge drink in the past month (5 or more drinks on the same occasion)
- 45% were drunk at least once in the past month

“Even though I drink, I am responsible, it is bad if it is a common activity but a glass of wine here or there isn’t a bad thing, Don’t judge people too heavily, most are like me, very responsible.” Gr 12

“I know people that are drinking and I like them a lot but my parents don’t want me to go out with her because she drinks.” Gr 7

Source of alcohol

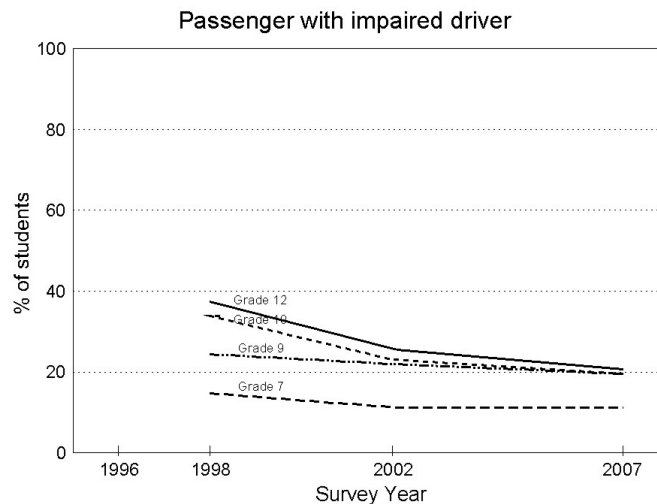
- Among underage students who drank:
 - 40% was purchased by a friend
 - 20% was offered by a friend
 - 20% was offered by a parent
 - 12% was from home without permission
 - 6% was offered by an adult (not parent)
 - 4% was purchased by student
- In grade 12, 17% of students have used fake ID or lied about their age to obtain alcohol.
- In grade 12, 33% of students drank in a licensed venue such as a bar, tavern, beverage room or lounge.

Alcohol and Driving

In the course of a year among grade 12 students:

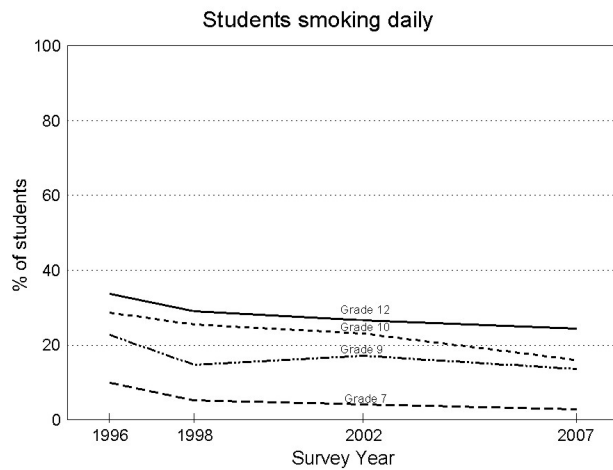
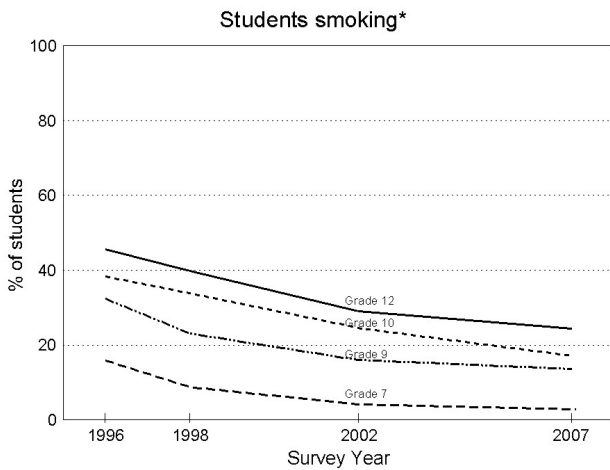
- 15% drove within an hour of drinking two or more drinks of alcohol
- 21% rode with an impaired driver

About 20% of students in grades 9, 10, and 12 have been a passenger with an impaired driver. This has decreased since 1998.



Past Year Smoking of CIGARETTES

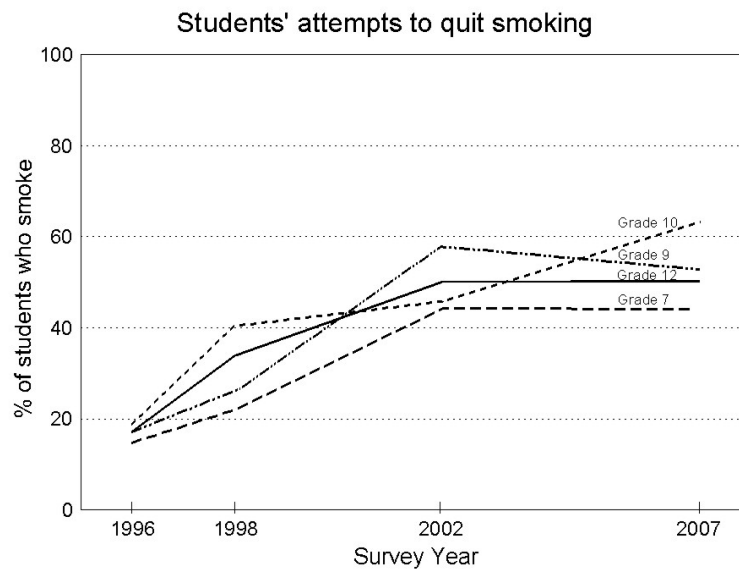
	Smoking in 2007	Trends in Smoking
Total Sample	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall, 15% of students surveyed report smoking cigarettes more than once during the 12 months before the survey. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The overall smoking rate has decreased since the 33% seen in 1996.
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smoking rates in 2007 are similar between males (16%) and females (13%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 1996, more females were smoking than males. Since then, the gap has decreased to no difference in 2007.
Grade/Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smoking is related to grade level. Rates of smoking increase with age: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gr. 7: 3% Gr. 9: 13% Gr.10: 17% Gr.12: 24% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The overall decrease in smoking rates is seen at all grade levels.



*smoked more than 1 cigarette in the past year

Cigarette smoking increases as students get older. In 2007, the rate of any smoking is similar to the daily smoking rate.

- 13 years: average age of smoking the first whole cigarette
- 12% of grade 12 students used a fake ID or lied about age in order to obtain cigarettes; this was less than 5% in younger grades
- 53% of student smokers have tried to quit in the past 6 months similar rates for male (53%) and female (53%) students
- quit attempts are highest among grade 10 students (63%), similar for grades 9 and 12 (50%), and lowest for grade 7 (44%)



“I am glad my dad quit smoking because I feel better” Gr 7

“Well my friends use to pressure me to smoke and they said It was cool.” Gr 7

Past Year Use of CANNABIS

	Cannabis Use in 2007	Trends in Cannabis Use
Total Sample	<p>■ Overall, 21% of students surveyed report using cannabis at least once during the 12 months before the survey. 2% of students are daily users of cannabis.</p>	<p>■ Cannabis use has remained stable since 1996.</p>
Gender	<p>■ Cannabis use is higher among males (24%) than females (19%).</p>	<p>■ The gap between male and female cannabis use has decreased since 1996.</p>
Grade/Age	<p>■ Cannabis use is related to grade level:</p> <p>Gr. 7: 3%</p> <p>Gr. 9: 17%</p> <p>Gr.10: 28%</p> <p>Gr.12: 37%</p>	<p>■ Cannabis use peaked in grade 12 students in 2002 at 41%.</p>

- Cannabis use is lower in PEI (21%) than in Atlantic Canada (29%)
- 3% of students in grades 9, 10, and 12 used cannabis daily.
- 17% of students rode with a stoned driver in the past year. This rate was similar for male and female students. The rate increased by grade: grade 7 (3%), grade 9 (10%), grade 10 (23%), and grade 12 (33%).

“Marajuanna is the most commonly used drug amongst me and my friends.” Gr 9

“I think you should legalize cannabis.” Gr 10

“If someone asked me I’d use cannabis.” Gr 9

Past Year Use of **STIMULANTS**

	Stimulant Use 2007	Trends in Use
Total Sample	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall, 6% of students surveyed report using stimulants at least once during the 12 months before the survey. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2007 rates are lower than the 10% seen in 2002.
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stimulant use is similar for males (6%) and females (7%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Male and female rates have been similar since 1998.
Grade/Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The use of stimulants increases with grade: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gr. 7: 1% Gr. 9: 5% Gr.10: 9% Gr.12: 8% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The overall decrease in stimulant use is seen at all grade levels.

- Non-medical use of stimulants was asked as two questions about amphetamine use and/or methylphenidate (Ritalin) use.

Other Drug Use

- 5% of PEI students report using mescaline/psilocybin (magic mushrooms)
4% of PEI students report using inhalants.
- 3% of PEI students report using MDMA (Ecstasy), similar to the rate of use in 2002. Rates are higher in the other Atlantic provinces, where the rate of use has increased since 2002.
- Less than 3% of PEI students report using LSD, cocaine, tranquilizers, or anabolic steroids. Rates are generally similar in all the Atlantic provinces.

"Don't steal a car or do E or coke, it messes you up. Trust me." Gr 9

"I do drugs a lot because I think I am fat. It makes me feel good." Gr 9

"Sometimes when I do drugs, I tell myself that everyone hates me, I feel depressed, anxious... But sometimes it's the opposite." Gr 9

"Well, we're not all drug crazy. Some of us have brains." Gr 10

ATLANTIC PROVINCES COMPARISON

The 2007 Student Drug Use Survey was conducted in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Prince Edward Island.

2007 Drug use in the Atlantic Provinces

(% of Grade 7, 9, 10, 12 students using drug at least once in past year)

	PEI	NS	NB	NL
Alcohol	46	52	50	52
Cannabis	21	32	27	30
Tobacco (cigarettes)	15	16	13	17
Stimulants*	6	6	4	6
Psilocybin/Mescaline (Magic Mushrooms)	5	7	5	4
Inhalants	4	4	3	4
MDMA (Ecstasy)	3	7	5	7
LSD	3	4	4	4
Cocaine	3	4	3	5
Tranquilizers*	2	3	2	3
Steroids	<2	<2	<2	<2

* non-medical use, without a prescription

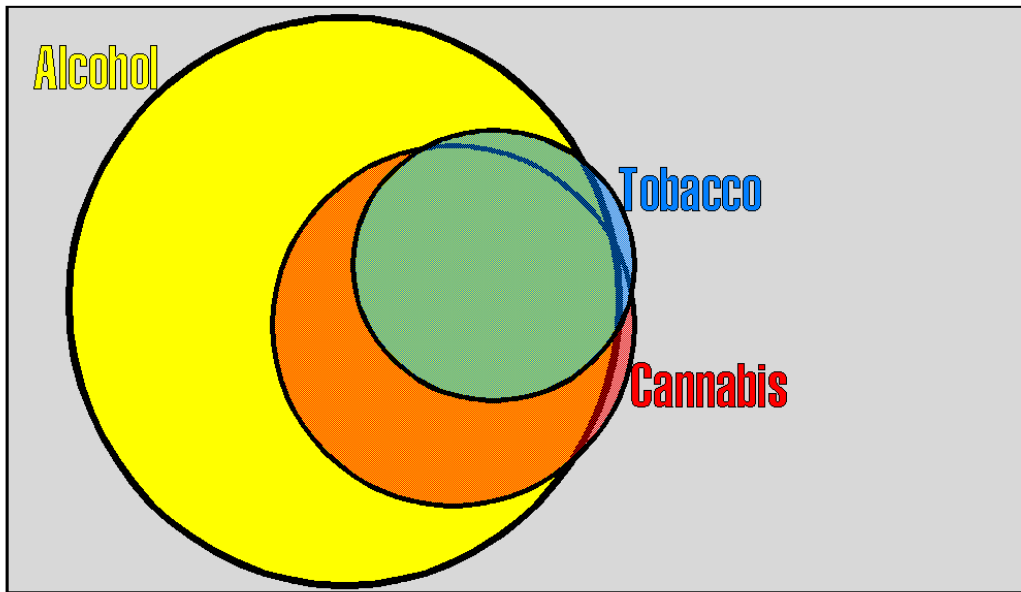
- The drugs most commonly used by adolescent students in the Atlantic provinces were alcohol, cannabis and tobacco.
- Provincial comparisons of student drug use rates for grades 7 to 12 combined must be made with caution (see methods). Comparisons should be made grade by grade (see technical report).
- The proportions of students who reported cigarette smoking decreased in all four provinces since the last survey in 2002.

MULTIPLE DRUG USE

Patterns of **multiple drug use** for adolescent PEI students in 2007:

- Alcohol use overlaps almost all other drug use.
- 10% of all students report multiple drug use of alcohol, tobacco and cannabis.

Various patterns of multiple drug use are shown as a Venn diagram with accurately scaled areas for the rectangle, circles and overlapping surfaces.



- The rectangle represents all students surveyed (100%).
- The circles represent the students reporting any use (51%).
- The remainder of the rectangle represents the students who did not use any drugs (49%).
- Students rarely report using tobacco, cannabis, or other drugs without drinking alcohol.

“A lot of people I know drink alcohol, but do not smoke regularly, unless they are drinking.” Gr 9

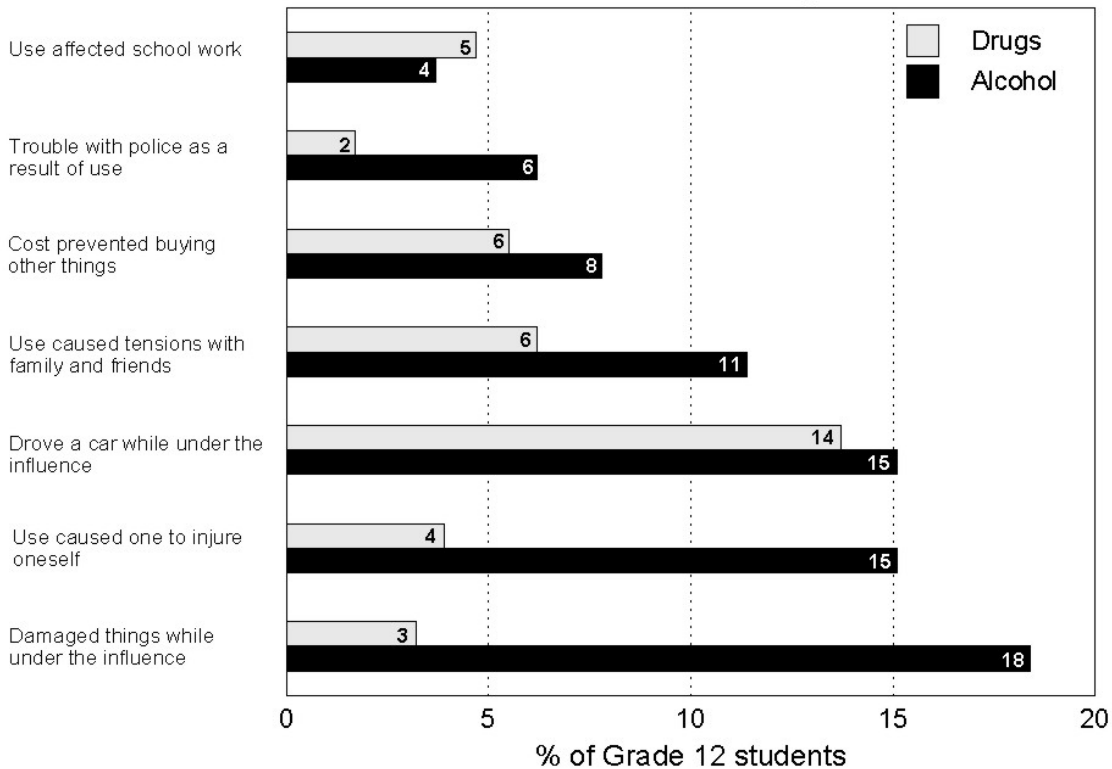
“I did drugs, alcohol, and smoked when I was around 12 years old, lived at home and had a lot of family problems. But now that I am in foster care and have a stable environment I don't do any of them anymore.” Gr 10

CONSEQUENCES of ALCOHOL & DRUGS

There are many harmful consequences of alcohol and drug use. The prevalence of the consequences reported in 2007 varied:

- males and females reported different patterns of consequences of alcohol use
- males and females reported similar patterns of consequences of drug use
- patterns of consequences are similar for alcohol and drug use; notable exceptions are damage and injury less likely to be reported consequence of drug use
- prevalence of each consequence increased with increasing grade

Problems Related to Alcohol and Drug Use, 2007



“Cannabis does not effect your ability to drive a vehicle. People I know do it everyday and they are actually better drivers for it. It is alcohol that causes the problems.”

Gr 12

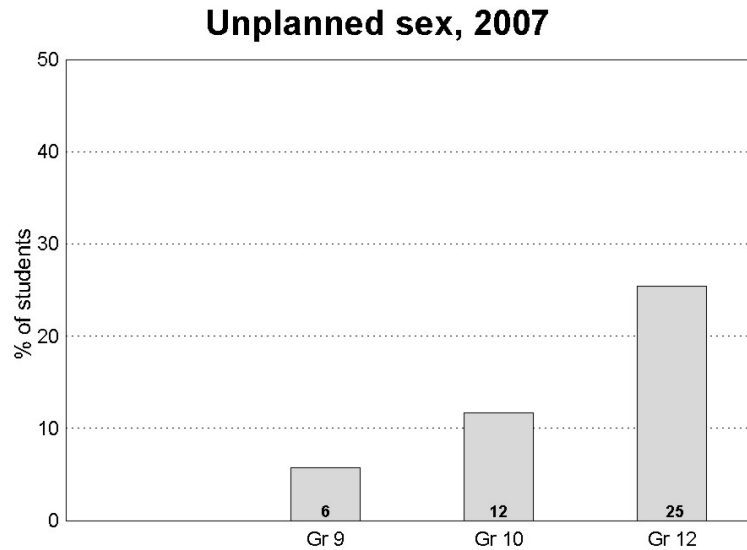
“There are a lot of people who use drugs alcohol and cigarettes that are just fine and don’t have problems they just do it for fun or because they are bored.”

Gr 10

“A lot of the questions about weed made it sound like you can’t concentrate when using but comming from a user it helps me concentrate.”

Gr 10

The most common consequence of student use of alcohol and/or drugs is **unplanned sex**.



Sexual Behaviour

- Sexual activity increases with grade level:
 - 13% of Grade 9 students are sexually active
 - 27% of Grade 10 students are sexually active
 - 53% of Grade 12 students are sexually active
- Sexual activity rates are similar for males and females.
- The rates of sexual activity in 2007 are consistent with the rates reported in 1998 and 2002.
- 60% of sexually active students used a condom.

“A lot of people are having oral sex and not classifying it as sex.” Gr 9

“I have never had sex while using alcohol, but I have had other things happen like being fingered when I passed out.” Gr 9

“I feel pressure to perform sexual acts on the boy I am seeing. I feel nervous about that sort of thing.” Gr 10

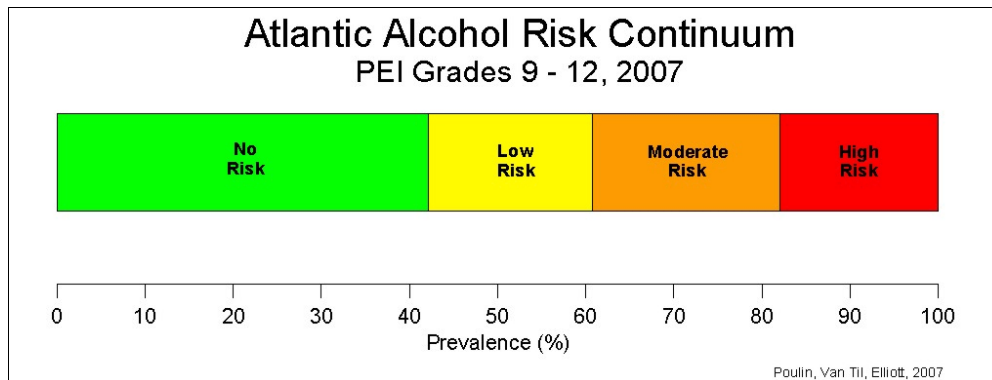
“I use birth control pills, and I have sex a lot, but only with my boyfriend, who got checked and is clean.” Gr 12

“What do you mean by having unplanned sex? Me and my partner never ‘plan’ to have sex, it usually just happens.” Gr 12

The consequences of alcohol and drug use can also be used to monitor the level of risk associated with substance use in the general adolescent population.

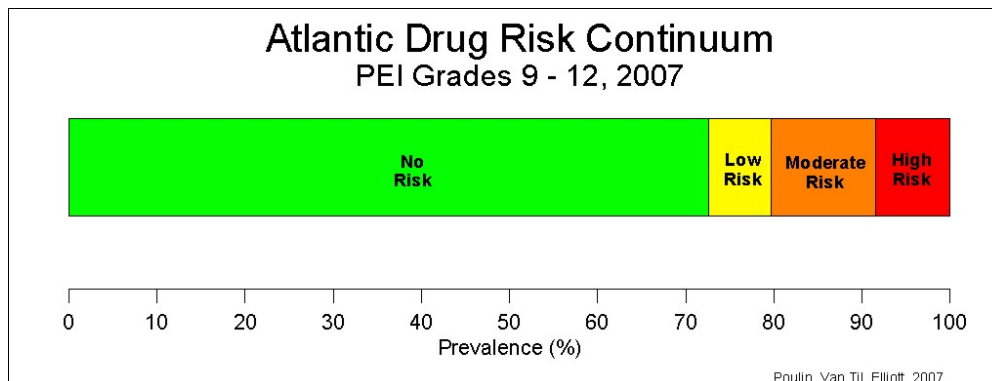
Alcohol Risk

- 18% of PEI students in grades 9, 10 and 12 have a pattern of high risk behaviours on the Atlantic Alcohol Risk Continuum.
- High risk students reported they had experienced three or more of 13 alcohol problem indicators. High risk students were more likely than other students to report binge drinking, or that they needed help.



Drug Risk

- 8% of PEI students in grades 9, 10 and 12 have a pattern of high risk behaviours on the Atlantic Drug Risk Continuum.
- High risk students reported they had experienced three or more of 9 drug problem indicators. High risk students were more likely than other students to report daily cannabis use, or that they needed help.



Few students (3%) in grades 7 to 12 indicated they needed help for alcohol or drug use. Very few students (1%) accessed intervention services. These rates are similar to those found in previous surveys.

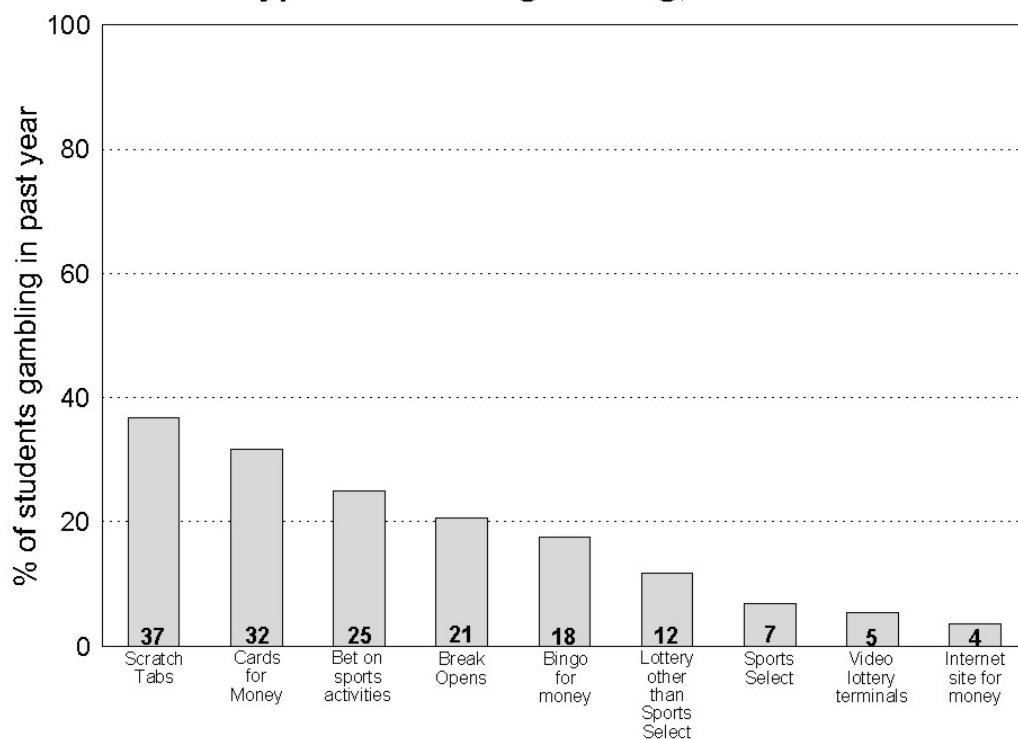
“I know in my school I see people all the time struggling with drug use and it would be great if they got help and realized they don’t need drugs or alcohol to be happy.” Gr 12

GAMBLING

60% of students participated in gambling activities in the past year. This is similar to rates reported in 2002.

- Similar rates of gambling were reported for all grades.
- Male gambling rates (67%) are higher than females rates(51%).
- 22% of students played on internet gambling sites with play money or points.
- The majority of students (96%) are not considered problem gamblers. This is similar to the rate reported for 2002.

Type of student gambling, 2007



“Buying scratch tickets once or twice a year would not be gambling.” Gr 12

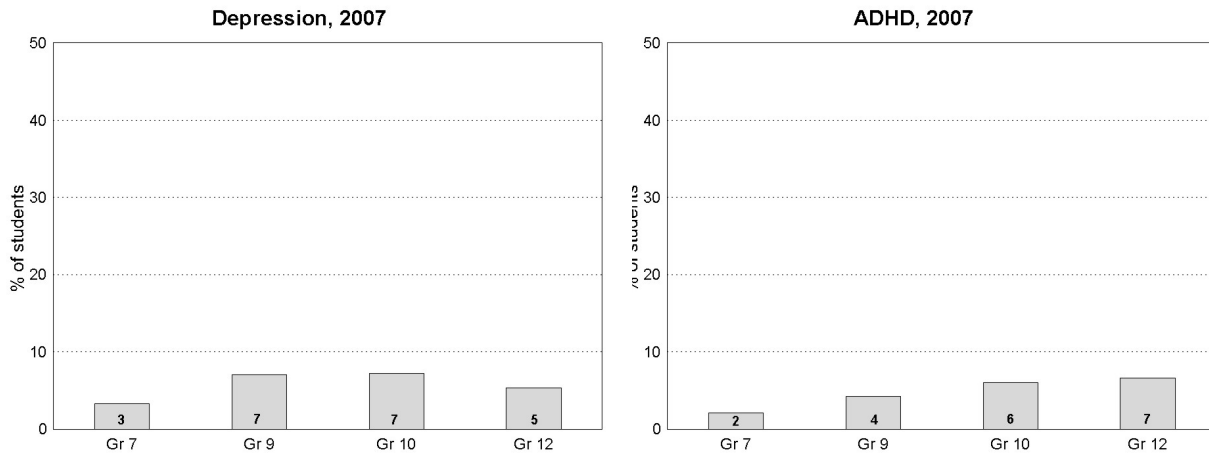
“I do ‘virtual’ gambling, like paying points instead of paying real money.” Gr 7

“If there are a lot of family members we play texas hold’em and entry is 2\$ or 5\$. So it’s not like I go with random people and gamble, it’s within the family.” Gr 9

MENTAL HEALTH

Depression was measured using a scale that asks about symptoms.

- 6% of students scored as having “very elevated” depressive symptoms. This is the prevalence of probable depression.
- Females are twice as likely to report depressive symptoms as males.
- Students in Grade 7 were less likely than older students to report depression.
- Prevalence of depressive symptoms has remained stable since 2002, and is similar across Atlantic provinces.



Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) was measured using a scale that asks about symptoms of inattention, impulsiveness, and hyperactivity.

- 5% of students scored positive on the screening tool for ADHD.
- There is no difference between males and females.
- Students in Grade 7 were less likely than older students to report ADHD symptoms.

“I feel really depressed, the people in my school are pricks (some of them), I get made fun of sometimes, and I can never concentrate. Sometimes I feel as if noone really cares how I feel. (Well, certain people)” Gr 9

“Sometimes I feel like the world is against me and I can’t change it but wish I could.” Gr 10

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The findings of the 2007 Student Drug Use Survey have implications for the public, parents, and the formal systems in Prince Edward Island. Collaboration needs to continue to address the complex issues surrounding students.

- ❑ Half of PEI students in grades 7 to 12 abstained from using alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs. We should continue to support students to make healthy decisions about drug use.
- ❑ Cigarette use has decreased, but daily smoking has remained stable. Daily smokers will require different supports to encourage quit behaviour.
- ❑ Alcohol is the drug of choice among students. While friends were the most common source of alcohol, some parents provide alcohol, and students also drank in licenced venues with or without fake identification. We should continue to inform the public on the harms of alcohol use.
- ❑ Injury and damage are common consequences of alcohol use. Students continue to drive under the influence of both alcohol and cannabis. We should continue to develop adolescent understanding of the consequences of both alcohol and drug use.
- ❑ As many as one in three students find themselves in the potentially harmful situation of being a passenger in a vehicle driven by a driver under the influence of alcohol or drugs. We need to provide more information on the effects of alcohol and drugs on driving, and promote skills in making positive choices.
- ❑ Sexual activity among students results in high risk behaviour (such as avoiding condom use, unplanned sex under the influence of alcohol or drugs) that can increase the risks of sexually transmitted infections, or unplanned pregnancy. We should support students with the knowledge and skills to make informed choices and avoid these consequences.
- ❑ By Grade 9, depression symptoms in students are similar to rates in the adult population. We need to provide mechanisms for coping with mental health issues.
- ❑ The majority of students have participated in gambling activities. We should continue to educate youth on the risks of gambling.

FOR MORE INFORMATION...

Additional copies of this report are available by contacting:

Island Information Services
1st floor Jones Bldg, 11 Kent St.
Charlottetown, PEI
Tel: (902) 368-4000

This Highlights Report is based on *2007 PEI Student Drug Survey: Technical Report*.
The Technical Report and the Highlights Report are available on the government of
Prince Edward Island website:

www.gov.pe.ca

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Contact numbers for Adolescent Addictions programs:

Queens	368-4120 or 368-4027
West Prince	853-8670
East Prince	888-8380
Southern Kings	838-0960
Eastern Kings	687-7110

Contact numbers for Adolescent Mental Health programs:

Queens	368-4430
West Prince	853-8670
East Prince	888-8380
Southern and Eastern Kings	838-0960
Kids Help Phone	1-800-668-6868
Island Helpline	1-800-218-2885