Illicit Drug Use, Including Cannabis

Key Findings

- In 2009-2011, 12% (±2) of Halton residents and 12% (±1) of Ontario residents aged 15 and over reported illicit drug use in the past 12 months (see **Figure 1**).
- In 2009-2011, 10% (±2) of Halton residents and 10% (±1) of Ontario residents aged 15 and over reported using 'cannabis only' in the past 12 months (see **Figure 1**), indicating that cannabis is currently the illicit drug of choice for Halton and Ontario residents.
- The numbers for illicit drugs used by Halton residents, other than cannabis, were too small to report.

Sex

- In 2009-2011, Halton males aged 15 and older [21% (±6)] were significantly more likely than Halton females [8% (±3)] to report illicit drug use in the past 12 months (see **Figure 2**).
- In 2009-2011, the percent of Halton males aged 15 and older using only cannabis in the past 12 months was 15% (±5) compared to 8% (±3) for females (see **Figure 2**). These differences were not statistically significant.

Age Group

- In 2009-2011, 32% (±9) of Halton youth (aged 15 to 24), 10% (±3) of Halton adults aged 25-44 and 8% (±4) of adults aged 45-64 reported illicit drug use in the past 12 months. These differences were statistically significant when comparing youth aged 15 to 24 to adults aged 25-64 (see **Figure 3**).
- In 2009-2011, the 15-24 age group also had significantly higher rates of 'cannabis only' use in the past 12 months [27% (±8)] compared to the 25-44 age group [9% (±3)] and the 45-64 age group [5% (±3)] (see **Figure 3**).
- The coefficient of variation for adults aged 65+ was too large to report the findings.

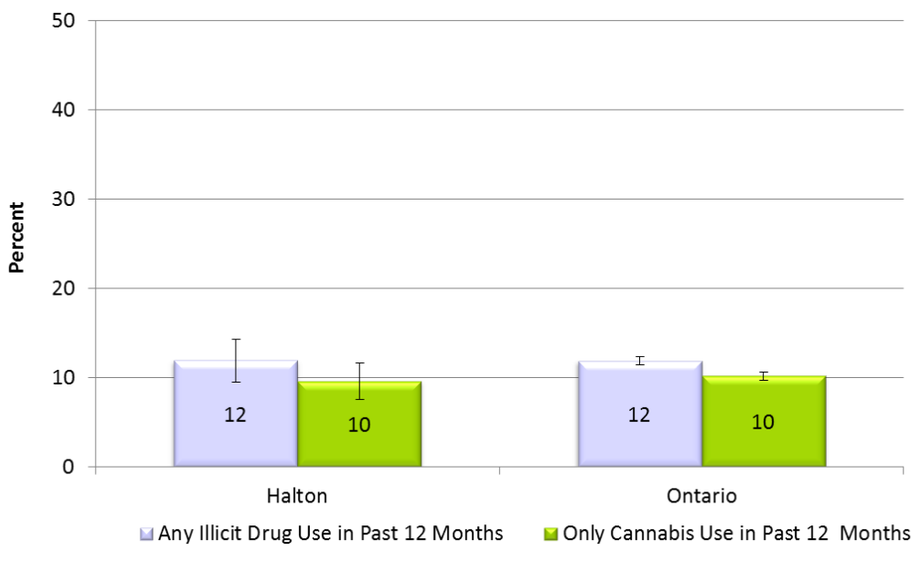
Municipality

- In 2009-2011, residents aged 15 and over in Halton Hills [21% (±8)] had higher rates of illicit drug use in the past 12 months than residents in the other municipalities. The differences were statistically significant when comparing Halton Hills with Milton [7% (±4)] (see **Figure 4**).
- In 2009-2011, the percent of residents aged 15 and over who reported 'cannabis only' use in the past 12 months did not vary significantly by municipality (see **Figure 4**).

Income

- In 2009-2011, the percent of residents aged 15 and over who reported illicit drug use in the past 12 months or cannabis only use in the past 12 months did not vary significantly by income (see **Figure 5**).

Figure 1: Percent of Residents Aged 15 and Over who Reported Illicit Drug Use, Halton Region and Ontario, 2009 to 2011 combined



A. Purpose

The purpose of this Health Indicator Report is to provide information about the percent of residents aged 15 and over living in Halton Region and Ontario who report illicit drug use, including cannabis use.

B. Data Sources

The data source used for this report was the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS)[1]. The CCHS is a cross-sectional survey that collects information related to health status, health care utilization, and health determinants for the Canadian population.

The target population for the CCHS is all Canadians aged 12 and over. One respondent is randomly selected from each household to complete the survey.

C. Data Collection Period

2009/10 and 2011 data were combined to ensure sufficient sample size for analysis.

"Illicit Drug Use" is optional content in the CCHS and not selected for Halton Region for years prior to 2009.

D. Definitions

This CCHS and this report defines illicit drug use as the use of cannabis (marijuana, hashish); cocaine or crack, speed (amphetamines); ecstasy (MDMA); hallucinogens (PCP or LSD); heroin; steroids (e.g. testosterone, dianabol or growth hormones); inhalants (e.g. sniffing or huffing glue/solvents).[2] Respondents of the CCHS were not asked about the use of prescription opioids.

Income was based self-reported household income divided by household size, as a proxy for individual income adequacy. Four income groups were determined by Statistics Canada in earlier years of the CCHS. However, for this report the two lowest income groups were combined (to create the "Lower" group) to ensure sufficient sample size for analysis. The lowest income group cut-offs are higher than the current LICO produced by Statistics Canada.

A 95% confidence interval (CI) refers to the range of values that has a 95% chance of including the 'true' estimate. A large CI means that there is a large amount of variability or imprecision. When CI's do not overlap, estimates are significantly different. CI's are reported in brackets or presented as I in the graphs.

Coefficient of variation (CV) refers to the precision of the estimate. When the CV is between 16.6 and 33.3, the estimate should be interpreted with caution because of high variability and has been marked with an asterisk (*). Estimates with a CV of 33.3 or greater are not reportable and have been marked with double asterisks (**) in the graphs.

Analysis of CCHS data uses weights to adjust for sampling design and the population.[3] Bootstrapping techniques were used to produce the coefficient of variation (CV) and 95% confidence intervals.

E. Limitations

CCHS results are self-reported and may not necessarily be recalled accurately. Individuals living on First Nations Reserves and Crown lands; residents of institutions; full-time members of the Canadian Armed Forces; and residents of certain remote areas were excluded.

In general, illicit drug users are more difficult to reach in surveys. In addition the CCHS surveys civilian, non-institutionalized, community-dwelling individuals and therefore excludes groups that may be at risk of illicit drug use, such as those in hospitals, jails, prisons, the military, people living on reserves and the homeless. As a result, the percentages may be underestimated. Also, the perception of social approval/disapproval by respondents may affect their responses to questions on drug use.

Rounded estimates were used for the presentation of data, thus estimates may not total 100 percent. Rounded CI's were used for the presentation of data; however, non-rounded CI's were used to determine significant differences.

The total population, including people who had never used an illicit drug in their lifetime was used for the denominator. Don't know, refused and not stated responses were excluded from the analysis.

F. References

1. Canadian Community Health Survey [2009-2010, 2011], Statistics Canada, Share File, Ontario MOHLTC
2. Association of Public Health Epidemiologists of Ontario (APHEO), Core Indicators and Resource List (http://www.apheo.ca)
3. Thomas, S., Sarafin, C., & Simard, M. 2007. Review of the Weighting Methodology for the Canadian Community Health Survey. http://www.fcsm.gov/07papers/Thomas.II-A.pdf. Accessed July 2013.

Last Revised: September 11, 2013

Aged 15 and Over who Reported Illicit Drug Use, By Sex, Halton Region, 2009 to 2011 combined

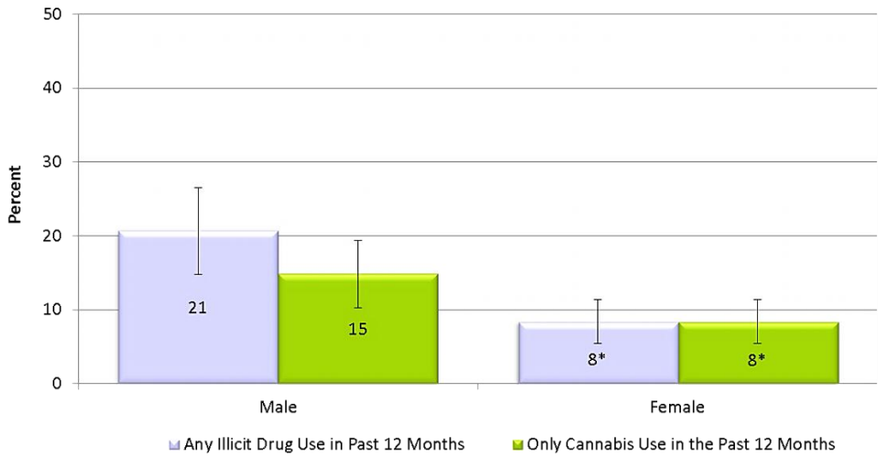


Figure 3: Percent of Residents Aged 15 and Over who Reported Illicit Drug Use, By Age Group, Halton Region, 2009 to 2011 combined

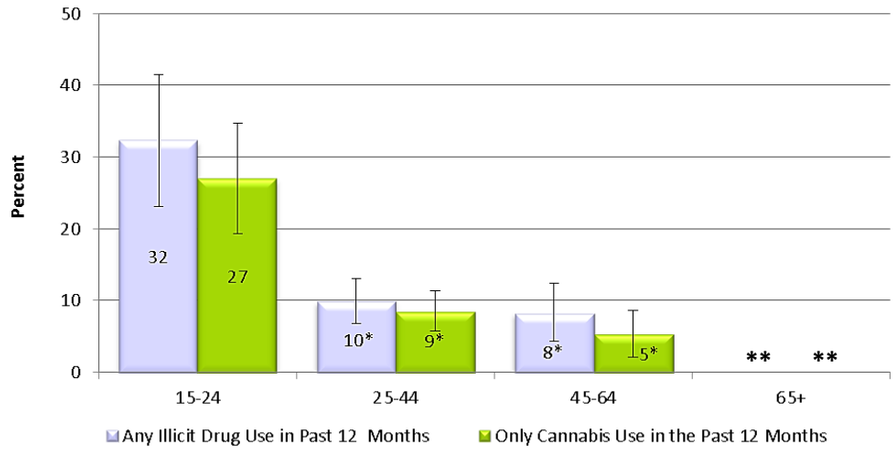


Figure 4: Percent of Residents Aged 15 and Over who Reported Illicit Drug Use, By Municipality, Halton Region, 2009 to 2011 combined

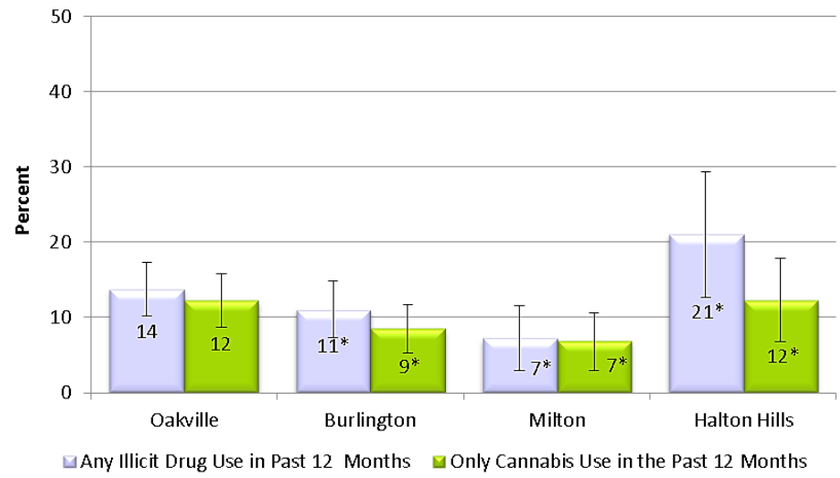


Figure 5: Percent of Residents Aged 15 and Over who Reported Illicit Drug Use, By Income, Halton Region, 2009 to 2011 combined

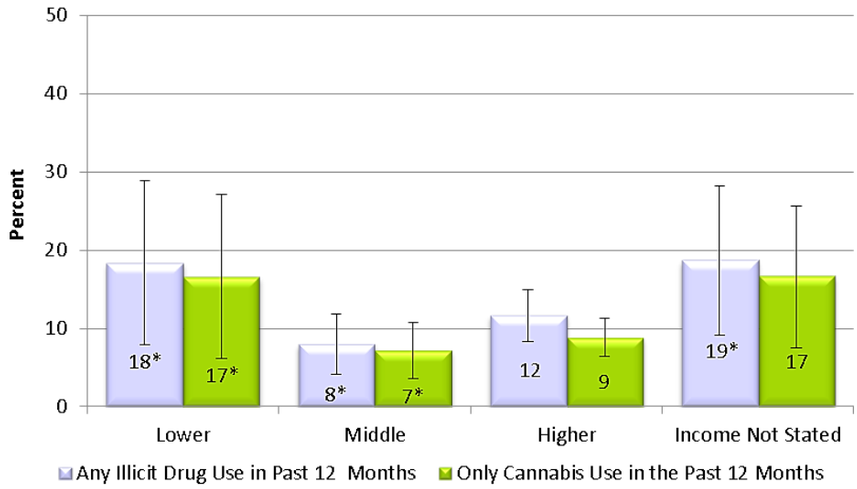


Figure 2: Percent of Residents