



Health
Canada

Santé
Canada



Canadian Executive Council on Addictions
Conseil exécutif canadien sur les toxicomanies



Release of detailed Canadian Addiction Survey (CAS) improves understanding of substance use and abuse in Canada

OTTAWA/March 23/CNW – Health Canada, the Canadian Executive Council on Addictions (CECA) and the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (CCSA) today released detailed results of the *Canadian Addiction Survey (CAS)*—the first national survey devoted to alcohol and other drug use since 1994. CAS data is expected to guide program and policy development and inform the substance use and abuse research agenda for the next several years.

The 100-page detailed CAS report provides an in-depth national and province-by-province look at how Canadians use alcohol, cannabis and other drugs, and the impact these substances have on their lives. The report also examines differences in rates of consumption and harm since the 1994 *Canada's Alcohol and Other Drugs Survey (CADS)* and the 1989 *National Alcohol and Other Drugs Survey (NADS)*. Highlights of the CAS were released on November 24, 2004.

The CAS reveals a rise in alcohol and cannabis use since 1994 with Canadians under the age of 25 accounting for much of the increase and problematic use. The detailed report also outlines self-reported harms that individuals attribute to their use of alcohol and drugs, including problems with friendships and social life, physical health, home life and marriage, work and studies, financial well-being, legal matters, housing, and learning.

“The CAS is the result of an impressive and effective partnership involving CECA, Health Canada and ourselves,” said Michel Perron, CCSA’s Chief Executive Officer. “We are very pleased that our collective efforts will help inform and assist decision-makers in their prevention and policy efforts.”

“The release of this report is the crucial next step in sharing the valuable CAS data with the research and treatment community to provide them with the additional clarity and understanding they need to validate or modify their work in the substance abuse and addictions field,” said CECA president John Borody. “We hope that future detailed analyses will continue to build on this new understanding.”

The full CAS data set will be made public in June 2005, providing Canadian researchers with further opportunities to conduct more detailed analyses from the rich data source. Some areas targeted for further exploration include health systems, treatment barriers and access; drinking, drugs and driving; psychosocial aspects of alcohol use; attitudes, beliefs and public opinion; detailed analysis of cannabis findings; youth and older adults.

The CAS was designed to provide a detailed assessment of how Canadians aged 15 years and older use alcohol and other drugs. The survey focused on the impact that alcohol and drug use has on physical, mental and social well-being. The survey also questioned Canadians about their attitudes toward measures to control drug use, and on their beliefs about the availability of drugs and the risks associated with use.

A total of 13,909 Canadians participated in the CAS, with a minimum of 1,000 in each province. With Health Canada support, Yukon and the Northwest Territories are being surveyed separately with results anticipated in the summer of 2005.

The CAS is a collaboration of Health Canada, the Canadian Executive Council on Addictions (CECA)—which includes the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (CCSA), the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC), the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba (AFM), the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), Prince Edward Island Provincial Health Services Authority, and the Kaiser Foundation/Centre for Addictions Research of BC (CAR-BC)—and the provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and British Columbia.

The Canadian Addiction Survey: A National Survey of Canadians' Use of Alcohol and Other Drugs: Prevalence of Use and Related Harms (both the highlights and detailed report) are available at www.ccsa.ca.

Backgrounder: <http://www.ccsa.ca/pdf/ccsa-bckgrd-20050323-e.pdf>

For further information, contact

Enid Harrison

Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (CCSA) and
Canadian Executive Council on Addictions (CECA)
613) 235-4048 ext. 237; (613) 355-6894 (mobile)
e-mail <mailto:eharrison@ccsa.ca>

Paul Duchesne

Health Canada
(613) 954-4807