

CAS shows increase in heavy drinking and cannabis use among young Canadians

The Canadian Addiction Survey (CAS)—the first national survey devoted to alcohol and other drug use in Canada in 10 years—has revealed a significant growth in alcohol and cannabis use since 1994 with Canadians under the age of 25 accounting for much of the increase. Highlights of the CAS were released at a news conference in Ottawa in November.

The most extensive survey of its type ever conducted in Canada, the CAS provides a detailed picture of how Canadians use alcohol and other drugs, and the impact that use has on their physical, mental and social well-being. The survey is a collaboration of Health Canada, the Canadian Executive Council on Addictions (CECA)—which includes CCSA, the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission, the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Prince Edward Island Provincial Health Services Authority, and the Kaiser Founda-

tion/Centre for Addictions Research of BC (CAR-BC)—and the provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and British Columbia.

The CAS is based on a

preceding the CAS, compared with 72.3% in 1994.

Across provinces, past-year alcohol use is fairly close to the national average, although rates are significantly

lower in Prince Edward Island (70.2%), New Brunswick (73.8%), Newfoundland and Labrador (73.9%), and higher in Quebec (82.3%). Past-year drinking rates peak among youth 18–24 years old with 90% of those in this age group consuming alcohol in the past 12 months.

Heavy drinking has increased with nearly 17% of past-year drinkers falling into the category of high-risk drinkers according to the World Health Organization's Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT). These high-risk drinkers are predominantly males and people under the age of 25.

Nearly one-quarter of former and current drinkers report that their drinking has caused harm to themselves and to others in their lifetime,

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► CAS highlights were released at a well-attended media conference on Nov. 24. Speaking to the findings were (left to right) Ed Adlaf, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health; Michel Perron, CCSA; and Robert Hanson, Health Canada. The complete CAS will be released early in 2005.

sample of 13,909 Canadians 15 years of age and older compiled from a random selection of telephone numbers with a minimum of 1,000 respondents in each province. The territories are being surveyed separately by Health Canada using culturally appropriate survey methods; results are expected by mid-2005.

More people drinking

Nearly 80% (79.3%) of Canadians report that they drank alcohol in the 12 months

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► About 70 leading addictions researchers, specialists and key stakeholders met at the October 2003 Forum on Alcohol and Illicit Drugs Research in Canada to develop a strategic addictions research agenda for Canada—from basic and clinical science to social, cultural and environmental research linked to alcohol and illicit drugs. The recently announced “strategic initiative” for research funding grew out of that Forum and a previous research workshop at Carleton University in December 2001.

Unique partnership prepares to invest in addictions research

CCSA has pooled resources with a unique group of partners as part of a new “strategic initiative” to provide much-needed funding for substance abuse and addictions research in Canada.

Research in Addictions: Innovative Approaches in Health Research was launched in December with the issuing of a Request for Application (RFA) for funding of research in 10 eligible areas of interest. The initiative is spearheaded by the CIHR Institute of Neurosciences, Mental Health and Addiction in partnerships with the Institutes of Aboriginal Peoples’ Health; Gender and Health; and Human Development, Child and Youth

Health. Other partner organizations include the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, the Canadian Tobacco Control Research Initiative, Health Canada, First Nations and Inuit Health Branch, and the Interprovincial Consortium on Problem Gambling Research.

Total funding for the first year of the five-year initiative is expected to reach at least \$1,137,000, of which CCSA’s share will be \$100,000. The partnership is also hoping to expand as other funding sources come on stream.

Nine of the 10 eligible research themes emerged as recommendations from the Forum on Alcohol and Illicit Drugs Research in Canada, held in Ottawa in October

2003, where the seeds of the new strategic initiative were planted. The themes are set out in a report on the Forum at www.ccsa.ca/pdf/extl-009442-2003.pdf (or see *Action News* Vol. XIII No. 4).

A 10th theme addresses cross-addictions involving alcohol, tobacco and gambling.

Applicants can choose from five different types of grants: New Emerging Teams, Policy Research, Knowledge Synthesis, New Discoveries (High-Risk Seed Grants), and Secondary Analysis.

Deadline for full applications in all five categories is Aug. 1, 2005.

For more information, contact Dr. Colleen Dell at cdell@ccsa.ca □



Envisioning a National Framework for Action on Substance Use and Abuse

This document provides a series of key activities leading to a National Conference on Alcohol and Drugs in fall 2005, and identifies key players in the process, including Canada’s Drug Strategy partners and other major stakeholders.



► The consultation process currently in place to explore and define the National Framework on Substance Use and Abuse is described in a new CCSA information piece at www.ccsa.ca/pdf/ccsa-011056-2004-e.pdf. The document outlines a series of key activities leading to a National Conference on Alcohol and Drugs in fall 2005, and identifies key players in the process, including Canada’s Drug Strategy partners and other major stakeholders.

National Framework process consults on alcohol policy

The renewal of Canada’s Drug Strategy (CDS) in May 2003 created an opportunity to envision a comprehensive and coordinated approach to substance abuse in Canada.

This proposed new approach—the National Framework for Action on Substance Use and Abuse—is currently the subject of a broad consultation process organized by Health Canada and CCSA.

The aim is first to determine the level of commitment across Canada to developing such a Framework, and then to work to define its various functions and structures. CCSA has prepared a “roadmap” of the consultation process at www.ccsa.ca/pdf/ccsa-011056-2004-e.pdf

Among the many activities contributing to the consultation process was the recent National Thematic Roundtable on Alcohol Policy, hosted by CCSA in Ottawa to identify alcohol-related topics of national concern and to consider potential policy directions within these topic areas.

The two-day event was remarkable for its diversity of participants—including government, addictions agencies, universities, the alcohol industry, and provincial liquor monopolies—and for the willingness of those participants to listen to each other.

A background paper entitled *Alcohol-Related Harms and Control Policy in Canada* was prepared for the event by Gerald Thomas, Senior

Policy Analyst with CCSA’s Research and Policy Division, and is posted at www.ccsa.ca/pdf/ccsa-004840-2004.pdf. A presentation on alcohol issues in Canada by Dr. Eric Single, CCSA’s Scientific Advisor Emeritus, is available at www.ccsa.ca/pdf/ccsa-004799-2004.pdf

The Framework process culminates next fall with a National Conference on Alcohol and Drugs hosted by CCSA. The event will focus on policy and program innovation in Canada and will review outcomes of several projects now underway, including the Canadian Cost Study, the Workforce Development Strategy, the Adolescent Problem Gambling Index, and the Northern Addiction Surveys. □

Western methamphetamine summit seeks consensus

Growing concerns over methamphetamine use in Canada's western provinces were the focus of a three-day consensus development summit in Vancouver in November.

More than 250 stakeholders from across western Canada met to develop a collaborative approach to issues of methamphetamine use and production. The meeting heard from health care and social service providers, front-line responders, law enforcement representatives and methamphetamine users themselves, as well as

from guest speakers from Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States.

A panel of eight experts listened to the exchanges of information and will produce a consensus statement by next spring. The panel, which included a CCSA representative, heard presentations from 25 authorities on various aspects of methamphetamine use and production, and then listened as the presenters engaged in a dialogue with the delegates.

Questions referred to the expert panel touched on the scope of methamphetamine

use, what is known about use from a public health perspective, what is known about production and enforcement, what constitutes best practice in prevention and health promotion, and what opportunities exist for collaboration in policy, programming and research.

The summit was sponsored by Vancouver Coastal Health, and jointly funded by the BC Government, Health Canada, Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada, BC Health Authorities, and the governments of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. □



► **Anne-Elyse Deguire**, a Senior Research Analyst with CCSA's Research and Policy Division, was one of eight members of an expert panel whose consensus statement on methamphetamine use and production is expected in spring 2005.

CSC and CCSA announce plans for 2005 Summer Institute

The third National Summer Institute on Addictions will be held in Prince Edward Island, July 18-21, 2005, with the theme of Assessment and Treatment Planning. The Institute will present up-to-date, evidence-based information on screening, assessment and treatment planning for alcohol- and drug-dependent cli-

ents. The theme includes motivational interviewing, individual and group counselling, and relapse prevention. Population-specific treatment needs will also be addressed.

The 2005 Institute will reflect participant feedback from the 2004 Institute as well as consultations with members of the Canadian Executive Council on Addictions and the Atlan-

tic Association of Addiction Executives (AAAE). As well, CCSA's preliminary review of the National Treatment Workforce Development Survey demonstrates strong interest in assessment and treatment planning among managers and front-line workers.

For more information on the 2005 Institute, please go to www.ccsa.ca □



► Registration day at the 2004 National Summer Institute on Addictions in Montague, PEI. The Institute is presented by CCSA and the Addictions Research Centre (ARC) of the Correctional Service of Canada.

Addictions executives form new group in Atlantic Canada

A new association has been established to provide a forum for the development of common positions on addictions policy, prevention, treatment, research and training in Atlantic Canada.

The Atlantic Association of Addiction Executives (AAAE) is made up of senior representatives from Newfoundland and Labrador,

Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island.

CCSA, the Addictions Research Centre of the Correctional Service of Canada in PEI, and Health Canada have also joined the AAAE.

After only two meetings the new group is already engaged in a high-profile addictions issue affecting Atlantic Canada. In response to concerns about the abuse of

OxyContin, the Association will release a position paper on Methadone Maintenance Treatment in January.

Through a partnership with Health Canada, the group will soon be in a position to hire an AAAE coordinator who will also act as the new Health, Education and Enforcement in Partnership (HEP) coordinator for the province of Nova Scotia. □



► For more information about AAAE, contact the group's Chair, Greg Purvis, Director, Addiction Services, Nova Scotia, District Health Authorities 4,5&6, at Greg.Purvis@pcha.nshealth.ca

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and one-third report being harmed at least once in the past year because of someone else's drinking.

Cannabis use doubles

The proportion of Canadians reporting any cannabis use in their lifetime has risen significantly to 44.5% from 28.7% in 1994, and the proportion reporting use in the past year nearly doubled to 14.1% from 7.4% in 1994.

Cannabis use is most common among males and young people, with use peaking in late teens and dropping off after age 24. Past-year use of cannabis is reported by 30% of 15-17 year olds and just over 47% of 18-19 year olds. Beyond age 45, less than 10% of the population has used cannabis in the past year.

About 1 in 20 Canadians reports a concern with their cannabis use. The most common concern is failing to control use (4.8%), followed by a strong desire to use (4.5%), and friends' concerns about the respondent's use (2.2%).

Rates of use of illicit drugs other than cannabis remain relatively low with past-year use levels at 3% or less. Again rates are highest among men (4.3%), 18-19 year olds (17.8%) and 20-24 year olds (11.5%).

Next steps

Detailed analyses of CAS data will be published in a series of reports and research papers following publication of the full report early in 2005. CAS Highlights: Prevalence of Use and Related Harms can be viewed at www.ccsa.ca/pdf/ccsa-004804-2004.pdf □

Brooke Somers joins PR&M team

Brooke Somers has joined CCSA as a Communications Advisor, working under Enid Harrison, Director of Public Relations and Marketing. Brooke will focus on media relations and communications strategies and tactics to help raise public awareness of substance abuse issues and to promote CCSA's brand image. Brooke joins CCSA from Cognos Inc., an Ottawa-based



software company, where she held both public relations and marketing positions. □

Please fill out our Action News survey

We're asking *Action News* readers to help us ensure that our newsletter is contributing as much as possible to the exchange of news and information among Canada's addictions professionals. Please take a few minutes to fill

out the survey that came with this issue and mail it or fax it to us (see survey for address and fax number). You can also fill out the survey online at www.ccsa.ca/survey/default.asp?ID=3

For more details, e-mail the Editor at rgarlick@ccsa.ca. □

Events

For details of these and other events or to submit an event, go to www.ccsa.ca/index.asp?mode=Calendar

Feb. 3-4—Epidemics in our Communities: Finding Solutions. Regina, Saskatchewan. Website: www.aidsresourcesask.ca/anhan/home.htm. E-mail: barb.bowditch@sasktel.net

Feb. 3-4—Bottom Line Conference. Depression, Anxiety Disorders and Addictions in the Workplace. Vancouver, British Columbia. Website: <http://www.cmha-bc.org/bottomline/>. E-mail: rfried@cmha-bc.org

Feb. 14-18—Youth Addiction Workshop. Edmonton, Alberta. Website: www.nечи.com/calendar/pdf/YouthAddictions.pdf. Tel.: (780) 459-1884; Toll-free 1-800-459-1884.

Feb. 24-26—Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder: Equality of Access: Rights and the Right Thing To Do. Victoria, British Columbia. Website: www.interprofessional.ubc.ca/FASD2005.htm. E-mail: ipconf@interchange.ubc.ca

March 20-24—16th International Conference on the Reduction of Drug Related Harm. Belfast, Northern Ireland. Website: www.ihrcebelfast.com/. E-mail: dawn@project-planning.com

March 23-24—Western Canadian Conference — Adults with FASD. Winnipeg, Manitoba. Website: www.admb.ca/. E-mail: admb@mts.net

March 31-April 1—4th Annual Alberta Conference on Gambling Research. Public Policy Implications of Gambling Research. Edmonton, Alberta. Website: www.abgaminginstitute.ualberta.ca/2005_conference.cfm

April 11-13—Rond-point 2005 : congrès nationale en toxicomanie. Montréal, Québec. Website: <http://rondpoint2005.fqcrpat.org/accueil.php>. E-mail: fqcrpat@fqcrpat.qc.ca

April 17-20—Responsible Gambling Council Discovery 2005. Niagara Falls, ON. Website: www.responsiblegambling.org/events_rgc_upcoming_events.cfm. Tel.: (416) 499-9800; Toll-free: 1-888-391-1111.

Agreement targets solvent addiction

CCSA and the Youth Solvent Addiction Committee (YSAC)—a network of eight solvent addiction treatment centres located throughout Canada—have signed a two-year Memorandum of Agreement whose goal is to bring First Nations treatment providers and addictions researchers closer together to share data, information, networks and resources.

The Dec. 3 signing ceremony in Vancouver follows a series of joint activities by the two organizations since 2002, including last year's development of a research report on youth residential solvent treatment. The ceremony also

marked the launch of a solvent abuse prevention poster contest for children and youth in Canada. Details of the agreement and poster contest are at www.ccsa.ca/pdf/ccsa-newrel-20041206-e.pdf □



► YSAC-CCSA signing ceremony (left to right): Elder Fred Johnson, Nenqayni Treatment Centre; Dr. Colleen Dell, CCSA; Carol Hopkins, Executive Director, Nimkee NupiGawagan Healing Centre.