



Addressing youth substance abuse: Is there a better way?

A new CCSA report—a follow-up to *Substance Abuse in Canada: Current Challenges and Choices*, published in 2005—provides an up-to-date look at the extent of youth substance abuse and addiction in Canada, and outlines some broad strategic directions for addressing the immediate and long-term impacts of alcohol and other drugs on this vulnerable population.

A lack of evidence-based youth prevention and treatment services contributes to discrepancies in program quality.

Substance Abuse in Canada: Youth in Focus was authored by a team of addiction and adolescent health care professionals commissioned by CCSA. The report summarizes current knowledge on a range of topics and explores implications for policy and practice.

The report covers issues of substance use and harm in the general youth population and among non-mainstream youth; our approaches to those issues, including neuroscience and biomedical perspectives;

and gaps in our responses to the problems. In a concluding chapter, *A call to action*, four potential areas for future action are proposed:

Matching services to age and stage: Appropriate programs and services should be available to all young people as they move from childhood through adolescence. We need to do a better job of identifying and addressing underlying risks in young school-aged children.

Implementing effective services: A lack of evidence-based youth prevention and treatment services contributes to discrepancies in program quality. Accreditation standards should be developed for prevention and treatment programs, and tied to funding.

Preparing professionals: We need better awareness and training in early detection, brief intervention and referral among a range of professionals who work with children and adolescents, including family doctors, teachers, psychologists and youth workers.

Continuing to develop knowledge: Successful interventions depend on comprehensive program evaluations, yet these kinds of evaluations are difficult with limited resources. A solution may be to partner with academic institutions interested in this type of research.

Substance Abuse in Canada: Youth in Focus is available at www.ccsa.ca. >

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CCSA applauds new Nova Scotia alcohol strategy

CCSA has greeted the recent announcement of Nova Scotia's new alcohol strategy with high praise for the province's adoption of a "culture of moderation"—reflecting recommendations contained in a report on a national alcohol strategy completed earlier this year. The Centre issued a news release on Aug. 30 reacting favourably to the Nova Scotia strategy, *Changing the Culture of Alcohol Use in Nova Scotia*, shortly after it was made public.

"We are very pleased to see Nova Scotia's commitment to and investment in reducing alcohol-related harm and we celebrate their efforts to proactively address problematic alcohol use," said CCSA's Chief Executive Officer, Michel Perron.

A multi-sectoral expert working group, co-chaired by CCSA, the Alberta

Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission and Health Canada, was created two years ago to develop consensus on recommendations for a national alcohol strategy. The working group included representatives from government, non-governmental organizations, industry and regulatory bodies, and the research community. Nova Scotia is the first province to interpret the group's 41 recommendations at the provincial level.

Both the provincial and national strategic approaches focus on alcohol from a public health perspective and underline alcohol's significant role in contributing to health and social harms in Canada. The national report, *Reducing Alcohol-Related Harm in Canada: Toward a Culture of Moderation—Recommendations for a National Alcohol Strategy* addresses four

key strategic action areas: health promotion, prevention and education; health impacts and treatment; availability of alcohol; and safer communities.

CCSA has taken an active role in promoting and monitoring the implementation of the national initiative and has identified several recommendations that will be a priority in the coming months, including enhanced efforts to transfer knowledge around prevention, treatment and population health policies and programs.

To view the new Nova Scotia alcohol strategy, visit www.gov.ns.ca/news/ and search on Aug. 29. To access the national alcohol strategy report, please visit the CCSA website at www.ccsa.ca and follow the links for Topics > Drug Strategies. >

Neuroscience-addictions "think tank" sparks new ideas

CCSA "think tank" devoted to bridging the gap between neuroscience and addictions has met twice since June to identify a range of activities for future consideration. These include countrywide consensus building around models of treatment for concurrent disorders, and national clinical practice guidelines to promote a more uniform and evidence-based approach to treatment.

CCSA assembled the eight-member panel of renowned Canadian researchers following a June 2006 report by Dr. Franco Vaccarino of the University of Toronto. CCSA commissioned the report to ensure that the biomedical and neuroscience perspective is reflected in all its work and in its national policy development. The panel will advise CCSA on how to raise the profile of the issues, and how to influence national policy and research agendas.

Other ideas discussed by the panel include improved uptake by clinicians of best and promising practice; continuing education, training and access to knowledge; communicating key messages to the general public about the effects of intoxication and drug use on brain function; connecting with Canada's new Mental Health Commission and centres of excellence; and reframing the discussion of addictions as a health issue.

The panel will meet again in October to look at the ideas that have been generated and to define priorities for action that CCSA and the panel can pursue in the future.

For more information about this initiative, please contact

Rita Notarandrea, Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Director of Research and Policy, at rnotarandrea@ccsa.ca >



> A group seeking to bridge the gap between neuroscience and addictions met for the second time on Aug. 27. Shown here are Dr. Franco Vaccarino, University of Toronto, and Rita Notarandrea, CCSA's Deputy CEO and Director of Research and Policy.

CCSA signs MOA with U of Saskatchewan

CCSA has signed a memorandum of agreement with the University of Saskatchewan that will provide a bridge between academic excellence and the field of substance abuse and addiction research. CEO Michel Perron represented CCSA at the Sept. 24 signing ceremony in Saskatoon, which also provided an opportunity for the University to officially welcome Dr. Colleen Anne Dell as its new Research and Addictions Chair.

Dr. Dell spent five years at CCSA as part of an earlier memorandum of agreement with Carleton University where she was an associate professor of Sociology

and Anthropology. She was named to the newly created position at U of S in 2006 as part of Saskatchewan's Project Hope, a three-year program to prevent and treat substance abuse in the province. Dr. Dell will continue her involvement with some of the issues she worked on at CCSA—including women, solvent abuse and Aboriginal peoples—and will continue to advise CCSA in these areas.

Mr. Perron said knowledge-exchange agreements such as this are “a key part of CCSA's overall vision of a healthier future for all Canadians.” >

CCSA joins Access to Recovery partnership

CCSA's Workforce Development division is partnering with the Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres (CAILC) on a project aimed at raising awareness in both the disabilities and substance abuse communities about the connection between drug and alcohol abuse and other types of impairment, including mobility, vision, hearing, development and learning. The Access to Recovery initiative has generated a number of tools (including the poster pictured here) that promote awareness of the issues and help substance abuse

treatment providers to accommodate persons with disabilities.

For its part, CCSA has developed a new topic area devoted to substance abuse and disabilities as part of its Canadian Network of Substance Abuse and Allied Professionals (go to www.cnsaap.ca and click on “Developing the Workforce”). The new section contains a list of resources for service providers from the Access to Recovery initiative as well as from other sources. The Access to Recovery Web page and Web-based resources can be accessed through www.cailc.ca/ >

Working together to provide ... **Access to Recovery**
 Nous travaillons ensemble pour assurer un ... **Accès au rétablissement**

visit: www.cailc.ca / visitez: www.accva.ca

Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres
 Promoting a new perspective on disability
 Association canadienne des centres de vie autonome
 Voir au-delà du handicap

Sponsored by CAILC in partnership with
 Commandité par l'ACCVA en partenariat avec

abilities.ca
 CANADIAN ALLIANCE FOR TREATMENT

CCSA - CCLAT
 Supporting Recovery Through

Toronto Rehab
 ACCPC
 camh
 Newfoundland Labrador

Incomplete CAS question prompts call for caution

The 2004 Canadian Addiction Survey (CAS), published as *CAS Highlights* (November, 2004), *CAS Detailed report* (March, 2005), and *CAS Microdata eGuide* (June, 2005), included a brief six-item screener to measure problematic drug use. The screener, the ASSIST, was developed by the World Health Organization.

An error was recently found in one symptom (represented by two items: CNAS5 and ASSIS5) of the ASSIST scale. Properly stated, the question is “Have you ever tried [AND FAILED] to control, cut down or stop using cannabis, marijuana or hashish {or other drugs}. The phrase “and failed” was not asked of respondents. This error, in turn, affects the following derived variables: ASISTCAN, ASISTCN3, ASISTCN2, ASISTIL and ASISTIL3.

NOTE: A small study to assess the impact of the missing “and failed” phrase suggested that estimates with the missing phrase underestimate the standard ASSIST item, but total scores and their cutoffs do not differ significantly between the two versions. This error should not affect estimates of subgroup differences (i.e., sex, age and regional differences). Caution and warning should be used in making direct comparisons with other studies using the ASSIST.

For reference to specific places in each of the three documents that were affected by the error, please go to www.ccsa.ca.



CCSA welcomes new staff in two divisions

Amy Porath-Waller and Florence Kellner recently joined the Research and Policy Division as Senior Research Analysts, and Heather Wilcox joined Public Relations and Marketing as Communications Advisor, replacing Brooke Bryce who is on maternity leave.

Amy Porath-Waller achieved her M.A. (Psychology) from Carleton University in 2003 and is close to completing her Doctorate on the topic of impaired-driving behaviours and attitudes among youth. Her long list of scholarships and awards includes a Young Scientist Fellowship, 2007; a Lewar Graduate Scholarship in Arts and Social Sciences, 2003–2007; and a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Doctoral Fellowship, 2005–2007.



Amy Porath-Waller

Florence Kellner achieved both her Masters and Doctorate in Sociology from Rutgers University, New Jersey, and was a faculty member of the Rutgers Center of Alcohol Studies for two years. In

1971, Florence joined Carleton University's Department of Sociology and Anthropology where she lectured, wrote and researched until 2005, having attained the position of Professor Emeritus. Florence was Chair of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology as well as a member of the University Senate and the Ethics Review Board from 1999 to 2005.



Dr. Florence Kellner

Heather Wilcox's primary responsibilities, as the newest member of the Public Relations and Marketing team, will include media relations and organizing events such as the Issues of Substance conference and National Drug and Addictions Awareness Week. A graduate of Algonquin College's public relations program, Heather has worked in marketing-communications for the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada, the Ottawa International Animation Festival and CBC Radio. >



Heather Wilcox

UN grants CCSA special consultative status

The United Nations Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations has approved CCSA's application for special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) after a

lengthy process that began five years ago. ECOSOC serves as the central forum for discussing international economic and social issues, and for formulating policy recommendations addressed to Member States and the United Nations system. >

Call for Nominations

The Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse is looking for qualified people to fill two vacant at-large positions on its volunteer Board of Directors. The Board meets three to four times a year. Board members come from a wide variety of backgrounds, including government, the private sector and the addictions field. A nomination form and additional information, such as the CCSA Act and the current Board list, are available at the CCSA website at www.ccsa.ca.

EVENTS

OCT. 28–31

Toxicomanie et troubles concomitants : XXXV^e colloque de l'Association des intervenants en toxicomanie du Québec
Trois-Rivières, QC. www.aitq.com;
email: info@aitq.com; tel.: 450-646-3271;
fax: 450-646-3275

NOV. 18–24

National Drug and Addictions Awareness Week (NDAAW)
NDAAW: www.ccsa.ca/CCSA/EN/Partnerships/NAAW_DAW/
National Addictions Awareness Week:
www.naaw.net/

NOV. 22–24

2^e Forum national de recherche sur la santé
Ottawa, ON.
www.documentsetc.ca/CNFSFORUM/;
Tel.: 613-749-5975;
fax: 613-745-8753;
email: CNFSforum@documentsetc.ca

NOV. 25–28

Issues of Substance (IOS) 2007
Edmonton, AB. www.issuesofsubstance.ca/IOS/EN/Home.htm
Tel.: 613-235-4048, ext. 243;
fax: 613-235-8101;
Email: bbryce@ccsa.ca

DEC. 4–6

Human Health Resources 2007: Connecting Issues and People
Ottawa, ON. www.cihiconferences.ca/en/HHR2007/about_e.shtml;
tel.: 613-694-6844; fax: 613-789-2114;
email: conferences@cihi.ca

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