

PHYSICAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING

INDICATOR #14 Marijuana Use

DEFINITIONS

The original established indicator is the percentage of BC students in grades 7–12 who report having used marijuana in the past 30 days. In the interest of more fully understanding the level of marijuana use among youth, this indicator will be explored here and in future reports as two measures, specified below as Indicators 14A and 14B.

INDICATOR #14A — Percentage of BC students in grades 7–12 who report having ever tried marijuana.

INDICATOR #14B — Percentage of BC students in grades 7–12 who report having used marijuana in the past 30 days.

KEY MESSAGES

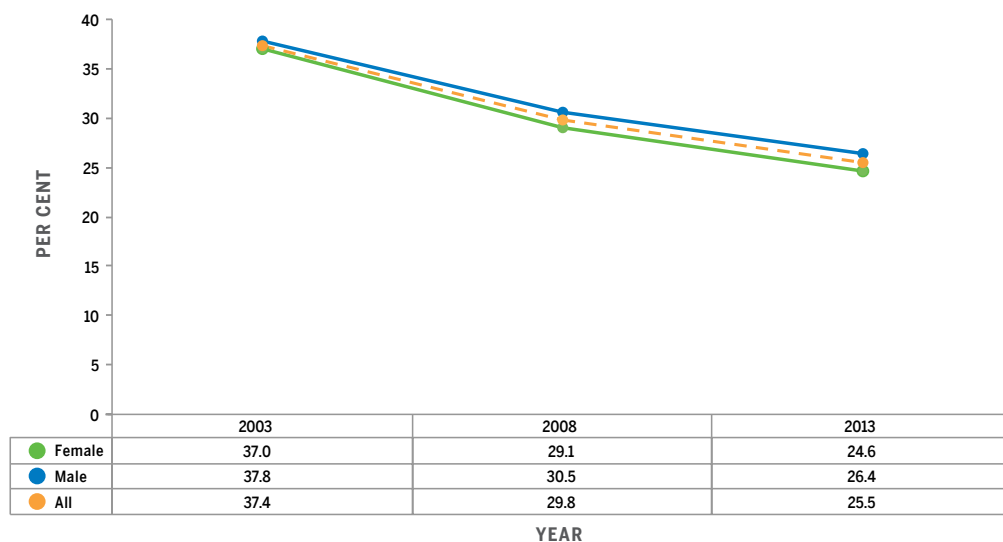
- ▶ In Canada, marijuana is the most commonly used illicit drug.¹
- ▶ Canadian youth have the highest rate of marijuana use in the world.²
- ▶ There is concern that substance use, including marijuana use, may permanently harm developing adolescent brains.^{3,4} Frequent use of marijuana during adolescence can result in reduced cognitive functioning, limited educational attainment, and marijuana dependence. Research has found that daily users are at the highest risk of experiencing negative outcomes.⁴
- ▶ Marijuana use also has negative effects on lung health.⁵
- ▶ Figure 14A.1 shows that in 2013, approximately one-quarter of youth surveyed (25.5 per cent) reported having ever used marijuana. This was a decrease from the 37.4 per cent who reported this in 2003.
- ▶ Figure 14B.1 shows a decrease between 2008 and 2013 in the percentage of youth who reported using marijuana at least once in the past 30 days, with a slightly larger decrease among males that resulted in the gap between sexes narrowing slightly by 2013.
- ▶ Figures 14B.2 and 14B.3 reveal geographic differences among youth who reported using marijuana at least once in the past 30 days; for example, Figure 14B.2 shows an approximately 8 percentage point difference between the lowest health authority (Fraser Health at 11.6 per cent) and the highest (Northern Health at 19.4 per cent).
- ▶ Due to the changing nature of methods through which youth are consuming marijuana, future reports will include data on marijuana use through other means such as edibles and vaporizers.

“Marijuana use has gone up because it is just really popular. Marijuana is so much easier to get now.”

“It is very confusing to hear that marijuana is bad for you and then hear about adults who use medical marijuana and how it does wonders for them. With such a positive side to it and such a negative side to it, it is really hard to tell kids ‘no it is bad for you’ and then tell others ‘you need it to get rid of this arthritis pain’.”

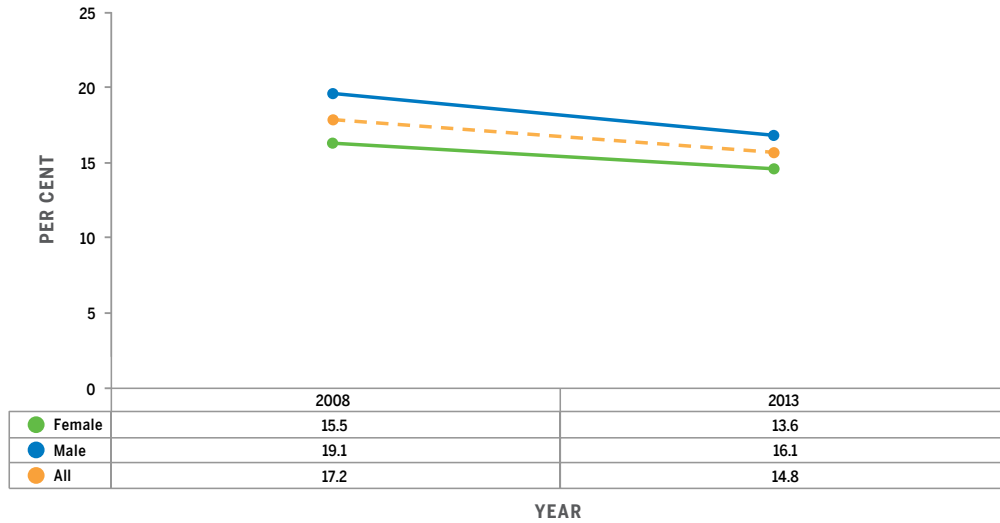
“Some kids believe if you smoke marijuana and study then you will ace the test. Like how is that possible? It’s not like that – it doesn’t work that way.”

FIG 14A.1 Percentage of Students in Grades 7-12 Who Reported Ever Using Marijuana, by Sex, BC, 2003, 2008, and 2013



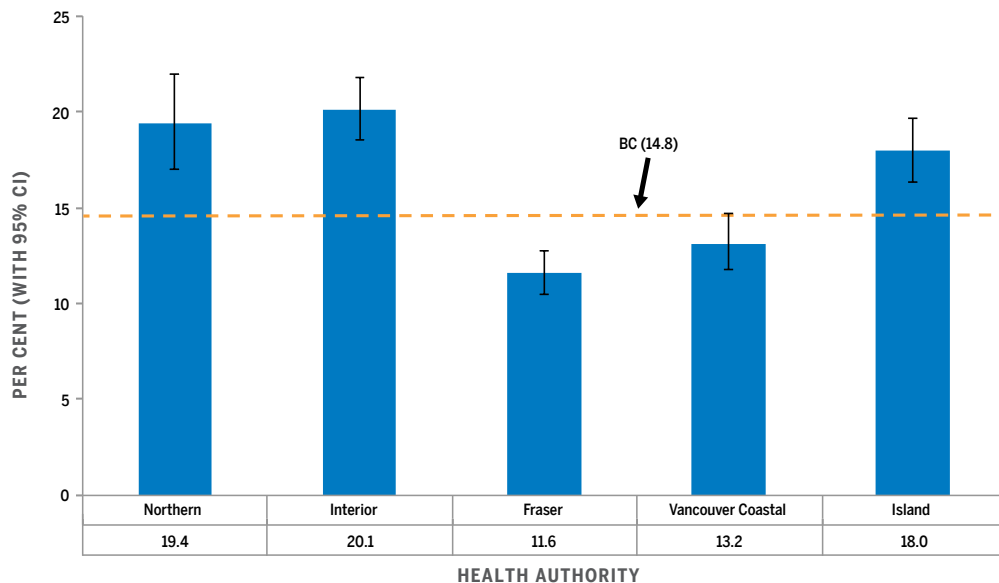
Notes: The differences between years were statistically significant for all groups. See Appendix B for more information about this data source.
Source: McCreary Centre Society, BC Adolescent Health Survey, 2003, 2008, 2013. Prepared by the Surveillance and Epidemiology Team, BC Office of the Provincial Health Officer, 2016.

FIG 14B.1 Percentage of Students in Grades 7-12 Who Reported Using Marijuana in the Last 30 Days, by Sex, BC, 2008 and 2013



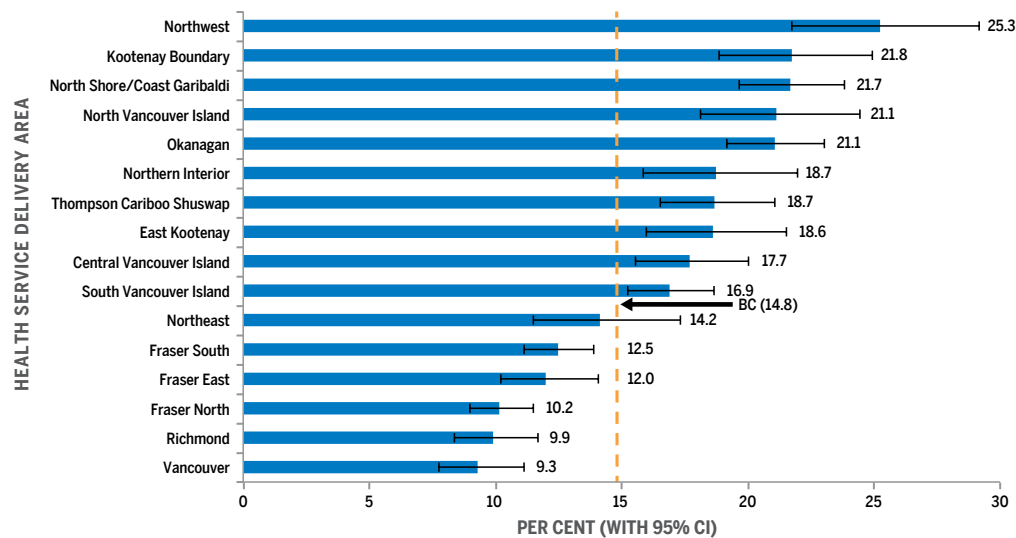
Notes: The difference between 2008 and 2013 was statistically significant for all groups. The difference between sexes was statistically significant for all years. See Appendix B for more information about this data source.
Source: McCreary Centre Society, BC Adolescent Health Survey, 2008, 2013. Prepared by the Surveillance and Epidemiology Team, BC Office of the Provincial Health Officer, 2016.

FIG 14B.2 Percentage of Students in Grades 7-12 Who Reported Using Marijuana in the Last 30 Days, by Health Authority, BC, 2013



Notes: Health authority is based on the location of the school. See Appendix B for more information about this data source.
Source: McCreary Centre Society, BC Adolescent Health Survey, 2013. Prepared by the Surveillance and Epidemiology Team, BC Office of the Provincial Health Officer, 2016.

FIG 14B.3 Percentage of Students in Grades 7-12 Who Reported Using Marijuana in the Last 30 Days, by Health Service Delivery Area, BC, 2013



Notes: Health service delivery area is based on the location of the school. See Appendix B for more information about this data source.
Source: McCreary Centre Society, BC Adolescent Health Survey, 2013. Prepared by the Surveillance and Epidemiology Team, BC Office of the Provincial Health Officer, 2016.

REFERENCES

- ¹ Pirie T, Simmons M. Cannabis use and risky behaviours and harms: a comparison of urban and rural populations in Canada. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse; 2014 Feb [cited 2016 Mar 21]. Available from: <http://www.ccsa.ca/Resource%20Library/CCSA-Cannabis-use-Risky-behaviours-and-Harms-2014-en.pdf>.
- ² UNICEF Office of Research. Child well-being in rich countries: a comparative overview. Innocenti report card 11. Florence: UNICEF Office of Research; 2013 [cited 2016 Mar 21]. Available from: http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/rc11_eng.pdf.
- ³ H. Krueger & Associates. Child and youth health and well-being indicators project: appendix F – physical health and well-being evidence review [prepared for the Office of the Provincial Health Officer and the Canadian Institute for Health Information]. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Institute for Health Information; 2011.
- ⁴ George T, Vaccarino F, editors. Substance abuse in Canada: the effects of cannabis use during adolescence. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse; 2015 [cited 2016 Mar 21]. Available from: <http://www.ccsa.ca/Resource%20Library/CCSA-Effects-of-Cannabis-Use-during-Adolescence-Report-2015-en.pdf>.
- ⁵ Diplock J, Plecas D. Clearing the smoke on cannabis; respiratory effects of cannabis smoking. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse; 2009 [cited 2016 Apr 6]. Available from: <http://www.ccsa.ca/Resource%20Library/ccsa-11797-2009.pdf>.