
2

Prevalence of drug misuse

2.1 [Scottish schools survey, 2000](#)

2.2 [Scottish crime survey](#)

2.3 [National prevalence study](#)

2.1 Scottish schools survey, 2000

The *Smoking, drinking and drug use among young people in Scotland in 2000* survey was carried out by the National Centre for Social Research and the National Foundation for Educational Research among more than 4 700 pupils in 150 schools in Scotland, in the autumn of 2000, and focused on smoking, drinking and drug use. The Department of Health and the Scottish Executive commissioned the study.

This is the latest in a series of national surveys of secondary school children aged 12 to 15 in Scotland. The first survey in the series was carried out in 1982 to provide estimates of the proportion of pupils who smoked and to describe the smoking behaviour of those who did smoke. Similar surveys were carried out every two years (apart from in 1988), to monitor trends in the prevalence of cigarette smoking. Questions on alcohol consumption were included for the first time in the 1990 survey, and the 1998 survey was the first to include questions on the prevalence of drug use.

Drug use

Measures of drug taking in the last month remained at the same level between 1998 and 2000 (10 per cent). The proportion taking drugs in the last year seemed to decrease slightly from 15 per cent to 14 per cent and the proportion who had ever taken drugs seemed to decrease from 18 per cent to 17 per cent although neither of these changes were statistically significant.

The pattern of differences according to sex and age is broadly consistent over both the 1998 and 2000 surveys. For both sexes there was marked variation in relation to age: only 1 per cent of 12 year olds had used drugs in the last month, but 22 per cent of 15 year olds had done so. Boys were a little more likely to have used drugs in the last month than were girls (11 per cent compared with 8 per cent) and were also more likely to have used drugs in the last year, or to have ever used drugs.

There was a decrease between 1998 and 2000 in 15 year olds reporting drug use in the last year (35 per cent to 30 per cent) ([Table 1](#)).

Cannabis was by far the most likely drug to have been used – 13 per cent of pupils aged 12-15 had used cannabis in the last year. As with overall use of drugs, use of cannabis was slightly higher among older pupils and among boys than girls.

One per cent of 12 - 15 year olds had used opiates (heroin or methadone) in the last year, and 3 per cent had used stimulants (a group of substances which includes ecstasy, cocaine, crack, amphetamines and poppers). The proportions of pupils using these types of drugs is so small that it is difficult to detect changes, and there were no significant changes in the proportion of pupils using either of these categories of drugs (or in use of psychedelic drugs) between 1998 and 2000 ([Tables 2](#) and [3](#)).

Many more pupils had been offered drugs than had tried them: more than one third (39 per cent) had been offered one or more drugs, and boys were more likely to have been offered them than were girls (41 per cent compared with 36 per cent).

Again, cannabis was the drug most likely to have been offered (32 per cent said they had been offered cannabis), 15 per cent said that they had been offered glue or gas, 10 per cent had been offered ecstasy, 7 per cent had been offered heroin or methadone, 7 per cent amphetamines and 6 per cent cocaine. As with use of drugs, likelihood of having ever been offered drugs increased sharply with age ([Tables 4](#) and [5](#)).

1 Pupils who had used drugs in the last month, in the last year (including the last month) and ever ; age : 1998 and 2000

gender

		Scotland - All pupils	12 years	13 years	14 years	15 years
		number				
Pupils surveyed (2000)¹						
Boys		2 372	789	618	546	419
Girls		2 303	783	554	578	388
		<i>percentage</i>				
Used drugs in the last month						
Boys	1998	11	2	9	14	26
	2000	11	2	8	19	23
Girls	1998	9	2	7	14	22
	2000	8	1	7	12	20
All pupils	1998	10	2	8	14	24
	2000	10	1	8	15	22
Used drugs in the last year (including those who had done so in the last month)						
Boys	1998	16	2	14	23	36
	2000	16	4	12	25	32
Girls	1998	14	4	9	20	34
	2000	12	2	10	19	27
All pupils	1998	15	3	11	22	35
	2000	14	3	11	22	30
Ever used drugs						
Boys	1998	19	3	16	27	42
	2000	19	5	15	30	35
Girls	1998	16	4	11	23	38
	2000	14	2	11	23	31
All pupils	1998	18	3	13	25	39
	2000	17	4	13	26	33

¹ Pupils are presented with a list of drugs and asked when they last used each one, along with a category for any other drugs that they have used. The number of 'pupils surveyed' in this table are lower than the achieved sample because pupils have been excluded due to partial or non-completion of these questions.

Source : NCSR and NFER (Smoking, drinking and drug use among young people in Scotland in 2000).

2 Pupils who had used individual drugs in the last year ; gender : 1998 and 2000

drug group, drug name

	Scotland - All pupils		Boys		Girls	
	1998	2000	1998	2000	1998	2000
	<i>number</i>					
Pupils surveyed ¹	3 451	4 675	1 691	2 372	1 760	2 303
	<i>percentage</i>					
Used any drug in the last year	15	14	16	16	14	12
Cannabis	15	13	16	15	13	11
Stimulants	4	3	5	3	4	3
Cocaine	1	1	1	1	-	1
Crack	-	-	-	1	-	-
Ecstasy	1	2	1	1	1	2
Amphetamines	3	1	4	1	3	1
Poppers	1	1	2	1	1	1
Psychedelics	3	2	3	3	2	1
LSD	2	1	2	1	1	1
Magic mushrooms	2	2	3	3	1	1
Opiates	-	1	1	1	-	1
Heroin	-	1	1	-	-	1
Methadone	-	-	-	-	-	-
Glue/Gas ²	3	3	3	3	3	3
Tranquillisers	1	1	1	1	1	1
Steroids	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other drugs	1	-	1	-	1	-

1 Pupils are presented with a list of drugs and asked when they last used each one, along with a category for any other drugs that they have used. The number of 'pupils surveyed' in this table are lower than the achieved sample because pupils have been excluded due to partial or non-completion of these questions.

2 Gas was not asked in 1998 survey, Glue and Gas were asked as one category in 2000 survey.

Source : NCSR and NFER (Smoking, drinking and drug use among young people in Scotland in 2000).

3 Pupils who had used individual drugs in the last year ; age : 2000

drug group, drug name

	Scotland - All Pupils	12 years	13 years	14 years	15 years
	<i>number</i>				
Pupils surveyed ¹	4 675	1 572	1 172	1 124	807
	<i>percentage</i>				
Used any drug in last year	14	3	11	22	30
Cannabis	13	2	9	20	28
Stimulants	3	-	3	5	8
Cocaine	1	-	1	1	2
Crack	-	-	1	-	1
Ecstasy	2	-	1	2	4
Amphetamines	1	-	1	2	2
Poppers	1	-	1	1	3
Psychedelics	2	-	2	4	5
LSD	1	-	1	2	2
Magic mushrooms	2	-	2	3	4
Opiates	1	-	1	1	1
Heroin	1	-	1	1	1
Methadone	-	-	1	-	1
Glue/Gas	3	1	3	5	5
Tranquillisers	1	-	1	1	2
Steroids	-	-	-	-	-
Other drugs	-	-	1	-	1

¹ Pupils are presented with a list of drugs and asked when they last used each one, along with a category for any other drugs that they have used. The number of 'pupils surveyed' in this table are lower than the achieved sample because pupils have been excluded due to partial or non-completion of these questions.

Source : NCSR and NFER (Smoking, drinking and drug use among young people in Scotland in 2000).

4 Pupils who had been offered individual drugs ; gender : 1998 and 2000

drug group, drug name

	Scotland - All pupils		Boys		Girls	
	1998	2000	1998	2000	1998	2000
	<i>number</i>					
Pupils surveyed ¹	3 540	4 774	1 748	2 439	1 792	2 335
	<i>percentage</i>					
Offered any drug	41	39	44	41	38	36
Cannabis	34	32	37	35	31	30
Stimulants	17	17	18	17	16	16
Cocaine	6	6	6	6	5	6
Crack	3	4	4	5	3	3
Ecstasy	9	10	9	10	9	11
Amphetamines	11	7	12	8	10	7
Poppers	6	5	7	4	5	5
Psychedelics	14	12	15	14	12	10
LSD	9	6	10	7	9	6
Magic mushrooms	10	10	12	11	8	8
Opiates	5	7	6	7	4	7
Heroin	5	7	6	7	4	7
Methadone	2	2	3	2	2	2
Glue/Gas ²	13	15	13	15	13	15
Tranquillisers	6	5	6	5	6	5
Steroids	2	1	2	2	2	1
Other drugs	6	2	8	2	5	1

1 Pupils are presented with a list of drugs and asked when they last used each one, along with a category for any other drugs that they have used. The number of 'pupils surveyed' in this table are lower than the achieved sample because pupils have been excluded due to partial or non-completion of these questions.

2 'Gas' was not asked in the 1998 survey. Glue and Gas were asked as one category in the 2000 survey.

Source : NCSR and NFER (Smoking, drinking and drug use among young people in Scotland in 2000).

5 Pupils who had been offered individual drugs ; age : 2000

drug group, drug name

	Scotland - All Pupils	12 years	13 years	14 years	15 years
	<i>number</i>				
Pupils surveyed ¹	4 774	1 619	1 189	1 147	819
	<i>percentage</i>				
Offered any drug	39	17	37	54	64
Cannabis	32	11	28	47	59
Stimulants	17	5	15	25	30
Cocaine	6	4	7	7	11
Crack	4	2	5	5	5
Ecstasy	10	2	8	16	22
Amphetamines	7	2	6	11	15
Poppers	5	1	3	7	9
Psychedelics	12	4	10	17	23
LSD	6	2	5	9	14
Magic mushrooms	10	4	8	14	19
Opiates	7	3	7	9	11
Heroin	7	3	7	8	10
Methadone	2	1	1	2	3
Glue/Gas	15	7	15	21	24
Tranquillisers	5	2	5	7	11
Steroids	1	1	1	2	3
Other drugs	2	1	2	2	2

¹ Pupils are presented with a list of drugs and asked if they had been offered each one, along with a category for any other drugs that they have been offered. The number of 'pupils surveyed' in this table are lower than the achieved sample because pupils have been excluded due to partial or non-completion of these questions.

Source : NCSR and NFER (Smoking, drinking and drug use among young people in Scotland in 2000).

2.2 Scottish crime survey

In response to the global spread of drug misuse, the last decade has seen a growth in the development of national household surveys of drug misuse in Britain and elsewhere (Ramsay and Percy, 1997¹). By asking a representative sample of the population about drugs that they have taken, such surveys can provide an indication of current levels and patterns of drug use. In addition, when surveys are repeated using the same methods, it is possible to track changes over time (Ramsay and Partridge, 1999²). In more recent years, such surveys have become increasingly important due to their role in monitoring the progress of the UK drug strategies³.

The 2000 Scottish crime survey (SCS) is the fifth survey of its kind to be carried out in Scotland since the early 1980s. The first two sweeps in 1982 and 1988 were conducted as part of the British Crime Survey and only covered Central and Southern Scotland. A separate SCS was introduced in 1993 that covered the whole of mainland Scotland, including the larger islands. This was repeated in 1996 and 2000. The SCS is primarily designed to ask people about their experiences and perceptions of individual and household crime. However, it also includes a self-completion component that asks adults about their use of drugs. The detailed results of the first two sweeps of the drug misuse survey (1993 and 1996) are published elsewhere⁴. This paper focuses on the findings of the 2000 sweep and trends in drug use between 1993 and 2000.

Trends in drug use are examined across the last three Surveys (1993, 1996 and 2000). When interpreting these results it should be remembered that the numbers of people reporting drug use to the Survey is relatively small. Less than 3000 people returned the self-completion questionnaire. Around 130 of these were aged 16 - 19; about 230 were aged between 20 and 24; and less than 300 were aged 25 - 29; key age groups used in the analyses presented in this report.

The 2000 survey was based on an overall sample of 5 059 households and on drugs questionnaires completed by 2 886 individuals between the ages of 16 and 59. The response rate for the survey as a whole was 71 per cent and, of those who responded within the target group, the drugs questionnaire was returned by 91 per cent. As in previous surveys, the questionnaire was paper based⁵, and respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire and place it in a sealed envelope provided for return to the interviewer.

The fieldwork for all three sweeps of the survey was carried out by MVA Ltd.

The questions asked and the drugs asked about

Respondents were asked questions about a range of different substances: whether they had heard of any of the drugs, whether they had ever taken any, whether they had been offered or taken any in the last year, and whether they had been offered or taken any in the last month. They were also asked about which methods of taking drugs they had tried, the age that they first used an illegal drug and some questions about their attitudes towards drug misuse. The list of substances asked about is shown below. The substances are grouped, for certain analyses, under four summary headings:

Cannabis and 'smoke unknown'	Stimulants and hallucinogens	Opiates+	Other drugs
Cannabis	Amphetamines	Cocaine	Glue/ gas
smoke (unknown)	Ecstasy	Crack cocaine	Pills (unspecified)
	LSD	Heroin	Temazepam
	Magic Mushrooms	Methadone	Valium
			Poppers*
			Anabolic steroids*

* These drugs were asked about for the first time in 2000 and have therefore not been included in the 'other' drugs category of charts, etc. to allow comparison with previous surveys. They are, however, taken into account in the overall measures of drug use in the last year, month, and ever.

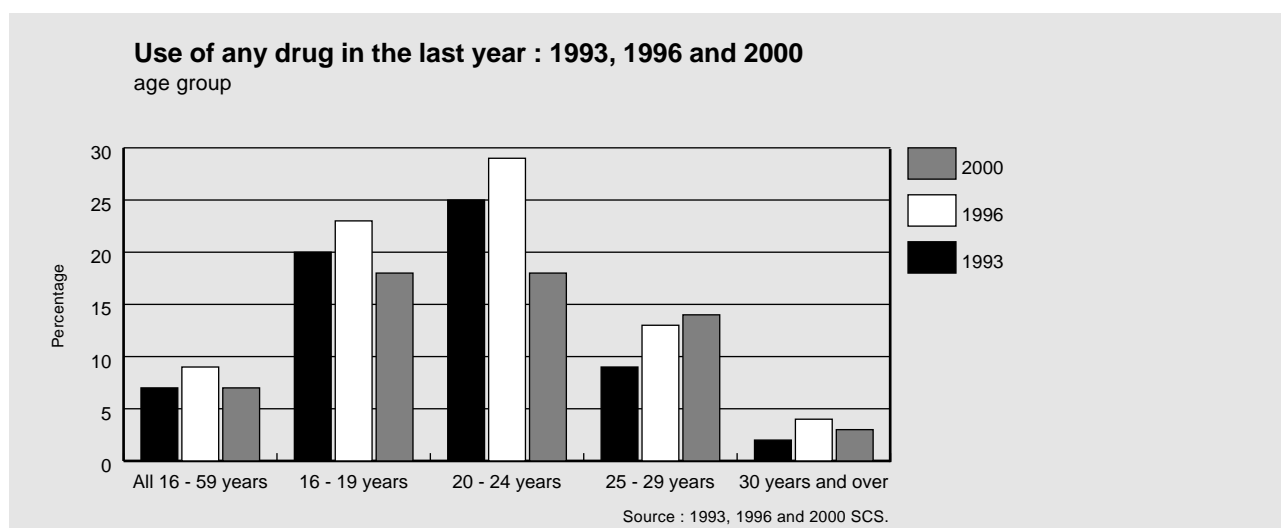
Summary of main findings

Between the 1996 and 2000 SCS, there was a statistically significant drop (from 9 per cent to 7 per cent) in the proportion of respondents who reported having taken a drug in the last year (Table 6).

6 Use of any drug in the last year : 1993, 1996 and 2000

age group	1993	1996	2000
	<i>percentage</i>		
Total (16 - 59 years)	7	9	7
16 - 19 years	20	23	18
20 - 24 years	25	29	18
25 - 29 years	9	13	14
30 years and over	2	4	3

Source : 1993, 1996 and 2000 SCS.



The major change in drug taking activity seems to be with regard to young males. Whereas drug use in the last year by females aged 16 - 24 years appears to have remained stable (20 per cent in 1996, 19 per cent in 2000), use amongst men in the same age group has dropped significantly (from 33 per cent in 1996 to 18 per cent in 2000) (Table 7).

7 Use of any drug in the last year in 16 - 24 years age group : 1993, 1996 and 2000

gender	1993	1996	2000
	<i>percentage</i>		
Males	28	33	18
Females	19	20	19

Source : 1993, 1996 and 2000 SCS.

Although the most commonly used drug among 16 - 59 year olds is still cannabis, its reported use has dropped significantly between surveys (from 8 per cent who had used it in the previous year in 1996, to 6 per cent in 2000). According to the survey, the proportion of people reporting the use of amphetamines, LSD, magic mushrooms (psilocybin), ecstasy and temazepam in the last 12 months has also dropped significantly (Table 8).

The survey does not suggest any significant changes in the use of 'opiates+' (cocaine, crack, heroin and methadone) but their use remains extremely rare and, in addition, the SCS is very likely to under-report the use of such drugs (Table 8).

8 | Prevalence of drug misuse ; gender and age group

'ever' and 'in the last twelve months'

	Females (SCS 2000)						Males (SCS 2000)						All ages 16 - 59 years		
	All females	16 - 19 years	20 - 24 years	25 - 29 years	30 - 39 years	40 - 59 years	All males	16 - 19 years	20 - 24 years	25 - 29 years	30 - 39 years	40 - 59 years	1996	2000	Change 1996 to 2000
Any drug															
Ever	16.1	27.2	39.5	26.5	17.5	5.9	22.4	30.1	47.8	44.4	22.5	11.4	22.5	19.2	-3.3 ¹
12 months	5.7	20.6	17.4	11.5	3.3	0.8	7.6	15.4	19.0	18.0	7.5	2.1	9.0	6.6	-2.4 ¹
Cannabis															
Ever	13.4	24.3	32.6	25.2	14.9	3.8	21.5	25.2	46.3	42.9	21.8	11.2	19.0	17.4	-1.6 ²
12 months	4.5	18.4	13.0	8.8	2.1	0.5	6.6	10.6	17.6	15.8	6.5	2.1	8.2	5.5	-2.7 ¹
Amphetamine															
Ever	4.9	8.1	15.2	8.1	5.1	1.0	7.6	6.7	15.0	16.5	11.5	2.7	7.3	6.3	-1.0 ²
12 months	0.2	0.7	-	0.7	0.2	-	0.9	1.0	3.4	0.5	0.5	0.3	3.1	0.5	-2.6 ¹
LSD															
Ever	2.6	6.6	7.0	4.8	2.1	0.8	5.7	6.8	12.2	13.5	5.8	2.5	5.5	4.1	-1.4 ¹
12 months	0.7	3.7	0.5	2.0	0.5	-	1.0	1.9	3.4	3.8	0.3	-	1.3	0.7	-0.6 ¹
Psilocybin															
Ever	2.0	7.4	2.2	5.4	1.6	0.5	5.3	8.7	8.7	12.9	6.5	2.0	5.1	3.6	-1.5 ¹
12 months	0.1	0.7	-	-	-	-	0.1	-	-	1.5	0.3	-	1.3	0.1	-1.2 ¹
Ecstasy															
Ever	3.0	9.6	11.4	4.1	1.6	0.6	4.4	5.8	11.2	14.3	4.5	0.8	4.0	3.7	-0.3
12 months	0.6	2.2	3.8	0.7	0.2	-	1.4	1.9	6.8	2.3	0.3	0.1	2.1	1.0	-1.1 ¹
Temazepam															
Ever	1.3	5.1	2.7	0.7	0.9	0.8	2.4	1.9	4.4	9.8	1.5	0.9	3.7	1.8	-1.9 ¹
12 months	0.4	0.7	1.6	0.7	-	0.1	0.4	-	0.5	1.5	-	0.1	1.1	0.4	-0.7 ¹
Valium															
Ever	2.1	5.9	1.6	1.4	1.9	1.9	2.4	-	2.9	9.0	2.0	1.5	4.2	2.3	-1.9 ¹
12 months	0.5	2.2	-	1.4	0.5	0.3	0.7	-	1.0	3.8	0.3	0.1	0.9	0.6	-0.3
Solvents															
Ever	0.7	2.9	1.1	0.7	-	0.5	2.1	3.8	3.9	7.5	1.5	0.8	2.1	1.4	-0.7 ¹
12 months	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.2	-	-0.2
Cocaine															
Ever	1.4	5.1	4.3	2.0	0.7	0.5	3.7	3.8	8.3	10.5	3.8	1.4	2.6	2.5	-0.1
12 months	0.6	1.5	3.8	0.7	-	-	0.9	-	5.4	0.8	-	0.3	1.0	0.7	-0.3
Crack cocaine															
Ever	0.7	2.9	2.2	0.7	0.2	0.5	1.2	1.0	1.0	2.3	2.0	0.6	0.7	1.0	+0.3
12 months	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	0.2	-	-0.2
Heroin															
Ever	0.7	2.9	1.6	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.8	1.0	1.5	6.0	2.0	0.6	0.8	1.2	+0.4
12 months	0.1	-	-	0.7	0.2	-	0.1	-	1.0	1.5	-	-	0.1	0.2	+0.1
Methadone															
Ever	0.7	2.9	0.5	0.7	0.5	0.5	1.4	1.0	1.0	3.8	2.0	0.8	0.9	1.0	+0.1
12 months	0.1	0.7	-	0.7	-	-	0.4	-	1.0	1.5	-	0.1	0.3	0.3	0
Poppers															
Ever	2.1	3.7	4.3	6.8	1.4	0.9	3.3	7.7	3.9	10.6	2.8	1.3	n/a	2.7	n/a
12 months	0.3	0.7	1.6	-	-	0.1	0.4	1.9	-	0.8	0.3	0.3	n/a	0.3	n/a
Anabolic Steroids															
Ever	0.6	2.9	0.5	0.7	-	0.4	0.9	1.0	1.5	2.3	0.8	0.5	n/a	0.7	n/a
12 months	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	n/a	0.1	n/a

1 Significant at the 95% confidence level.
2 Significant at the 90% confidence level.

Source : 1996 and 2000 SCS.

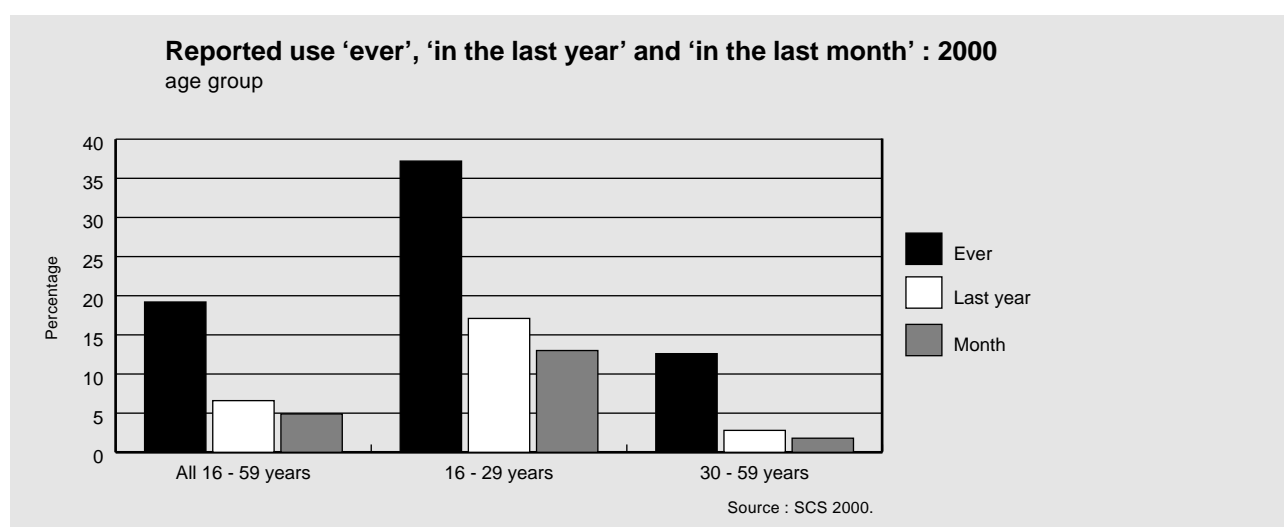
Drug use is concentrated among younger people, with 37 per cent of 16 to 29 year olds saying they had ever tried drugs, compared with 13 per cent of those aged 30 and over (Table 9).

9 | Reported use 'ever', 'in the last year' and 'in the last month' : 2000

age group

	All 16 - 59 years	16 - 29 years	30 - 59 years
	<i>percentage</i>		
Ever	19	37	13
In the last year	7	17	3
In the last month	5	13	2

Source : SCS 2000.



Income, employment and lifestyle factors are, however, also important in determining the likelihood of drug use. Those in low income households (under £15 000 a year), unemployed or in full-time education, were all more likely to report having taken a drug in the previous year (Tables 10 and 11).

10 | Reported use of any drug in the last year ; age group : 2000

household income

	All 16 - 59 years	16 - 29 years	30 - 59 years
	<i>percentage</i>		
Under £5 000	12	20	7
£5 000 - £14 999	10	27	4
£15 000 - £29 999	4	11	2
£30 000 and over	3	13	2

Source : SCS 2000.

11 | Reported use of any drug in the last year ; age group : 2000

employment status

	All 16 - 59 years	16 - 29 years	30 - 59 years
	<i>percentage</i>		
In employment	4	12	2
Unemployed	21	33	10
Disabled or retired	3	19	3
Home-maker	5	13	3
Student	21	24	5

Source : SCS 2000.

The results of the 2000 survey suggest that the previous upward trend in drug misuse observed during the first half of the 1990s may be tailing off. In particular, drug misuse amongst those aged under 25 appears to have fallen since 1996. As one of the key objectives for the Scottish Executive's drug misuse strategy 'Tackling Drugs in Scotland' is to reduce drug misuse amongst the under 25s, this news is clearly encouraging. Future sweeps of the crime survey will assist in assessing whether these results identify a downward trend in the use of drugs in Scotland.

References

- 1 Ramsay, M. and Percy, A. (1997) *Drug misuse declared: results of the 1994 British Crime Survey*. Home Office Research Findings No. 33. London: Home Office.
- 2 *Drug misuse declared in 1998: results from the British Crime Survey* by Malcolm Ramsay and Sarah Partridge. (1999). Home Office Research Study No. 197. London: Home Office.
- 3 *Tackling Drugs to Build a Better Britain: The Government's 10 year strategy for Tackling Drug Misuse*, Cm 3945, The Stationery Office. The Scottish Office (1999) *Tackling Drugs in Scotland: Action in Partnership*, The Stationery Office.
- 4 See Anderson and Leitch (1996) *Main Findings from the 1993 Scottish Crime Survey*, CRU; Anderson and Frischer (1997) *Crime and Criminal Justice Research Findings No. 17 'Drug Misuse in Scotland: Findings from the 1993 and 1996 Scottish Crime Surveys'*, CRU; Anderson and Frischer (2000) *Drug Misuse in Scotland*, CRU.

2.3 National prevalence study

The report, *Estimating the National and Local Prevalence of Problem Drug Misuse in Scotland*, was compiled by the Centre for Drug Misuse Research at the University of Glasgow, in conjunction with the Scottish Centre for Infection and Environmental Health (SCIEH), after being commissioned by the Scottish Executive.

The prevalence estimation research utilised the capture-recapture methodology. This method has been identified by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction as the most appropriate method for obtaining estimates of the prevalence of problematic drug misuse and has been applied in a number of European countries. For the purposes of the research, problematic drug misuse is defined as the misuse of opiates and benzodiazepines, including methadone.

A variety of data sources were employed in the study, including the Scottish Drug Misuse Database, drug treatment services, Social Enquiry Reports, Scottish police forces and SCIEH.

National Prevalence

To obtain a national estimate of the prevalence of problematic drug misuse in the year 2000, the local estimates for each of the 32 Council areas in Scotland were summed. On this basis, the estimation is that there are 55 800 individuals who are misusing opiates or benzodiazepines within Scotland. The 95% Confidence Interval (CI) attached to this estimate gives a range of 43 664 to 78 443. These figures correspond to a prevalence rate of 2.0 per cent of the Scottish population aged between 15 and 54 (95% CI, 1.5 - 2.7 per cent). The minimum number of drug users identified as being in contact with services or identifiable from criminal justice sources is 22 795 (40 per cent of the estimated total).

NHS Board Areas

By expressing the estimated number of drug misusers in each area as a percentage of the population aged 15 to 54, it is possible to make comparisons between NHS board areas. On that basis, the area with the highest prevalence rates for problematic drug misuse is Greater Glasgow at 3.1 per cent (95% CI, 2.7 – 3.7 per cent). The next highest is Argyll and Clyde at 2.3 per cent (95% CI, 1.8 – 3.2 per cent). The third highest is Tayside at 2.1 per cent (95% CI, 1.5 - 3.4 per cent). There are a range of NHS board areas with prevalence levels between 1 per cent and 2 per cent; they are Lothian (1.8 per cent), Grampian (1.8 per cent), Dumfries and Galloway (1.6 per cent), Lanarkshire (1.6 per cent), Ayrshire and Arran (1.5 per cent), Fife (1.5 per cent), Forth Valley (1.4 per cent) and Borders (1.1 per cent). Four NHS board areas had prevalence rates under 1 per cent; Highland (0.9 per cent), Orkney Isles (0.3 per cent), Shetland Isles (0.9 per cent), Western Isles (0.5 per cent).

The NHS board area with the highest number of problem drug users is Greater Glasgow, where the estimated total is 15 975 (95% CI, 13 797 - 19 069). The minimum known total is 7 248. The next highest is Lothian, where the minimum total of known drug misusers is 3 423 and the estimated total is 8 496 (95% CI, 6 592 - 11 782). The area with the third highest total is Argyll & Clyde, with a minimum identified number of drug misusers of 2 324 and an estimated total of 5 405 (95% CI, 4 183 - 7 431).

12 | Estimates of the number of problem drug users and prevalence ; NHS board

	Known	Total Estimate		Population (age 15 - 54 years)	Prevalence	
		Number	95% CI		Percentage	95% CI
Scotland	22 795	55 800	43 664 - 78 443	2 853 682	2.0	1.5 - 2.7
Argyll & Clyde	2 324	5 405	4 183 - 7 431	231 543	2.3	1.8 - 3.2
Ayrshire & Arran	1 171	3 058	2 451 - 3 932	200 291	1.5	1.2 - 2.0
Borders	106	585	297 - 1 503	54 800	1.1	0.5 - 2.7
Dumfries & Galloway	651	1 179	1 034 - 1 368	73 642	1.6	1.4 - 1.9
Fife	1 348	2 867	2 355 - 3 636	192 389	1.5	1.2 - 1.9
Forth Valley	730	2 208	1 363 - 4 516	154 777	1.4	0.9 - 2.9
Grampian	1 940	5 415	3 997 - 8 504	297 144	1.8	1.3 - 2.9
Greater Glasgow	7 248	15 975	13 797 - 19 069	519 332	3.1	2.7 - 3.7
Highland	358	1 029	644 - 2 073	111 033	0.9	0.6 - 1.9
Lanarkshire	1 828	5 076	3 782 - 7 373	317 855	1.6	1.2 - 2.3
Lothian	3 423	8 496	6 592 - 11 782	459 710	1.8	1.4 - 2.6
Orkney Isles	12	29	**	10 163	0.3	**
Shetland Isles	54	109	66 - 237	12 359	0.9	0.5 - 1.9
Tayside	1 575	4 304	3 009 - 6 925	204 869	2.1	1.5 - 3.4
Western Isles	27	65	**	13 775	0.5	**

** In the Orkney Isles and Western Isles NHS board areas, there were insufficient data to perform capture-recapture analyses. Therefore the prevalence estimates in these areas were obtained by applying the known to unknown ratio of problem drug users found elsewhere in Scotland to the number of known problem drug users in those areas.

Source : National prevalence study - University of Glasgow Centre for Drug Misuse Research (CDMR) and SCIEH.

Figure 1

Estimated prevalence of problem drug use by NHS board



Council areas

The map below summarises the estimates of the prevalence of problematic drug misuse for each of the 32 council areas in Scotland.

figure 2

Estimated prevalence of problem drug use by council area



13 | Estimates of the number of problem drug users ; council area

	Known	Total Estimate		Population (age 15 - 54 years)	Prevalence	
		Number	95% CI		Percentage	95% CI
Scotland	22 795	55 800	43 664 - 78 443	2 853 682	2.0	1.5 - 2.7
Aberdeen City	1 194	3 645	2 659 - 5 965	123 240	3.0	2.2 - 4.8
Aberdeenshire ¹	639	1 372	1 091 - 1 808	128 371	1.1	0.8 - 1.4
Angus ¹	291	702	558 - 916	58 395	1.2	1.0 - 1.6
Argyll & Bute ¹	186	460	334 - 684	46 626	1.0	0.7 - 1.5
Ayrshire East ¹	399	1 171	927 - 1 525	64 909	1.8	1.4 - 2.3
Ayrshire North	518	1 384	1 109 - 1 781	75 520	1.8	1.5 - 2.4
Ayrshire South ¹	254	503	415 - 626	59 862	0.8	0.7 - 1.0
Borders ¹	106	585	297 - 1 503	54 800	1.1	0.5 - 2.7
Clackmannanshire	155	362	255 - 566	26 575	1.4	1.0 - 2.1
Dumfries & Galloway ¹	651	1 179	1 034 - 1 368	73 642	1.6	1.4 - 1.9
Dunbartonshire East	234	605	450 - 856	62 162	1.0	0.7 - 1.4
Dunbartonshire West	531	1 123	924 - 1 408	52 506	2.1	1.8 - 2.7
Dundee City	899	2 700	1 828 - 4 523	76 509	3.5	2.4 - 5.9
Edinburgh City	2 536	5 872	4 754 - 7 573	271 103	2.2	1.8 - 2.8
Eilean Siar ¹	27	65	**	13 775	0.5	**
Falkirk	346	1 163	716 - 2 351	80 324	1.4	0.9 - 2.9
Fife	1 348	2 867	2 355 - 3 636	192 389	1.5	1.2 - 1.9
Glasgow City	6 514	13 788	12 196 - 15 875	355 788	3.9	3.4 - 4.5
Highland ¹	358	1 029	644 - 2 073	111 033	0.9	0.6 - 1.9
Inverclyde	680	1 280	1 039 - 1 674	45 996	2.8	2.3 - 3.6
Lanarkshire North	1 026	2 898	2 236 - 3 960	185 297	1.6	1.2 - 2.1
Lanarkshire South	1 062	3 220	2 305 - 4 931	172 907	1.9	1.3 - 2.9
Lothian East	239	779	551 - 1 180	49 422	1.6	1.1 - 2.4
Lothian West	402	1 116	835 - 1 579	92 512	1.2	0.9 - 1.7
Midlothian	246	729	452 - 1 450	46 673	1.6	1.0 - 3.1
Moray ¹	107	398	247 - 731	45 533	0.9	0.5 - 1.6
Orkney Isles ¹	12	29	**	10 163	0.3	**
Perth & Kinross ¹	385	902	623 - 1 486	69 965	1.3	0.9 - 2.1
Renfrewshire	838	2 441	1 773 - 3 598	97 614	2.5	1.8 - 3.7
Renfrewshire East	329	641	505 - 887	49 834	1.3	1.0 - 1.8
Shetland Isles ¹	54	109	66 - 237	12 359	0.9	0.5 - 1.9
Stirling ¹	229	683	392 - 1 599	47 878	1.4	0.8 - 3.3

¹ Councils classified as rural within this research.

** In the Orkney Isles and Western Isles NHS Board areas, there were insufficient data to perform capture-recapture analyses. Therefore the prevalence estimates in these areas were obtained by applying the known to unknown ratio of problem drug users found elsewhere in Scotland to the number of known drug users in those areas.

Source : National prevalence study - CDMR & SCIEH

Within the research a Council area is classified as rural if it has a population density of less than one person per hectare (*Rural Scotland: A New Approach*, The Scottish Executive, 2000).

As one might have expected, the highest prevalence rates amongst the non-rural Council areas are found in the major urban centres. The highest prevalence rate is Glasgow City at 3.9 per cent of the population aged 15 to 54 (95% CI, 3.4 - 4.5 per cent). The next highest is Dundee City at 3.5 per cent (95% CI, 2.4 - 5.9 per cent). The third highest is Aberdeen City at 3.0 per cent (95% CI, 2.2 - 4.8 per cent).

Although many people would associate Scotland's drug problem with the two cities of Glasgow and Edinburgh, it is striking that Aberdeen City has the third highest prevalence in Scotland behind Dundee. Edinburgh City, which featured prominently in the past as a result of the rapid rise in HIV infection amongst its injecting drug using population, has the sixth highest prevalence rate of problematic drug misuse at 2.2 per cent. Three of the Council areas in the Argyll and Clyde NHS board area have prevalence rates above the Scottish average, in particular high levels of drug misuse are to be found in Inverclyde (2.8 per cent) and Renfrewshire (2.5 per cent). This clearly demonstrates that problematic drug misuse in Scotland has extended beyond the major urban centres.

The prevalence of problematic drug misuse overall is lower in the rural Council areas and in only two cases does it exceed 1.5 per cent; Dumfries and Galloway (1.6 per cent, 95% CI, 1.4 - 1.9 per cent) and East Ayrshire (1.8 per cent, 95% CI, 1.4 - 2.3 per cent). Apart from Eilean Siar and the Orkney Islands, the remaining rural Council areas have prevalence rates around 1 per cent of the population aged 15 to 54.

Gender

In the case of the ten council areas with the highest prevalence of problematic drug misuse, constituting 51 per cent of the Scottish population, it has been possible to stratify the prevalence estimates by both age and gender. In the case of Table 14, males constitute between 69 per cent and 78 per cent of the minimum known drug misusing population and between 67 per cent and 77 per cent of the estimated total population.

14 | Estimated prevalence of problem drug use ; gender

ten council areas with highest prevalence

	Known				Total estimates			
	Males	Percent- age	Females	Percent- age	Males	Percent- age	Females	Percent- age
Aberdeen City	886	74	308	26	2 724	75	921	25
Ayrshire North	404	78	114	22	1 110	77	324	23
Dunbartonshire West	385	73	146	27	805	75	271	25
Dundee City	643	72	256	28	1 929	71	771	29
Edinburgh City	1 764	70	772	30	4 433	75	1 439	25
Glasgow City	4 522	69	1 992	31	9 172	67	4 616	33
Inverclyde	487	72	193	28	896	70	384	30
Lanarkshire North	740	72	286	28	2 065	71	883	29
Lanarkshire South	798	75	264	25	2 177	68	1 017	32
Renfrewshire	596	71	242	29	1 679	69	762	31

Source : National prevalence study - CDMR & SCIEH

Age group

Table 15 provides an analysis by age group comparing the estimated numbers of problem drug users in the 15 - 24 years age range, along with the corresponding prevalence rate, against the numbers and rate within the wider 15 - 54 age range. We see here that the areas with the highest rate of drug use in the 15 - 24 years age range are Inverclyde (5.1 per cent) and Aberdeen City (4.7 per cent). This compares with 3.7 per cent in Glasgow and 2.4 per cent in Edinburgh.

15 | Estimated prevalence of problem drug use ; age group

ten council areas with highest prevalence

	Estimate (15 - 24 years)	Prevalence rate	Estimate (15 - 54 years)	Prevalence rate
Aberdeen City	1 356	4.7	3645	3.0
Ayrshire North	686	4.0	1 384	1.8
Dunbartonshire West	505	4.0	1 123	2.1
Dundee City	828	4.2	2 700	3.5
Edinburgh City	1 546	2.4	5 872	2.2
Glasgow City	3 229	3.7	13 788	3.9
Inverclyde	521	5.1	1 280	2.8
Lanarkshire North	978	2.3	2 898	1.6
Lanarkshire South	1 296	3.4	3 220	1.9
Renfrewshire	820	4.0	2 441	2.5

Source : National prevalence study - CDMR & SCIEH