

Press release –Thursday 28th October 2004 (0930h)

Interim Report of the Scottish Schools Adolescent Lifestyle and Substance Use Survey (SALSUS) 2004

Some early statistics are released on the web today from the 2004 biennial school survey on smoking, drinking and drug use among secondary school children in Scotland (web address shown below). The key points are:

Smoking

- Among 15 year old boys prevalence of regular smoking¹ has remained fairly stable since the 2000 survey (15% in 2000, 16% in 2002 and 14% in 2004). However, prevalence in 2004 is the lowest reported in the series and is markedly lower than the level reported in the peak year of 1996 (30%).
- Among 15 year old girls, prevalence of regular smoking is higher than among 15 year old boys (24% compared with 14%) and has remained at 24% since 2000. Although lower than the prevalence of 30% in 1996 this decline is smaller than that among 15 year old boys and is not statistically significant.
- There has been a small but statistically significant decrease in the prevalence of regular smoking among 13 year olds since 1998: from 9% to 5% among boys and from 11% to 7% among girls.

Drinking

- Among 15 year olds, reported drinking in the week before the survey decreased between 2002 and 2004 among boys, from 47% in 2002 to 40% in 2004.
- Reported drinking in the week before the survey among 15 year old girls has remained constant at 46% since 2002. In 2004 15 year old girls were therefore slightly more likely than 15 year old boys to report that they had drunk alcohol in the week before the survey.
- Among 13 year olds (boys and girls) there was a small but statistically significant decrease in reported drinking in the week before the survey between 2002 and 2004 from 23% to 20%.

Drug Use

- 7% of 13 year olds and 20% of 15 year olds reported that they had used drugs in the month before the survey.
- Reported drug use in the last month among 15 year old boys declined between 2002 and 2004, from 24% to 21%. Equivalent prevalence figures for 15 year old girls and 13 year old boys and girls showed no major change (15 year old girls: 21% in 2002 and 20% in 2004; 13 year old boys: 9% in 2002 and 7% in 2004; 13 year old girls: 6% in 2002 and 6% in 2004).

¹ Pupils who reported that they usually smoked one or more cigarettes a week

- Cannabis was the drug most commonly reported as being used: 6% of 13 year olds and 19% of 15 year olds reported using cannabis in the last month.
- Among regular smokers, 59% of 13 year olds and 64% of 15 year olds reported using drugs in the past month.
- Of those who reported using drugs in the past month, 36% of 13 year olds and 43% of 15 year olds said that they were also drinking alcohol the last time they used drugs.

The statistics can be accessed via:

<http://www.drugmisuse.isdscotland.org/publications/abstracts/salsus.htm>

Background

1. Data source: the Scottish Schools Adolescent Lifestyle and Substance Use Survey (SALSUS), was established by the Scottish Executive to monitor substance use among secondary school children in Scotland in the context of other lifestyle and social factors. The survey continues the biennial series of school surveys used to monitor national trends in smoking, drinking and drug use among young people in Scotland since 1982.
2. The survey covered 7,000 13 and 15 year olds in 191 local authority and independently funded schools across Scotland.
3. The Interim report contains national headline information on key smoking, drinking and drug use prevalence and behaviour. The full report will be published early in 2005.
4. The survey research was undertaken by the Child and Adolescent Health Research Unit (CAHRU), The University of Edinburgh, commissioned by the Information Services Division, NHS National Services Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Executive.
5. CAHRU is a specialist research unit that focuses on child and adolescent health within the school-aged population (see <http://www.education.ed.ac.uk/cahru>).
6. Information Services Division's primary role is to support NHS Scotland and other associated organisations on information matters. Within ISD the Drug Misuse and Alcohol Teams carry out work on behalf of the Scottish Executive and local Alcohol and Drug Action Teams (ADATS) and their constituent organisations.
7. For further information contact :

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