NATIONALE ANTI - DRUGS RAAD

UITVOEREND BUREAU VAN DE NAR (UBN)

ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE
IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS
IN SURINAME

Paramaribo, Suriname
July 2007

INTRODUCTION

The study is a result of the Drug Demand Reduction Program in Suriname (DDRP), financed by the European Union, and has used a comparable questionnaire developed by OAS/CICAD. Repetition of the survey every two years will also enable trends and patterns to be studied and compared nationally, regionally and hemispherically.

The aim of the present study is to estimate the prevalence of drug consumption in high schools in Suriname. CICAD has developed a system, the Inter-American Uniform Drug Use Data System (SIDUC), to improve the collection of comparable statistical information on the consumption of psychoactive substances. For the school surveys, a representative sample of the school population is drawn to complete SIDUCs standardized comparable questionnaire. The study targets the 2nd and 4th grade classes of the junior high schools and the second year of the senior high schools (public and private) in Suriname. In general, age range of the students is 13 -17 years.

The results of the survey will assist the government in the development of appropriate policies to effectively address the problems of drugs in schools.
be used for the planning of educational drug prevention programmes within the national secondary school curriculum.
be a valuable tool for the national drug councils in the creation of appropriate school based counselling and treatment programs.

This Report is the result of the second secondary school survey conducted in 2006, a repeat of the second in 2004 and the first survey in 2002.

The Secondary School Survey was implemented in the period November – December 2006 in the second and fourth grade classes of the junior secondary schools and the second year of the senior high schools in Suriname. A sample of schools and classes to be surveyed was drawn by the CICAD and submitted to the Executive Office of the NAR in charge of the implementation of the survey. The data acquired via the self-administered questionnaires was analyzed using statistical computer software and some of the results are summarized below:

The National Anti-Drug Council takes this opportunity to thank the OAS/CICAD for the technical support and guidance for this survey.
The hope is expressed that the findings of this survey will contribute in many ways to a better approach of the problem of abuse of psychoactive substances and that it will permit regional comparison within the OAS states of this common threat to society.

METHODOLOGY

1.1 POPULATION SURVEYED

For SIDUC, and for a series of reasons, the universe examined includes middle school students in the second, fourth, and sixth grades. This general rule should be adapted to each country, but these grades tend to include students of 13, 15, and 17 years of age, respectively. This definition means that the information SIDUC wishes to receive from countries should refer to this population segment.

1.2 SAMPLE

The first aspect to be standardized is the sample. It is not easy, however, to propose a certain type of sample to several countries since it depends on different national situations. But these differences are resolved using SIDUC's "minimum in common" principle.

Considering the differences in the situation of countries and the need for comparable data, SIDUC proposes different sample designs with three levels of coverage.
Thus, in order to construct an indicator of the level of consumption among students that is comparable over time and among the different national environments, SIDUC considers that, as a minimum, it must obtain information representative of the metropolitan area of the capital of the country and, if possible, also of cities of more than 30,000 inhabitants. In this way comparisons may be made between capitals and also between countries.

1.5 DATA COLLECTION METHOD

Data gathering must be undertaken by means of a pre-coded and self-applied questionnaire, allowing the responses to remain anonymous. In this case there is not even an interviewer who can identify the respondent. According to the characteristics of the sample, the questionnaire is applied to all students present in the classrooms chosen.

This type of study requires major logistical support: a national coordinator, group supervisors, and surveyors. Various different training events bring these professionals together to identify schools and classes selected in the sample, questionnaire management, control systems, and the relationship with the school, its authorities, teachers, and students at the time the questionnaire is applied.

1.6 THE QUESTIONNAIRE

In order to achieve coherent results for SIDUC, apart from standardizing the general characteristics of the sample, the questionnaire itself must be standardized to allow a country to compare its existing circumstances with circumstances in other countries. However, to apply a single questionnaire to several measures and countries would diminish the chances of gradually extending our knowledge of the factors associated with consumption. Thus, the survey questionnaire must have two sides to it:

Certain of its variables should be measured in a strictly comparable manner and be maintained over time. These variables basically describe consumption of PAS, its prevalence and characteristics (consumption patterns).

Other variables may be introduced and modified according to the country's concerns. Those are the variables that could be associated with or explicative of consumption.

The questionnaire for this survey is organized according to the following sections:
 Basic socio-demographic data
Types of problems encountered in these studies
Opinion on risk associated with consumption of legal and illegal substances.
Relationship of friends to legal and illegal substances
Prevalence of cigarette and alcohol consumption and pattern of consumption (frequency, starting age)
Prevalence of psychotropic medication consumption and pattern of consumption (frequency, starting age)
Prevalence of drug consumption and patterns of consumption (frequency, starting age)
Level of information and exposure to prevention programs

1.7   DATA ANALYSIS

The, data was entered from the completed questionnaires using Microsoft Excel and the data was exported to the statistical package SPSS for processing by CICAD.

FINDINGS

1. General

This report is based on the tables generated after data processing by OAS/CICAD.
Following is an overview of the schools surveyed in the districts (table 1.1.).

Table 1.1. Overview of schools surveyed	
District	**Number of schools**
Paramaribo	23
Wanica	8
Nickerie	5
Commewijne	2
Para	1
Saramacca	2
Marowijne	1
Brokopondo	1
Total	43

A total 2,066 students participated in the survey,

1.1. Prevalence

Table 1.2 gives an overview of
        (a) the lifetime prevalence
        (b) one-year prevalence and
        (c) one-month prevalence of the substances used.

Table 1.2. Prevalence of substances used

Substance	Lifetime prevalence		One-year prevalence		One-month prevalence	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Cigarettes	**35.8**	**1,996**	**15.2**	**1,963**	**7.9**	**1,972**
Alcohol	63.5	2,025	46.8	1,964	34.4	1,972
Tranquillizers	9.8	1,987	5.5	1,932	3.2	1,931
Stimulants	4.8	1,971	2.7	1,948	1.5	1,948
Solvents & Inhalants	7.3	1,982	3.4	1,957	2.1	1,955
Marijuana	6.8	1,993	4.1	1,984	2.3	1,982
Hashish	1.5	1,981	0	1,981	0	1,981
Hallucinogens	0.4	1,963	0	1,963	0	1,963
Heroin	0.5	1,984	0	1,984	0	1,984
Opium	0.2	1,975	0	1,975	0	1,975
Morphine	0.3	1,969	0	1,969	0	1,969
Cocaine HCL	0.6	1,983	0.2	1,985	0.1	1,985
Coca Pasta	0.7	1,966	0	1,966	0	1,966
Crack	0.6	1,972	0.3	1,976	0	2,066
Ecstasy	1.2	1,963	0.2	1,962	0.2	1,962
Other drugs	3.5	1,910	2.0	2,066	1.0	2,066
Any Illegal Drug	16.9	2,066	9.0	2,066	5.2	2,066

N = Total number of students responding to this question

Table 1.3 looks at the prevalence for "any illegal drug" by gender. It shows that the male students in general have higher prevalence of use than females. Females have lower one year and one month prevalence than males.

Table 1.3. Prevalence of use of any illegal drug among students, by gender

Gender	Life time	One year	One month
Females	12.7	5.7	3.0
Males	23.4	18.8	8.9
Total	17.5	9.3	5.6

Table 1.4 distinguishes use of "any illegal drug" by age groups. It shows that prevalence in the group of 17 – 20 years doubles that of the 11 – 14 year age group at all 3 stages of prevalence.

Table 1.4. Prevalence of use of any illegal drug among students, by age group

Age Group	Total		
	Lifetime	One-year	One month
11 - 14 yr	11.9	5.7	4.1
15 - 16 yr	15.1	8.1	5.7
17 - 20 yr	22.3	12.2	6.4
Total	17.4	9.3	5.6

Table 1.5 shows the prevalence of "any illegal drug" use related to the number of times that the students had behavioral or discipline problems, or otherwise. The prevalence is higher with the times they had behavioral or discipline problems.

Table 1.5. Prevalence of use of any illegal drug among students, by behavior			
Behavioral or discipline problem	Lifetime	One year	One month
Never	13.8	7.1	3.7
A few times	28.3	15.3	10.3
Frequently	31,5	19.0	13.8
Total	17.4	9.2	5.5

Table 1.6 looks at the prevalence of drug use in relation to the region

Table 1.6. Prevalence of use of any illegal drug among students, by region			
Region	Lifetime prevalence	One-year prevalence	One-month prevalence
Paramaribo	18.9	10.2	6.6
Wanica	12.2	4.4	2.7
Nickerie	17.1	7.9	4.4
Other	14.9	8.6	4.1
Total	17.5	9.3	5.6

Table 1.7 shows a negative relationship between the probability finishing school and the lifetime, one-year and one-month prevalence of abuse of any illegal drug.

Table 1.7. Prevalence of abuse of any illegal drug among students and probability finishing school			
Probability finishing school	Lifetime prevalence	One-year prevalence	One-month prevalence
Very likely	17.2	10.2	6.1
Likely	18.3	9.9	5.0
Not very likely	16.2	7.6	3.9
Impossible	27.1	22.2	12.1
Don't know	17.1	8.0	5.5
Total	17.5	9.4	5.6

Table 1.8.shows the prevalence of any illegal drug, by grade. The prevalence is higher in the higher grades

Table 1.8. Prevalence of use of any illegal drug among students, by grade			
Grade	Lifetime	One year	One month
8	15.3	7.6	5.4
10	17.8	9.2	5.6
12	23.7	15.3	6.4
Total	17.5	9.3	5.6

Table 1.9. Age when used substances for the first time			
Substance	Mean	Median	Mode
Cigarettes	**12,9**	**13**	**15**
Alcohol	13.2	14	14
Tranquillizers	13	13	12
Stimulants	13.7	14	14
Solvents & Inhalants	11.9	12	12
Marijuana	15.2	15	15
Hashish	15.4	15	15
Other drugs	12.9	13	13
Any Illegal Drug	13.7	14	15

3. Conclusions

- The drugs most used by the Junior and Senior High School Students are, in the first place, alcohol followed by cigarettes, tranquillizers and marijuana. The use of all other substances (heroine, hashish, opium, morphine, cocaine, and methamphetamines) is seen in less than 1% of the students.

- Most of those who use any illegal drug are in the age category of 17 to 20 years.

- The majority of the students who use any illegal drug live in Paramaribo.

- A relatively high percentage of the students (31%) had behavioral or discipline problems