



# CISDUS Brief

April 2007

## Trends in Alcohol Use by Students, 1998-2006

This brief discusses alcohol use and related attitudes among students in 7<sup>th</sup>- to 12<sup>th</sup>-grade in the Cayman Islands, and trends in use between 1998 and 2006. The findings are based on data from the Cayman Islands Student Drug Use Survey (CISDUS), which was conducted in 1998, 2000, 2002, and most recently in 2006.

### Alcohol Use in 2006

In 2006, 68.8% of students in grades 7 to 12 reported having at least one drink of alcohol during their lifetime, and 45.5% reported having a drink at least once during the year prior to the survey (Figure 1). One-quarter of all students restrict their drinking to special occasions only. About 6% of students drink at least once a week, and a very small proportion (about 1%) drink on a daily basis.

### Key Highlights

- In 2006, about 46% of students in grades 7 to 12 consumed alcohol at least once in the year prior to the survey.
- Male (45%) and female (46%) students are equally likely to drink alcohol. Alcohol use increases with grade, from 21% of 7<sup>th</sup>-graders to 70% of 12<sup>th</sup>-graders. There is significant variation in drinking among the districts, ranging from 26% of students in Cayman Brac to 50% in George Town and East End.
- Past year alcohol use remained stable between 1998 (40%) 2000 (38%) and 2002 (38%). However, there was a significant increase in 2006, jumping to 46%. Both males and females, and students in all grades showed an increase in drinking over time.
- Almost half of all students say that alcohol is "easy" or "very easy" to obtain.

There is no significant difference in past year drinking between males (45.3%) and females (45.7%). However, the likelihood of drinking increases significantly with grade, from 21.4% of 7<sup>th</sup>-graders to 69.7% of 12<sup>th</sup>-graders. There are also significant differences among the regions, with students in Cayman Brac (25.6%) least likely to drink, and those in George Town and East End most likely (about 50%).

Among those reporting ever drinking alcohol, the average age of first use was 11.7 years. In 2006, about 44% of drinkers reported an "early onset" of use, that is they had their first drink between the ages of 6 and 11.

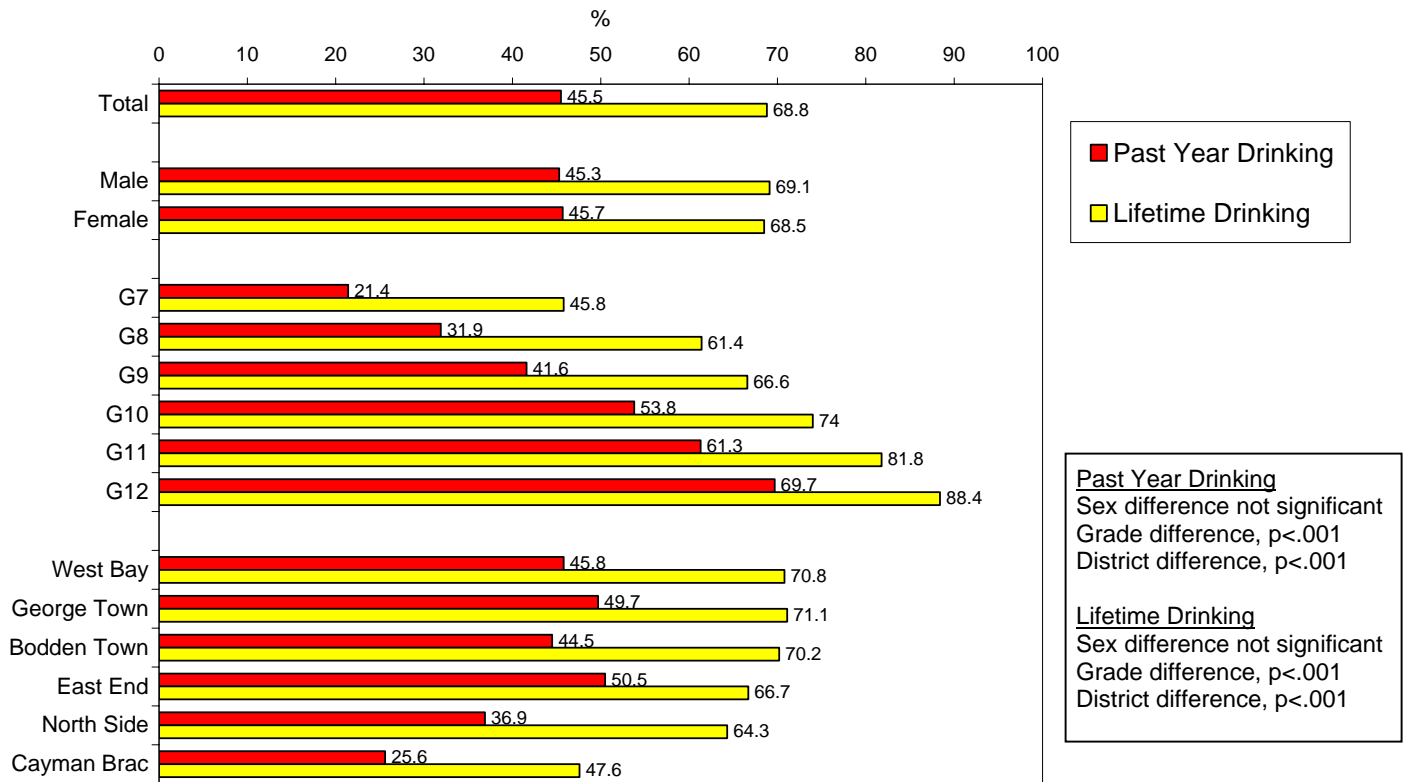
### Trends in Alcohol Use

Table 1 presents trends in past year alcohol use between 1998 and 2006. In 1998, 39.9% of Cayman Island students reported drinking, and this estimate remained stable in 2000 (38.0%) and 2002 (38.1%). However, alcohol use increased significantly in 2006, jumping to 45.5%. The 2006 estimates for alcohol use for both males and females are significantly higher those from past surveys.

Alcohol use among students in grades 7 to 9 significantly increased between 2002 and 2006, however the current rates are similar to those found in 1998. The 2006 drinking estimates for 10<sup>th</sup>- and 11<sup>th</sup>-graders are not significantly different than those found in 2002, but are higher than those from 1998. Drinking among 12<sup>th</sup>-graders significantly increased incrementally between 1998 and 2006. Among the districts, only students in George Town and East End showed significant increases in alcohol use in 2006 compared to earlier survey cycles.

Over time, early onset of drinking increased between 1998 (41.7%) and 2000 (48.4%), and then decreased slightly in 2002 (46%) and again in 2006 (44.1%).

**Figure 1. Lifetime and Past Year Alcohol Use By Sex, Grade and District, 2006 (N=2,447)**



### Alcohol Availability

In 2006, 46.8% of all students in grades 7 to 12 reported that it is “easy” or “very easy” to obtain alcohol. Of course, this increases linearly with grade, from 21.1% of 7<sup>th</sup>-graders to 77.6% of 12<sup>th</sup>-graders.

Students were also asked how they usually get their alcohol. Of those who drink alcohol, about 14% said they usually buy it themselves, 15% said friends usually buy it, 16% said friends offer it, 5% buy it in restaurants/bars, 18% said parents offer it, 3% report stealing it, and the remaining 30% obtain it in “other” ways. There is some variation by gender: males are more likely to report buying their alcohol, whereas females are more likely to get it from “other” sources not asked about (Figure 2).

### Perceived Risk and Disapproval of Daily Drinking

Students were asked how much risk they thought daily drinking poses to one’s health and well-being, and whether they disapproved of adults drinking every day. In 2006, 24.6% of students reported that they believe drinking daily poses a great risk, and 32.7% strongly disapprove of adults drinking on a daily basis.

### Comparisons with Other Student Surveys

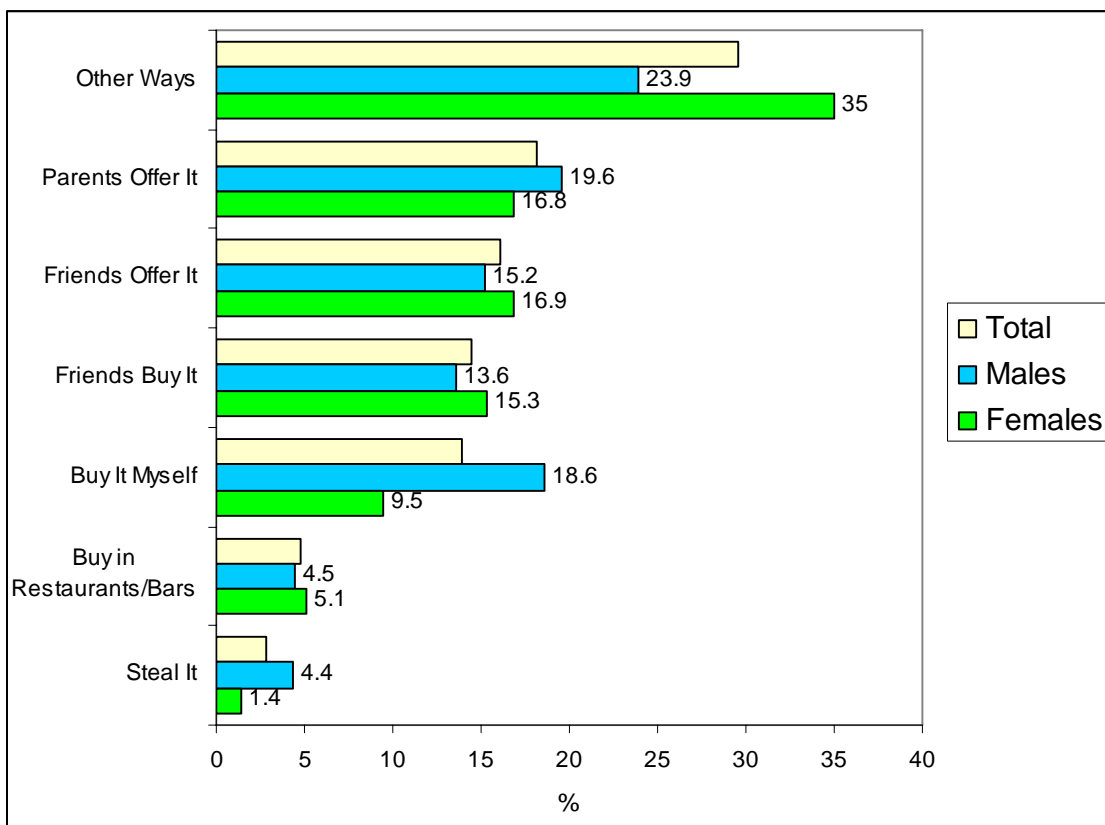
Table 2 compares estimates of past year drinking among students in grades 8, 10 and 12 in the Cayman Islands, Ontario, Canada, and the United States. Generally speaking, alcohol use by students in the Cayman Islands is relatively lower than in Ontario, Canada, but similar to students in the United States.

**Table 1. Trends in Past Year Alcohol Use (%), by Sex, Grade and District, 1998-2006**

		(N=)	1998 (1,946)	2000 (2,186)	2002 (2,187)	2006 (2,447)	Overall Change 1998 to 2006	Comparing 2006 vs 2002	Comparing 2006 vs 1998
Total			39.9	38.0	38.1	45.5	***	***	***
Sex	Male		41.6	40.7	37.7	45.3	**	***	ns
	Female		38.4	35.6	38.6	45.7	***	***	***
Grade	7		20.6	14.2	14.6	21.4	**	**	ns
	8		32.4	20.1	21.1	31.9	***	***	ns
	9		45.2	37.2	32.8	41.6	**	*	ns
	10		42.0	45.8	48.8	53.8	**	ns	***
	11		50.5	53.8	62.6	61.3	**	ns	**
	12		57.5	64.4	61.5	69.7	*	*	**
Region	West Bay		39.8	41.2	43.2	45.8	ns	ns	ns
	George Town		38.0	37.7	37.3	49.7	***	***	***
	Bodden Town		44.4	38.6	40.6	44.5	ns	ns	ns
	East End		47.1	30.3	30.4	50.5	**	**	ns
	North Side		45.9	35.1	34.7	36.9	ns	ns	ns
	Cayman Brac		30.0	29.4	24.5	25.6	ns	ns	ns

Notes: (1) \* p<0.05; \*\* p<0.01; \*\*\* p<0.001; ns=not significant; (2) sex\*year interaction=ns, grade\*year interaction=p<.001, district\*year interaction=p<.05.

**Figure 2. Usual Sources of Alcohol, by Sex, 2006 (Among Drinkers, N=1,408)**



**Table 2. Past Year Alcohol Use (%) for Grades 8, 10, and 12: Comparing the 2006 CISDUS, 2005 OSDUS, and the 2006 MTF Survey Findings**

	<b>CISDUS</b>	<b>OSDUS</b>	<b>MTF</b>
Grade 8	31.9	44.3	33.6
Grade 10	53.8	69.6	55.8
Grade 12	69.7	81.8	66.5

Note: OSDUS is the *Ontario Student Drug Use Survey*, which was conducted in Ontario, Canada; MTF is the *Monitoring the Future* survey, which was conducted across the USA.

## **Methods**

The CISDUS employs a census (i.e., a 100% sample) of students enrolled in grades 7 to 12. All twelve middle and high schools in the Cayman Islands participated in the 1998, 2000, 2002 and 2006 surveys. Of the 2,945 enrolled students, 2,480 completed questionnaires in 2006; 2,187 in 2002; 2,186 in 2000, and 1,946 completed questionnaires in 1998. Student participation rates were 84% in 2006, 88% in 2002, 94% in 2000 and 86.0% in 1998. The demographic composition of the sample did not significantly change between 1998 and 2006.

Because of the survey's complete sample (i.e., a census) there is no sampling error attached to an estimate (although estimates still have error based on non-sampling error, such as misreporting). Thus, no confidence intervals are required. Regarding the survey results, readers should bear in mind the following points:

- Since there is still the element of chance findings, the element of non-sampling errors, we cannot treat all absolute differences in percentages as meaningful and important.
- Small percentages are more unreliable than larger percentages.

## **Terminology**

- **Past Year Alcohol Use** is defined as drinking any alcohol during the past 12 months, excluding sips, but including drinking at special events.
- **Lifetime Alcohol Use** is defined as ever drinking any alcohol, excluding sips, but including drinking at special events.
- **Early Age of Drinking Onset** was defined as first drinking alcohol, excluding a sip only, between the ages of 6 and 11.
- **Alcohol Availability** is defined as reporting that it is "easy" or "very easy" to obtain alcohol if one wanted.
- **Perceived Risk of Daily Drinking** is defined as reporting that drinking 1 to 2 drinks of alcohol every day would be a "great risk" of harm to someone (physically or in other ways).
- **Disapproval of Daily Drinking** is defined as "strongly" disapproving of adults aged 18 and older drinking 1 to 2 drinks of alcohol every day.
- **Significant Difference** refers to a difference between percentages that is not likely due to chance. For example, a difference found at the  $p < .05$  level of statistical significance is one that is less than 5% likely to occur by chance alone. In this report, any difference is considered statistically significant if the probability is at the .05 level or lower.

## **Source**

To obtain the CISDUS questionnaire or other CISDUS Reports, please call (345) 949-9000.