



CAYMAN ISLANDS DRUG AND ALCOHOL SURVEY

*“Nature, extent, and frequency of both licit and illicit drug use
amongst the Cayman Islands population aged 15 years and older”*

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INTRODUCTION

Informed and enlightened social policy requires the collection and analysis of quality data documenting the nature and scope of social issues. The *Cayman Islands Drug and Alcohol Survey* was designed to explore the extent and patterns of alcohol and other drug use in the Cayman Islands. Previously, those developing initiatives in this area were left to rely on media reports, clinical observations, and anecdotal impressions. This study constitutes the first comprehensive effort to understand drug use among individuals 15 years of age and older in the Cayman Islands.

Specifically, the principal aims of this survey were to determine the:

- (1) Nature, extent, and frequency of both licit and illicit drug use;
- (2) Reasons for and circumstances conducive to drug use;
- (3) Risk factors associated with the use of alcohol and other drugs;
- (4) Social, psychological, and interpersonal, consequences of drug use;
- (5) Accessibility and effectiveness of treatment;
- (6) Attitudes and beliefs held by the public; and,
- (7) Views held by the public regarding the most appropriate strategies to deal with alcohol and drug use.

This results stated in this report pertain to (1) above. The reader should note that reports will be released in the future which contain information mentioned in items (2) – (7).

WHY SURVEY AND MONITOR DRUG USE AMONGST THE ADULT POPULATION?

Drug use is a dynamic phenomenon heavily influenced by changes in society. A survey of this type can provide an overview of drug-related concerns, including the nature and extent of substances used in the Cayman Islands, the geographic location of more serious problems (“hot spots”), and groups at high risk. Monitoring drug use serves the following purposes:

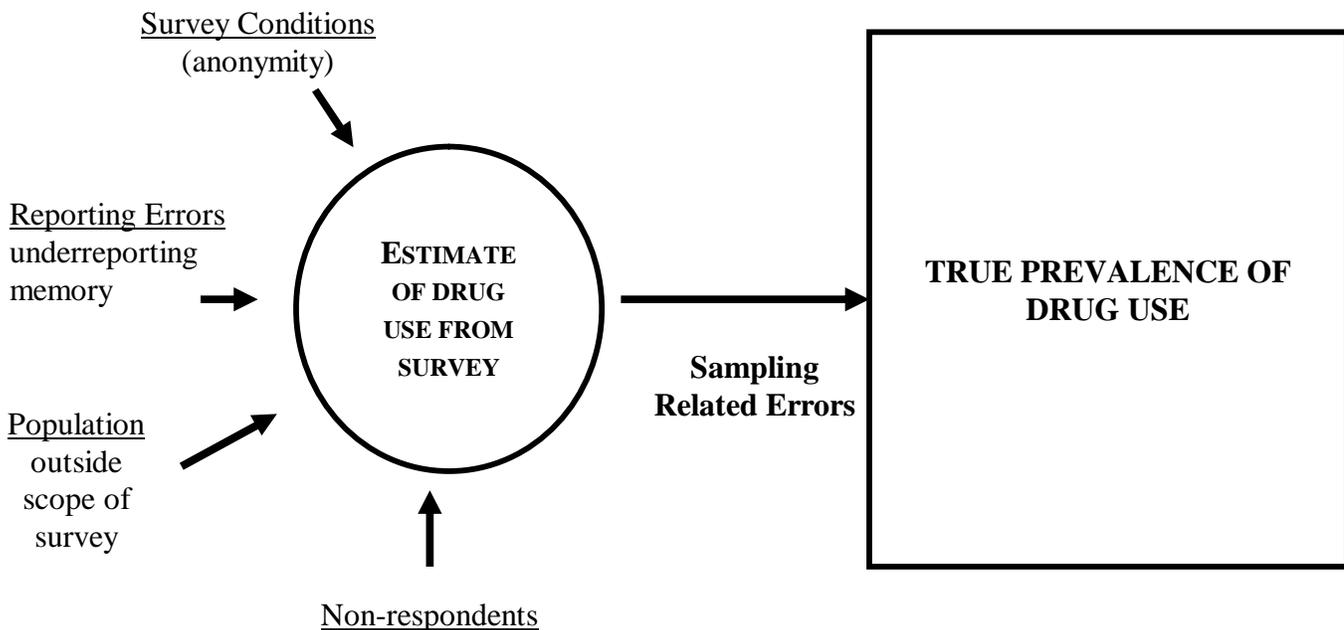
- § It builds knowledge and increases understanding of drug related problems. Moreover, this type of survey can inform the public about issues related to drug use, dispel some myths, and educate residents about the risks to which they and their offspring may be exposed;
- § It informs social policy and can assist public agencies to determine the type, amount, and distribution of resources needed to address substance abuse; and
- § It serves as a tool for evaluating programmes and objectives set by government departments and non-governmental agencies. Those performing front-line work in addictions and family counselling can obtain useful information about the factors associated with alcohol and other drug use, as well as feedback regarding the availability and efficacy of treatment in the six districts covered by the survey.

WHAT ARE THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE SURVEY?

Sample surveys provide a direct means of estimating drug use in the population, but not without limitations. However, this survey method remains the most feasible technique for its intended purpose. The strength of this survey method is based on the random selection design, which assumes no bias in the selection process. Therefore drug users drawn from sample should be representative of drug users in the general population.

Some of the weaknesses in this method are in the use of data to project drug use beyond the target population. This method is limited to those persons residing in regular households and therefore does not include those in prisons, hospitals, and transient persons such as the homeless. As these groups often contain significantly high numbers of drug users and heavy drinkers their non-inclusion could contribute to bias in the study. Depending on the relative size of these groups compared to the general population this bias may not be substantial (approximately 1%).

Another weakness of the survey is its reliance on self-reported data. Although self-reported methods tend to underestimate true usage of alcohol and drugs, they are still regarded as the best available means of estimating such behaviours¹.



¹ See Harrison, E., Haaga, J., & Richards, T (1993). Self-reported drug use data: What do they reveal?

HOW WAS THE SURVEY CONDUCTED?

This survey covered the six principal districts of the Cayman Islands--George Town, West Bay, Bodden Town, East End, North Side, and Cayman Brac. Due to its size, Little Cayman was excluded from this survey. As is customary in the case of nationwide surveys, a sample was selected to represent the adult population, as the inclusion of the entire population was not economically feasible. A critical objective in these studies, therefore, is to ensure that the sample is carefully selected so that survey results can be applied to the population as a whole.

The Economics and Statistics Office (ESO) of the Cayman Islands Government was solicited to generate a sample that represented all residents of the six districts who were 15 years of age and older. The ESO, which is responsible for conducting the census, maintains an updated registry of all households in the Cayman Islands². The goal was to identify and contact between 100-300 individuals (no more than one per household) in each district, the number depending upon the population of each district.

In all six districts a **systematic sample** was drawn. This method of sampling provides each household with an equal chance of being selected and ensures that all pockets within each district are represented; i.e., different income, ethnic, and other relevant groups. Systematic sampling also takes into account the fact that some households will be unavailable or will not cooperate during the survey period. Thus, additional households are selected when the sample is drawn to serve as replacements for those not participating. In the East End, for example, every third household was selected for inclusion, as the small population in that district required that a high proportion of households be selected in order to include at least one hundred people in the survey. In more populous districts like George Town and West Bay, on the other hand, a smaller proportion of households were drawn in order to maintain an economically feasible sample size (1 of every 25 households in George Town and 1 of every 15 in West Bay).

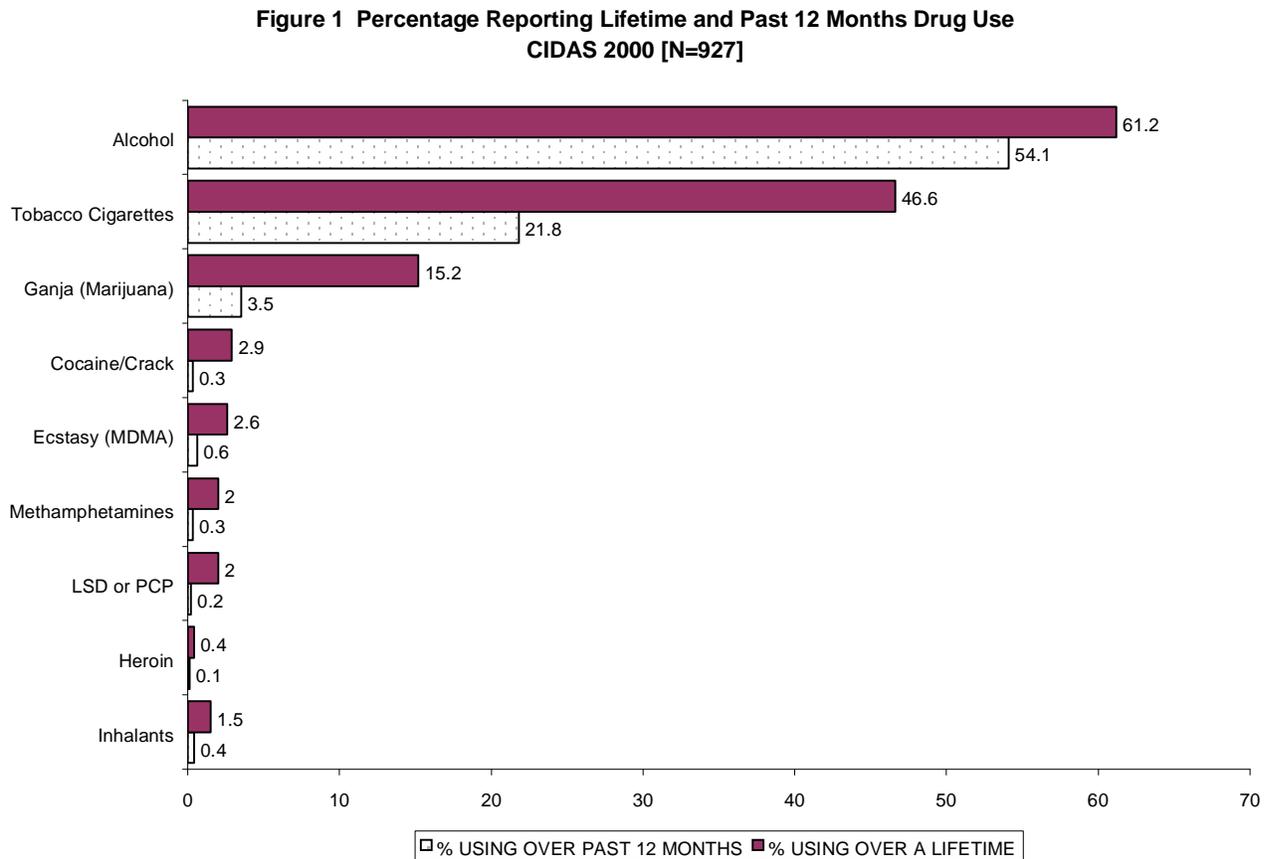
A total of 985 households were selected for inclusion in the six districts and 927 households actually agreed to participate. This yielded an impressive participation of **94%**. Most surveys, especially those dealing with sensitive topics, yield far lower participation rates. The type of high response rate achieved in this survey lends confidence to the findings, because the sample is more likely to be representative of the population as a whole.

² Version used was last updated in fall 1999

WHAT ARE THE HIGHLIGHTS?

OVERALL NON-MEDICAL DRUG USE IN THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

Figure 1 displays the overall prevalence of drug use in the Cayman Islands.

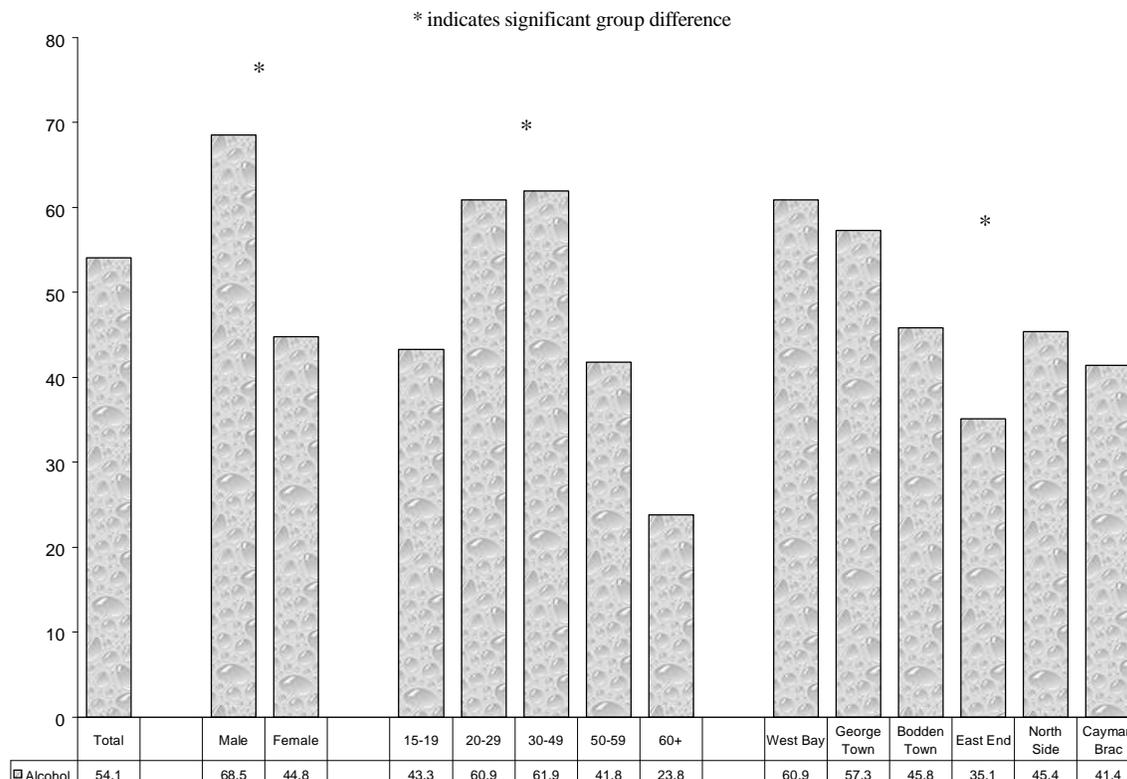


- § Alcohol and tobacco are by far the most commonly used substances in the Cayman Islands.
- § Approximately three out of every five adults (61.2%) has tried alcohol during their lifetime with more than half (54.1%) having consumed alcohol in the past 12 months.
- § Almost half of the respondents (46.6%) reported having smoked tobacco cigarettes during their lifetime, while slightly more than a fifth (21.8%) smoked during the past year.
- § The third most commonly used drug is ganja. Almost one in six (15.2%) adults reported having smoked ganja at some point during their lives and slightly more than three out of every hundred (3.5%) reported using ganja over the past year.
- § Approximately 2.9% reported having ever used cocaine, 2.6% ecstasy, 2.0% methamphetamines (“speed” or “ice”), 2.0% LSD or PCP, 0.4% heroin, and 1.5% inhalants (glue, gas, etc.). Rates of drug use over the past 12 months, for each of these substances, was well below one percent of the adult population.

ALCOHOL USE OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS

Figure 2 displays the overall prevalence of alcohol use in the Cayman Islands.

Figure 2 Percentage Reporting Past 12 Months Alcohol Use
CIDAS 2000



Overall Use of Alcohol

§ Over one-half (54.1%) of the adult population in the Cayman Islands had consumed alcohol over the previous 12 months.

Gender Differences

§ Men were significantly more likely to have consumed alcohol over the previous 12 months than were women (68.5% vs. 44.8%).

§ In particular, they were significantly more likely to have consumed beer (64.7% vs. 30.7%) and hard liquor (38.4% vs. 26.7%).

§ Wine consumption was almost identical for the sexes, with 39.2% of the men and 38.7% of the women having consumed it over the past 12 months.

Age Differences

- § Drinking was significantly associated with age.
- § Those most likely to drink in the past year were in the 20-29 year and 30-49 year age categories (60.9% and 61.9%, respectively). Those 60 years of age and over were least likely to have had a drink (23.8%) and those between 15-19 and 50-59 years of age fell in between these extremes (43.3% and 41.8%, respectively).
- § The age-related pattern just discussed applied, in particular, to beer and wine consumption. The notion that consumption is associated with young adulthood and middle age was supported even more so in the case of hard liquor.
- § Those 50 years of age or over were far less likely to have consumed liquor over the previous 12 months, than those under that age.
- § Just 14.7 % of people between 50-59 and 19.7% of those 60 or over drank rum, whiskey, and other liquors, whereas over a third of those in the lower age categories did so.
- § The highest level of liquor consumption was found among 20-29 year-olds (41.7%).

Home District

- § Drinking varied significantly across the districts.
- § West Bay and George Town residents were the most likely to have had an alcoholic beverage over the past 12 months and East Enders were least likely to have done so.
- § Almost two-thirds of West Bay residents, for example, had consumed an alcoholic drink, but only slightly over one third of East End residents did so.

Frequency of Use (see Table 1)

- § Less than 10 percent drank four times a week or more and five percent reported that they were drinking daily.
- § Just over a fifth drank two or three times a month and less than half drank once a week or more often.
- § Over a third of those reporting alcohol use over the past 12 months indicated that they drank once a month or less.
- § The beverage most likely to be consumed was beer (44.4% of adults), followed by wine (38.7%),

and then hard liquor (31.2%).

FREQUENCY	% OF DRINKERS
Once a Month or Less	35.3
2-3 Times Per Month	21.5
One Time Per Week	19.1
2-3 Times Per Week	15.0
4-5 Times Per Week	4.1
Almost Every Day	5.0

Heavy Drinkers

If heavy drinking is defined as consuming four or more alcoholic beverages during an *average* drinking session, then this survey indicates that 19.1% of beer drinkers, 3.7% of wine drinkers, and 13.1% of liquor drinkers qualified as heavy drinkers (Table 2, below).

§ A large majority of beer, wine, and liquor consumers reported that they tended to have three or fewer drinks at any one time.

BEVERAGE	% Having 1-3 DRINKS	% Having 4-5 DRINKS	% Having 6+ DRINKS
Beer	80.8	15.3	3.8
Wine	96.3	3.4	.3
Liquor	86.9	10.9	2.2

Gender Differences

- § Male heavy drinking exceeded that of females for all types of alcoholic beverages.
- § Almost one quarter (23.3%) of men who reported drinking beer can be classified as heavy drinkers, while 13.4% of women who drink beer would qualify as heavy drinkers. Bearing in mind that not all men or women drink beer, 15.1% of all men and just 4.1% of all women are heavy beer drinkers.
- § With regard to those who have consumed wine, 6.1% of the men and 2.3% of the women would qualify as heavy drinkers. As a percentage of all men, 2.4% are heavy wine drinkers, while 0.9% of women are heavy wine drinkers.
- § Of those drinking hard liquor, 15.6% of the men and 10.5% of the women qualify as heavy drinkers. As a percentage, 6% of all men and 2.8% of all women are heavy liquor consumers.
- § Of the different forms of alcoholic beverages, wine is least likely to be consumed heavily.

Age Differences

- § Overall, heavy alcohol consumption appears to decline with age.
- § Over one-third (35.1%) of 15-19 year-olds who drank beer reported an average intake of four or more drinks at one time. This figure declines to 22.4% for those between 20-29 years of age, to slightly over 18% for those in the 30-49 and 50-59 age bracket, and declines even further (6.2%) for those 60 years of age and older.
- § A similar pattern exists in the case of hard liquor consumption.

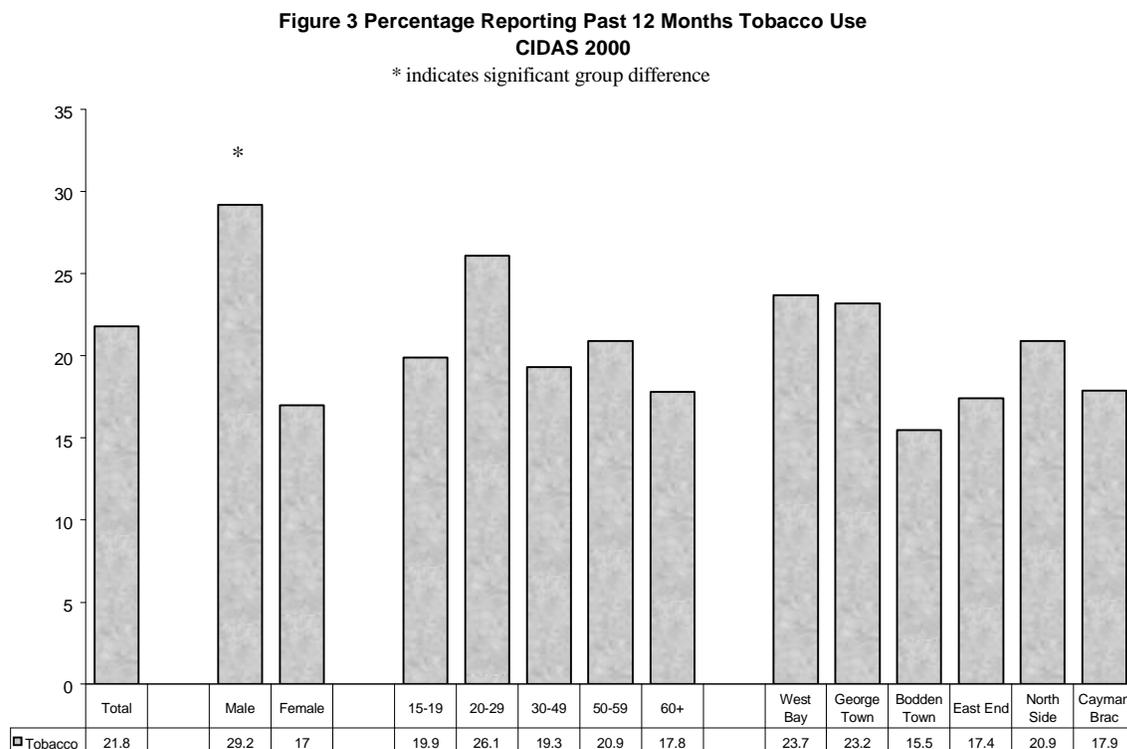
Home District

§ The North Side has the highest proportion of heavy beer, wine, and liquor drinkers (Table 3, below). The lowest level of heavy beer drinking is found in Bodden Town. East Enders have the lowest levels of both heavy wine and liquor drinking.

DISTRICT	BEER	WINE	LIQUOR
West Bay	8.3	1.6	4.1
George Town	9.3	1.6	4.2
Bodden Town	2.8	.8	3.1
East End	9.2	0.0	2.8
North Side	15.2	3.3	6.0
Cayman Brac	11.6	1.1	4.3

TOBACCO USE OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS

Figure 3 displays the prevalence of tobacco use in the Cayman Islands.



Overall Use

§ Over a fifth of the adult population in the Cayman Islands has smoked tobacco cigarettes over the 12-month period prior to the survey (Figure 3). Less than three percent stated that they had used a smokeless tobacco product, such as chewing tobacco or snuff, over the previous year.

Gender Differences

§ The smoking of men over the past 12 months exceeded that of women by a statistically significant margin. Close to one-third of the men (29.2%) as opposed to less than one-fifth (17%) of the women reported smoking in the past year.

Age Differences

§ Those most likely to smoke were in the 20-29 age category, while those least likely to smoke were 60 years of age or older. These age differences, however, were not found to be statistically significant.

Home District

§ Differences by district were also not significant. Figure 3 shows that West Bay and George Town residents reported the highest levels of tobacco smoking over the past year, while Bodden Town residents reported the lowest levels.

Frequency of Use

§ One-third of all smokers reported smoking only occasionally and close to another third reported smoking ten or fewer cigarettes a day (Table 4). About one-fifth smoked 20 or more cigarettes a day.

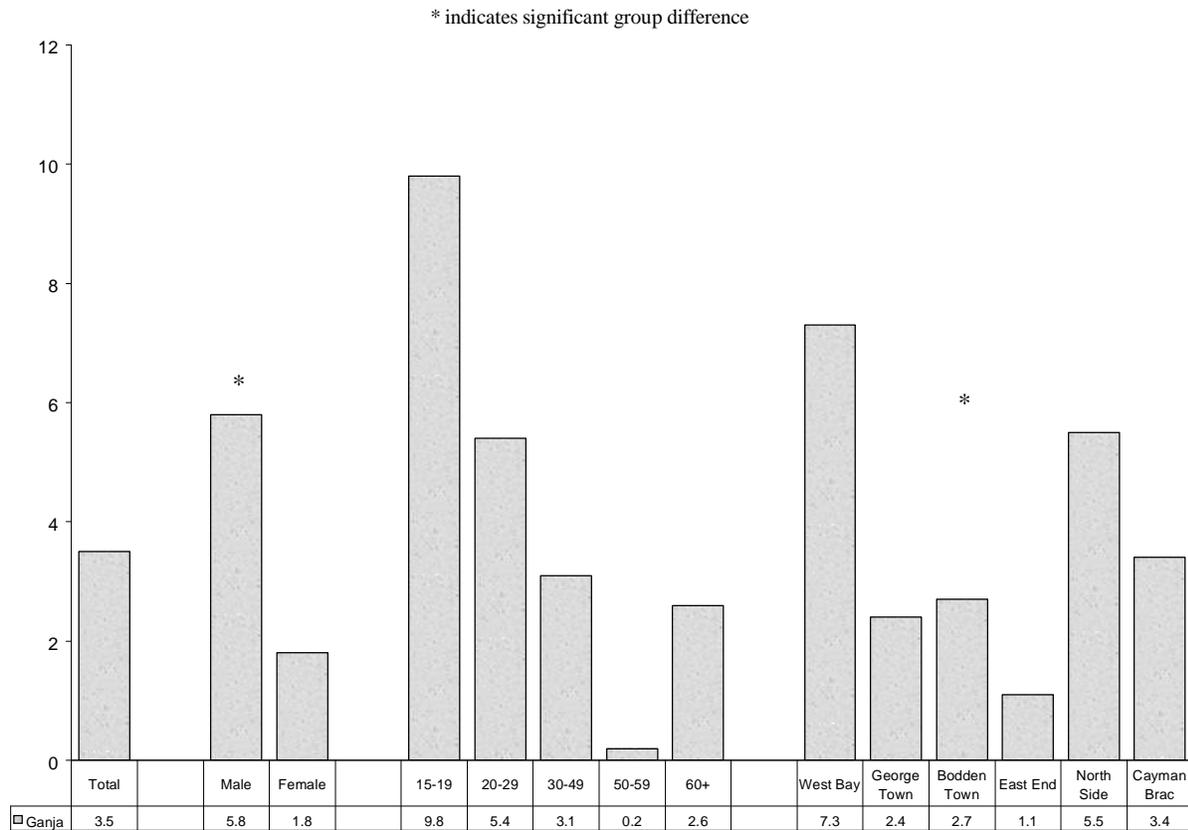
§ Of those using smokeless tobacco products, almost half reported using it on a daily basis.

FREQUENCY	% of Smokers
Occasional Smoking	34.0
1-5 Per Day	8.8
6-10 Per Day	21.9
11-19 Per Day	15.3
20 or More Per Day	20.0

GANJA USE OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS

Figure 4 displays the prevalence of ganja use in the Cayman Islands

Figure 4 Percentage Reporting past 12 Months Ganja Use
CIDAS 2000



Overall Use

§ A total of 3.5% of the respondents reported using ganja (marijuana) over the past 12 months.

Gender Differences

§ Men were significantly more likely to have used ganja than women over the past year (5.8% vs. 1.8%); however, the differences were not enormous because reported use overall was fairly low

§ Men were only slightly more likely than women to be frequent users--three or more uses per week.

§ Approximately 25.9% of the men and 22.2 % of the women qualified as frequent users.

Age Differences

- § Differences across the age groups were not statistically significant, although they are noteworthy.
- § The critical age was 30, with those under that age reporting a higher level of use.
- § Almost one of ten individuals (9.8%) between 15 and 19 years of age reported ganja use in the past year, while 5.4% of 20-29 year-olds did so.
- § For those 30 years and over, there was no consistent pattern of declining use with age. Use was three percent or less for the remaining age groups.

Home District

- § Ganja use over the past 12 months varied significantly across the districts of the Cayman Islands.
- § The highest level of use was found in West Bay (7.3% of residents), followed by North Side (5.5%). The lowest level of ganja use was in East End (1.1%).

Frequency of Use (see Table 5, below)

- § Over one-half of those reporting ganja use in the past year indicated that they used ganja once a month or less.
- § Another 14.7% smoked ganja two or three times a month. The remaining one-third used ganja at least once a week. Close to a quarter of all users smoked ganja three or more times per week.
- § Frequency of use was not consistently related to age; however, it is noteworthy that there was not even one frequent user found among those 50 years of age or older.

Table 5 Frequency of Ganja Use Among Those Using in the Past 12 Months	
FREQUENCY	% OF USERS
Once a Month or Less	52.9
2-3 Times Per Month	14.7
1-2 Times Per Week	8.8
3+ Times Per Week	23.5

OTHER ILLICIT OR NON-MEDICAL DRUG USE OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS

Overall Use

- § All other non-prescription drugs covered by this survey were used by well under one percent of the adult population.
- § The most popular of these substances over the past year was ecstasy (a hallucinogen) and inhalants, such as glue, gas, and paint thinners.
- § Heroin was the drug in this category that was least likely to be used. Only two of the 840 respondents who responded to this questionnaire item indicated that they had used heroin in the past year.

Gender Differences

- § Although no definitive conclusions could be drawn due to the small number of reported uses of these drugs, women reported more uses than did men.

Age Differences

- § Although the number of users were small, an association with age is suggested by the findings. Those under 30, especially those between 15-19, are the most active users, suggesting the need to monitor the use of these substances by young people.

Home District

- § North Side and Cayman Brac residents reported the highest number of uses, while Bodden Town residents reported the lowest number of uses of these categories of drugs.

Frequency of Use

- § The number of individuals using any of these substances was so few as to preclude any meaningful analyses relating to the frequency of their use.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG USE OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS

A number of consultants to this project, including a pharmacist and addictions counsellors, identified several prescription drugs that might be susceptible to abuse. Table 6 lists these by their best known names--usually these are the trade names and in a few cases a more common term is used (e.g., diet pill, steroid). It is still possible that some respondents may know these substances by other names and, hence, may have under reported their use of these drugs.

Table 6 Prescription Drug Use in the Past 12 Months			
DRUG	% NOT USING	% TAKING AS DOCTOR ADVISED	% TAKING WITHOUT OR MORE THAN DOC. ADVISED
Percocet	97.4	2.1	.5
Percodan	97.8	1.6	.6
Valium, Xanax	95.0	4.0	.9
HalCion	97.9	1.8	.3
Restoril	98.2	1.5	.4
Ativan	96.9	2.5	.6
Librium	98.1	1.5	.4
Tylenol 3	85.9	6.7	7.4
222	97.0	1.7	1.3
Demerol	97.2	1.8	.9
RobitussinC/ActifedC	84.4	8.1	7.5
Ritalin	98.2	1.4	.4
Diet Pills	95.0	2.5	2.5
Steroids	97.4	2.0	.6

Overall Use

- § The most frequently used prescription medications were RobitussinC or ActifedC (with codeine). About one of six adults reported using these medications. Close to one-half of these individuals (7.5% of all adults) used these drugs without the advice of a physician or used more than the physician advised.
- § The next most frequently used prescription drug was Tylenol 3 (with codeine), which was used by one in seven adults in the past year. Over one-half of those using Tylenol 3 (7.4% of all adults) reported doing so either without a physician's advice or in excess of the amount advised.
- § Five percent of all adults reported using diet pills and one-half of these people (2.5% of adults) took these pills without consulting a physician or in excess of the amount advised.
- § Valium and/or Xanax were also used by five percent of the population and about one-fifth of these individuals (.9% of the adult population) reported at least some use without being advised by a doctor to do so.
- § The remainder of the drugs mentioned in Table 6 were used by, at most, about three percent of the population.

Number of Prescription Drugs Used (see Table 7, below)

Table 7 Number of Prescription Drugs Taken		
NUMBER	% OF ADULTS	CUMULATIVE PERCENTAGE
None	69.6	69.6
One	18.0	87.6
Two	7.7	95.3
Three	2.6	97.9
Four	1.1	99.0
Five	.2	99.2
Six or more	.8	100.0

- § Over two-thirds of the respondents indicated that they did not use any prescription drugs at the time of the survey.
- § Another 18 percent reported taking one type of prescription drug and an additional 7.7% took two forms of prescription drugs.
- § A total of 4.7% of adults took three or more types of prescription drugs at the time of the survey.

Gender Differences

- § Tylenol 3 and RobitussinC/ActifedC were by far the most frequently used medications of those covered by this survey. Men were more likely than women to use Tylenol 3 (16.3% to 12.3%); however, this difference was not statistically significant. Among users of Tylenol 3, women reported a higher rate of use without a doctor's advice than did men (63.4% to 42.3%)
- § Women reported more uses of RobitussinC or ActifedC than men, although this result, too, was not statistically significant. There were no discernible differences between the sexes in terms of the proportion of users who took these medications without consulting a physician.

Age Differences

- § Those between 15-19 years of age reported the highest rate of use of Tylenol 3 (21.5%) and those 60 years of age and over reported the lowest use (7.0%). The differences among age groups, however, were not statistically significant. Use without a doctor's advice was not related to age in any discernible way.
- § The use of RobitussinC/ActifedC declined significantly with age. Here again, those in the 15-19 age group reported the highest rate of use (32.3%) and those 60 and over had the lowest rate (8.1%). The 50-59 age group had the next lowest rate of use. Once again, use without a physician's advice was not related to age in a consistent way.

Home District

- § The use of Tylenol 3 and RobitussinC/ActifedC did not vary significantly across the districts of the Cayman Islands.

SUMMARY

- § The principal substances consumed, by far, have been alcohol, tobacco, and ganja. Nearly as many people have consumed alcohol over the past year as during their lifetime, indicating that most people who consume alcohol tend to do so through their life span.
- § Tobacco and ganja use over the past year was substantially lower than lifetime use, suggesting a sharp overall decline in use with age.
- § Five percent of alcohol drinkers are daily consumers. About one-fifth of beer drinkers, one of eight liquor consumers, and only a small fraction of wine drinkers are heavy consumers.
- § One of every five tobacco smokers consume a pack or more of cigarettes a day.
- § Almost one-quarter of those using ganja smoke it several times a week.
- § About 30% of the population used at least one form of prescription drug at the time of the survey. The most commonly used of those listed were Robitussin C and Actifed C (with Codeine) and Tylenol 3 (with Codeine). These medications were often taken without a physician's advice. A smaller but noteworthy number took diet pills, Valium, and Xanax.
- § Men were more likely to consume tobacco, alcohol, and ganja than were women. They were also more likely to be heavy drinkers than were women.
- § Women were slightly more likely to use illegal drugs other than ganja, although the differences between the sexes was slight with regard to these substances.
- § There were no discernible gender differences in relation to the use of prescription drugs.
- § Age was also a powerful predictor of drug use. Those between 15-29 were the most active consumers of virtually every type of drug covered in the survey, while those over 50 years of age tended to be the least active users of most substances.
- § Among the districts, the North Side stood out as a leading venue for the use of tobacco, ganja, and other illegal drugs. While not leading in terms of the proportion of residents drinking alcoholic beverages, it was also ahead of the other districts in the proportion of heavy drinkers.

REGIONAL & INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

In this section of this report, the extent of drug use in the Cayman Islands is placed within the context of comparable estimates of drug use both regionally and internationally. In other words, to what extent do rates of drug use in Cayman Islands differ from other areas and countries? Table 8

Compares available drug use rates from CIDAS to similar surveys conducted in Trinidad & Tobago, Bermuda, Canada (Ontario) and the United States.

The Trinidad & Tobago data are based on the 1999 *National Drug Abuse Demand Reduction Survey*. In total 800 participants ranging from 18 to 45 were surveyed in 1999 (Past 12 months estimates of drug use are generally not available). The Bermuda data are based on the 1999 *Adult Population Survey*, a survey of 1,299 participants age 18 and above. The Ontario, Canada data are based on the 1999 *Ontario Drug Monitor*. The American data are based on the 1999 *National Household Survey on Drug Abuse*, which surveyed 70,000 persons ages 12 years and older.

Alcohol

- § Lifetime rates of alcohol use among the adult population of the Cayman Islands are similar to Trinidad & Tobago, but lower in comparison to Bermuda, Canada, and the United States.
- § Past year use of alcohol are also lower among Cayman residents in comparison to residents of Bermuda, Canada and the United States.

Tobacco

- § Lifetime rates of cigarette smoking among the adult population of the Cayman Islands is slightly higher than Trinidad & Tobago, but lower than Bermuda and the United States.
- § Past year rates for smoking cigarettes among the adult population of the Cayman Islands are similar to Bermuda, but lower than the United States.

Ganja

- § Lifetime rates of Ganja use in the Cayman Islands are similar to Trinidad & Tobago, but lower than Bermuda, Canada and the United States.
- § Past year rates of Ganja use by residents of the Cayman Islands are generally lower than Bermuda, Canada and the United States.

Cocaine

§ Lifetime rates of cocaine use among adults in the Cayman Islands are similar to Trinidad & Tobago, but lower than the United States.

§ Past year rates of cocaine use among residents of the Cayman Islands were less than 1% and significantly lower than Canada and the United States.

Table 8. REGIONAL & INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

	Cayman Is. CIDAS 2000	Trinidad & Tobago NDADRS 1999	Bermuda APS 1999	Ontario, Canada ODM 1999	U.S.A. NHSDA 1999
<u>Alcohol</u>					
Lifetime Use	61.2	6 2.5	87.5	90.8	81.3
Past 12 Months	54.1	~	68.9	77.1	62.6
<u>Tobacco</u>					
Lifetime Use	46.6	34.1	52.5	50.3	72.0
Past 12 months	21.8	~	23.1	~	36.1
<u>Ganja</u>					34.6
Lifetime Use	15.2	12.0	40.5	25.8	
Past 12 Months	3.5	~	11.1	8.6	8.9
<u>Cocaine</u>					
Lifetime Use	2.9	3.0	~	4.6	11.5
Past 12 Months	Less than 1.0%	~	~	Less than 1.0%	1.7

Notes: ~ estimates not available; *estimates based on past 30-day use.