

**Milestone 25: Reducing the incidence of drug misuse in general and of injecting and sharing of needles in particular**

This milestone is measured by three indicators. The first indicator on the incidence of drug misuse among young people (12-15 year olds) is obtained from national surveys of smoking, drinking and drug use among young people in Scotland. The incidence of drug misuse among 16-24 and 25-59 year olds is obtained from the Scottish Crime Survey. Information on injecting drug use and the sharing of needles comes from the Scottish Drug Misuse Database, managed by the Information and Statistics Division (ISD) of the National Health Service in Scotland.

**(a) Drug misuse among 12-15 year olds**

Between 1998 and 2004 there has been very little change in the percentage of 13 year olds who had used drugs. There has, however, been a reduction in the percentage of 15 year olds using drugs. Between 1998 and 2004 the percentage who have used drugs in the last month fell from 24% to 20%. The corresponding figures for those using drugs in the last year was a drop from 35% to 31% and for those who had ever used drugs there was a fall from 39% to 35%.

**Table 25a: Reported use of drugs by 12-15 year olds, 1998 - 2004**

|  | 12 years | 13 years | 14 years | 15 years | 12-15 years |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|-------------|
| <b>Percentage who had used drugs 'in the last month'</b> |          |          |          |          |             |
| 1998   | 2        | 8        | 14       | 24       | 10          |
| 2000   | 1        | 8        | 15       | 22       | 10          |
| 2002   | -        | 8        | -        | 23       | -           |
| 2004   | -        | 7        | -        | 20       | -           |
| <b>Percentage who had used drugs 'in the last year'</b>  |          |          |          |          |             |
| 1998   | 3        | 11       | 22       | 35       | 15          |
| 2000   | 3        | 11       | 22       | 30       | 14          |
| 2002   | -        | 11       | -        | 33       | -           |
| 2004   | -        | 11       | -        | 31       | -           |
| <b>Percentage who had 'ever' used drugs</b>              |          |          |          |          |             |
| 1998   | 3        | 13       | 25       | 39       | 18          |
| 2000   | 4        | 13       | 26       | 33       | 17          |
| 2002   | -        | 13       | -        | 37       | -           |
| 2004   | -        | 13       | -        | 35       | -           |

Sources: *Smoking, drinking and drug use among teenagers in 1998* (Office for National Statistics);

*Smoking, drinking and drug use among young people in Scotland in 2000* (National Centre for Social research & National Foundation for Educational Research);

*Scottish Schools Adolescent Lifestyle and Substance Use Survey (SALSUS) (2002&2004)*, (Child and Adolescent Health Research Unit (CAHRU) of The University of Edinburgh)

**(b) Drug misuse among 16-24 year olds and 25-59 year olds**

The incidence of drug misuse among 16-24 year olds and 25-59 year olds from the Scottish Crime Surveys is shown in Table 25b. The proportion of adults (aged 16-59) reporting use of any controlled drug in the past 12 months was 9 per cent in 1996 and 7 per cent in 2000; among young people (aged 16-24) the proportion was 27 per cent in 1996 and 18 per cent in 2000. Care should be taken when interpreting the figures from this survey, due to the small sample sizes involved. It is anticipated that information from the 2003 Crime Survey will be available in spring 2004.

**Table 25b: Reported drug use 'in the last 12 months' – adults aged 16-59 years**

|           | 1996 |      |        | 2000 |      |        |
|-----------|------|------|--------|------|------|--------|
|           | All  | Male | Female | All  | Male | Female |
| 16-24     | 27   | 33   | 20     | 18   | 17   | 18     |
| 25-59     | 5    | 6    | 3      | 4    | 5    | 3      |
| All 16-59 | 9    | 12   | 7      | 7    | 8    | 6      |

Source: Scottish Crime Survey

The national prevalence study *Estimating the national and local prevalence of problem drug misuse in Scotland* found that, in 2000, an estimated 55,800 individuals aged between 15 and 54 years were misusing opiates or benzodiazepams within Scotland (95% confidence interval of 43,664 to 78,443). This represents around 2 per cent of the population (95% confidence interval of 1.5 per cent to 2.7 per cent). In general the male to female ratio for problematic misuse was 3:1. A prevalence survey is currently being carried out for 2003, and the results will be available in 2004.

**(c) Levels of drug injecting and sharing**

Information from the Scottish Drug Misuse Database is available on the percentage of 'new problem drug misusers' attending services who reported injecting in the past month and of these, the percentage who reported sharing injecting equipment in the past month.

It is important to remember that these figures represent people attending services and therefore can not be considered to represent all drug users.

A drug user is defined as 'new' if he/she is attending a particular agency for the first time, or has had a gap of at least six months since their last attendance. In 2003/04, 37 per cent of all individuals reported that they had injected in the month prior to seeking treatment, a fall from previous years (in 1999/00, 40%, in 2002/03, 41%). Over the last five years, around a third of 'new problem drug misusers' injectors reported sharing needles/syringes in the previous month. This has remained steady over this time. Within each years data around 11,000 individuals have been defined as 'new problem drug misusers'.

**Table 25c: Percentage of 'new problem drug misusers' attending services who reported injecting and sharing behaviour**

| Year     | Percentage injected in past month | Percentage shared 'needles/syringes' in past month |
|----------|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1998/99r | 39                                | -  |
| 1999/00r | 40                                | 34   |
| 2000/01r | 39                                | 34   |
| 2001/02r | 38                                | 36   |
| 2002/03  | 41                                | 33   |
| 2003/04  | 37                                | 34   |

Source: Scottish Drug Misuse Database

Sharing figures refer to 'injecting equipment' for years 1999/00 and 2000/01 and to 'needles/syringes' for years 2001/02 to 2003/04.

All figures in this table exclude penal establishment and information received from needle exchanges.

r-Revised

**Availability of data and references**

Information on the use of drugs by 12-15 year olds was first collected in the Office for National Statistics national survey: *Smoking, drinking and drug use among young teenagers* in 1998. Figures for 2000 were obtained from the National Centre for Social Research and the National Foundation for Educational Research national survey: *Smoking, drinking & drug use among young people in Scotland* in 2000. Statistics from *The Scottish Schools Adolescent Lifestyle and Substance Use Survey (SALSUS) 2002 & 2004*, was undertaken by the Child and Adolescent Health Research Unit (CAHRU) of the University of Edinburgh. Information is provided

on drug use among 12-15 year olds in 1998 and 2000 and drug use among 13 and 15 year olds from 1998 to 2004.

The Scottish Crime Survey is a household survey which was conducted in 1993, 1996 and 2000. It is anticipated that information from the 2003 Crime Survey will be available in December 2004. It should be noted that the survey excludes certain groups of the population including homeless persons and those in prison, hospitals and other residential establishments. In addition, it is important to bear in mind the relatively small sample size and the sensitive nature of the subject matter when interpreting these figures.

The results from a national prevalence study provide a new and valuable source of information on the level of drug use in Scotland. The study was carried out by the Centre for Drug Misuse Research at the University of Glasgow, in conjunction with the Scottish Centre for Infection and Environmental Health (SCIEH). The study utilises the capture-recapture methodology and uses a variety of data sources to provide prevalence estimates of problem drug use. Figures are presented here for 2000. A prevalence survey is currently being carried out for 2003, and the results will be available in late 2004.

Information on the proportion of 'new problem drug misusers' injecting and sharing injecting equipment is available from ISD through the Scottish Drug Misuse Database.

*Interim Report of the Scottish Schools Adolescent Lifestyle and Substance Use Survey 2002 (SALSUS)*  
[http://www.drugmisuse.isdscotland.org/publications/abstracts/salsus\\_interim04.htm](http://www.drugmisuse.isdscotland.org/publications/abstracts/salsus_interim04.htm)

*Statistics from the Scottish Drug Misuse Database 2002/04*  
<http://www.drugmisuse.isdscotland.org/publications/03dmss/03dmss.htm>

*Scottish Crime Survey 2000*  
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/cru/kd01/green/emcs-00.asp>

*Office of National Statistics 'Smoking, drinking and drug use among young teenagers in 1998, Volume 2:*  
[http://www.statistics.gov.uk/ssd/surveys/survey\\_smoking\\_drinking\\_drug\\_use\\_among\\_secondary\\_school\\_children.asp](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/ssd/surveys/survey_smoking_drinking_drug_use_among_secondary_school_children.asp)

*Child and Adolescent Health Research Unit, Edinburgh University : 'Smoking, drinking and drug use among young people in Scotland in 2000'*  
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library3/health/smoking.pdf>