

Underage youth get cigarettes and alcohol from friends and family, survey shows

24 September 2013

A survey conducted by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) shows that a majority of those underage students in Ontario, Canada who smoke or drink are getting cigarettes and alcohol from a friend or family member.

Among [students](#) in Grades 7-12 who smoked cigarettes, 58 per cent say they received their last cigarette from a friend or family member, while 19 per cent report getting them from a corner store, grocery store, gas station, or bar.

Twenty-six per cent of males surveyed said they were more likely to obtain cigarettes from sources such as [corner stores](#), [grocery stores](#) and [gas stations](#) compared to 10 per cent of females. Seventy-three per cent of females report getting their last cigarette from a friend or family member compared to 46 per cent of males.

Among students who consumed [alcohol](#), 39 per cent reported that "someone gave it to me," while 28 per cent say they gave money to someone to buy it for them. Only 4 per cent reported obtaining alcohol from a [liquor store](#), and 2 per cent reported obtaining alcohol from a beer store.

Students in urban areas were more likely than students in rural areas to report that someone gave them alcohol (40 per cent vs. 35 per cent, respectively). Thirty-three per cent of students in [rural areas](#) say they gave someone money to buy alcohol for them, compared to 27 per cent of students who live in urban/suburban areas.

Older students were much more likely than younger students to report that they got their alcohol by giving someone else money to buy it – 32 per cent vs. 2 per cent. Younger students were more likely than older students to report that "someone gave it to me" – 53 per cent vs. 37 per cent.

"Despite efforts to curb youth smoking and prevent

youth alcohol use, the survey tells us that youth are still able to easily access these substances, often from the very people who should be looking out for their well-being," said Dr. Robert Mann, CAMH Senior Scientist and Principal Investigator on the survey. "It is also very clear that young people find it much easier to obtain cigarettes from corner stores than to obtain alcohol from liquor or beer stores. If we begin selling alcohol in corner stores, we can expect a large increase in underage drinking."

The data in this report are taken from CAMH's Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey (OSDUHS), an Ontario-wide survey of students in grades 7 through 12 which has been conducted every two years since 1977. The survey was completed by 9,288 students from 40 public and catholic school boards across Ontario.

Provided by Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

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