



Use of Inhalants by WA School Students in 2005

Introduction

The eighth Australian School Students' Alcohol and Drugs (ASSAD) national survey was conducted in 2005 to obtain prevalence rates of alcohol consumption, tobacco smoking and illicit substance use among secondary school students.

Whereas in the 1984, 1987, 1990 and 1993 surveys students were only asked questions about their use of tobacco and alcohol, the 1996, 1999, 2002 and 2005 surveys included questions about the use of illicit and licit drugs.

The defined West Australian target population for the 2005 ASSAD were all students enrolled in school year levels 7 to 12 in government, Catholic and independent schools. A total of 3,980 WA school students participated in the survey, of whom 3,344 were aged 12 to 17 years.

Lifetime use

Just over one in six (14.4%) students aged 12 to 17 years (14.6% of males, 14.3% of females) had used inhalants in their lifetime (Table 1).

For both males and females lifetime use of inhalants was highest in 12 year old students (24.4% vs 16.8%) and then declined with age to 5.4% for males and 7.0% for females at 17 years of age (Figure 1, page 2).

Used in past year

Overall, one in ten (10.5%) of students aged 12 to 17 years had used inhalants in the year prior to survey (Table 1).

For both males and females inhalant use was highest in 12 year olds (18.1% vs 13.3%) and then declined with age. Rates for females were slightly higher than for males up to the ages of 15, whereas for 16 and 17 year olds female rates were slightly below male rates (Figure 2).

Used in past month

Overall, both males and females aged 12 to 17 years had similar rates of use of inhalants in the past month (6.4% vs 5.7%) (Table 1). Whereas male rates were higher than for females for 12 year olds (11.7% vs 6.9%), higher rates occurred for females than males up to 15 years of age but were lower in the older age groups (Figure 3, page 2).

Table 1
Estimates of prevalence (%) of inhalant use by WA students aged 12 to 17 years, 2005

	12	13	14	15	16	17	12 - 17
Males							
Lifetime	24.4	14.9	13.3	14.7	8.3	5.4	14.6
In past year	18.1	10.4	9.7	10.1	6.4	4.0	10.5
In past month	11.7	5.6	6.5	4.9	4.0	4.0	6.4
In past week	9.4	4.2	4.2	3.2	2.6	2.8	4.6
Females							
Lifetime	16.8	15.0	17.1	16.5	8.7	7.0	14.3
In past year	13.3	11.1	12.3	12.5	5.6	3.6	10.5
In past month	6.9	6.9	8.0	5.6	2.4	1.7	5.7
In past week	4.2	3.5	3.8	3.0	1.6	0.4	3.0
Total							
Lifetime	20.6	14.9	15.2	15.6	8.5	6.2	14.4
In past year	15.7	10.8	11.0	11.2	6.0	3.8	10.5
In past month	9.3	6.3	7.2	5.2	3.2	2.8	6.1
In past week	6.8	3.9	3.9	3.1	2.1	1.6	4.6

Used in past week

Overall, one in 20 (4.6%) of students aged 12 to 17 years had used inhalants in the week prior to survey (Table 1). The highest levels of use involved 12 year old males, with

nearly one in 10 (9.4%) having used in the week prior to survey. There were lower rates of use recorded for both males and females in the remaining age groups with use declining with age (Figure 4, page 2).

Figure 1
Estimate of prevalence (%) by WA students aged 12 to 17 years who have ever used inhalants, 2005

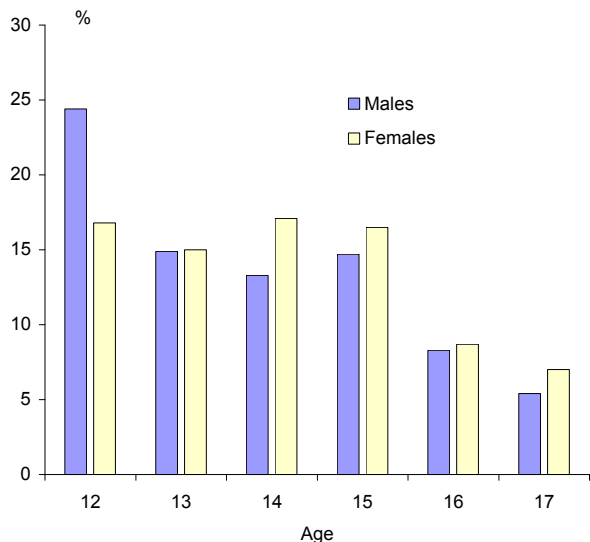


Figure 3
Estimate of prevalence (%) by WA students aged 12 to 17 years who have used inhalants in the past month, 2005

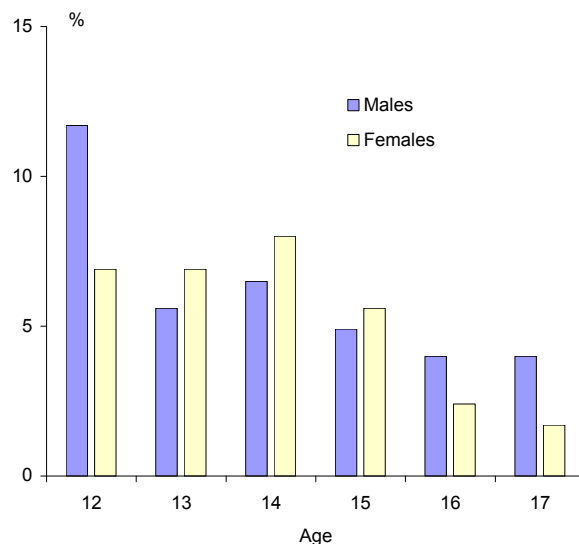


Figure 2
Estimate of prevalence (%) by WA students aged 12 to 17 years who have used inhalants in the past year, 2005

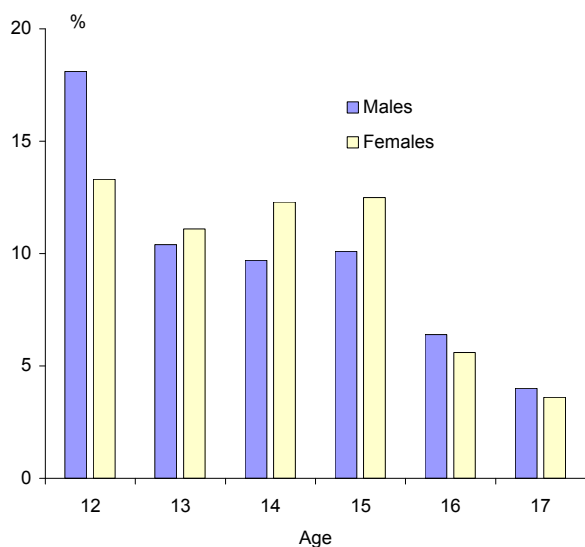
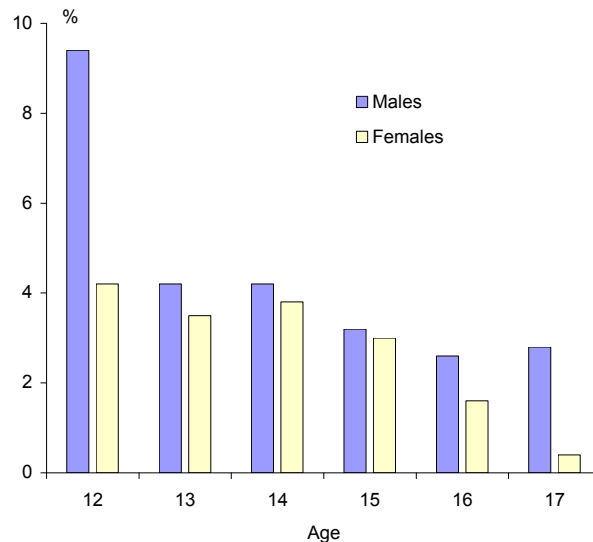


Figure 4
Estimate of prevalence (%) by WA students aged 12 to 17 years who have used inhalants in the past week, 2005



It should be noted if comparisons are made between figures that in some instances different scales have been used on the vertical axis to improve clarity of presentation of data.

Data contained in this publication is from the 2005 ASSAD survey conducted in WA by the Centre for Behavioural Research in Cancer, Cancer Council of Victoria. Some of the information in this publication has been reproduced with some minor editorial changes and explanatory interpretation from the text contained in the report by Miller J & Lang A. *ASSAD drug report 2005*. Mount Lawley, WA, Drug & Alcohol Office, 2007.

This publication is available online at
<http://www.dao.health.wa.gov.au>