

Cigarette Consumption among Western Australian School Students in 2005

Results from the 2005 Australian School Students Alcohol and Drug (ASSAD) Survey

Research Methodology

A survey of Western Australian school students in Years 7 to 12 was conducted in 2005. The aim of the survey was to provide up-to-date data on the prevalence of smoking, drinking and illicit drug use among school students aged 12 to 17 years. Previous surveys on smoking and alcohol consumption were conducted in 1984, 1987, 1990, 1993, 1996, 1999 and 2002. Illicit drug use was included in the survey for the first time in 1996.

As with the previous surveys, the target population for the survey comprised all students enrolled in school year levels 7 to 12 in government, Catholic and independent schools in Western Australia. All reported data has been weighted according to age, sex and school type to ensure the sample matched the population of Western Australian school enrolments for Semester 2, 2005.

The survey was administered in schools by external research staff using a self-completion questionnaire. Students were randomly selected and had no prior knowledge of the contents of the survey.

A total of 3 344 WA school children in Years 7 to 12 took part in the survey.

Results

Terminology

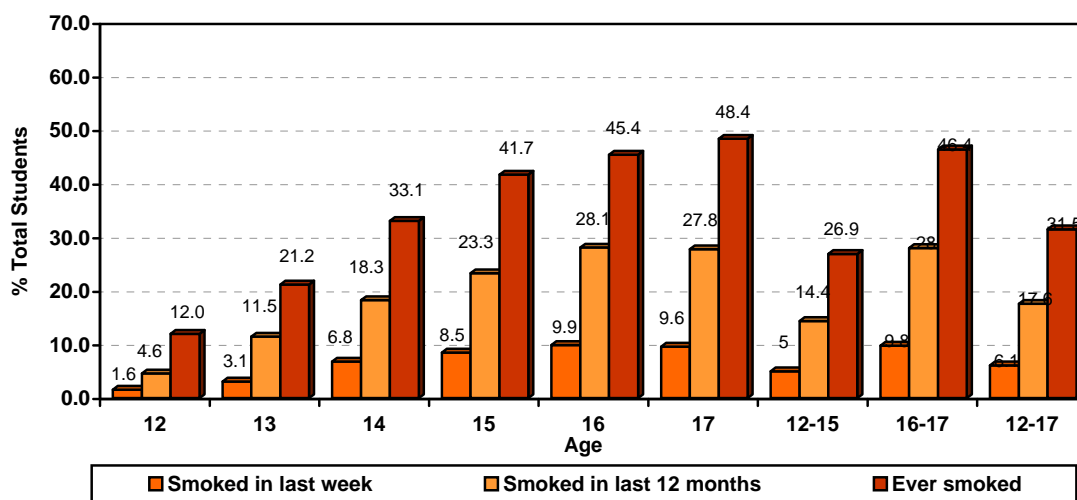
Current smoker : Students who had smoked tobacco on at least one day in the week prior to the survey.

Ever smoked : Students who had at least a few puffs of a cigarette in their lifetime.

Smoking recency

Overall, 6.1% of students aged 12 to 17 years had smoked in the last week, 8.7% in the last 4 weeks, 17.8% in the last 12 months and 31.5% had ever smoked at least part of a cigarette. As shown by the following figure, the rates of smoking increased with age for all recency periods in 2005. The proportion of students who smoked in the 12 months prior to the survey increased from 4.5% of 12 year-olds to 28% of 17 year-olds.

Figure 1: Percentage of all 12 to 17 year-old school students who have smoked cigarettes recently and in the past



Population estimates of the number of smokers

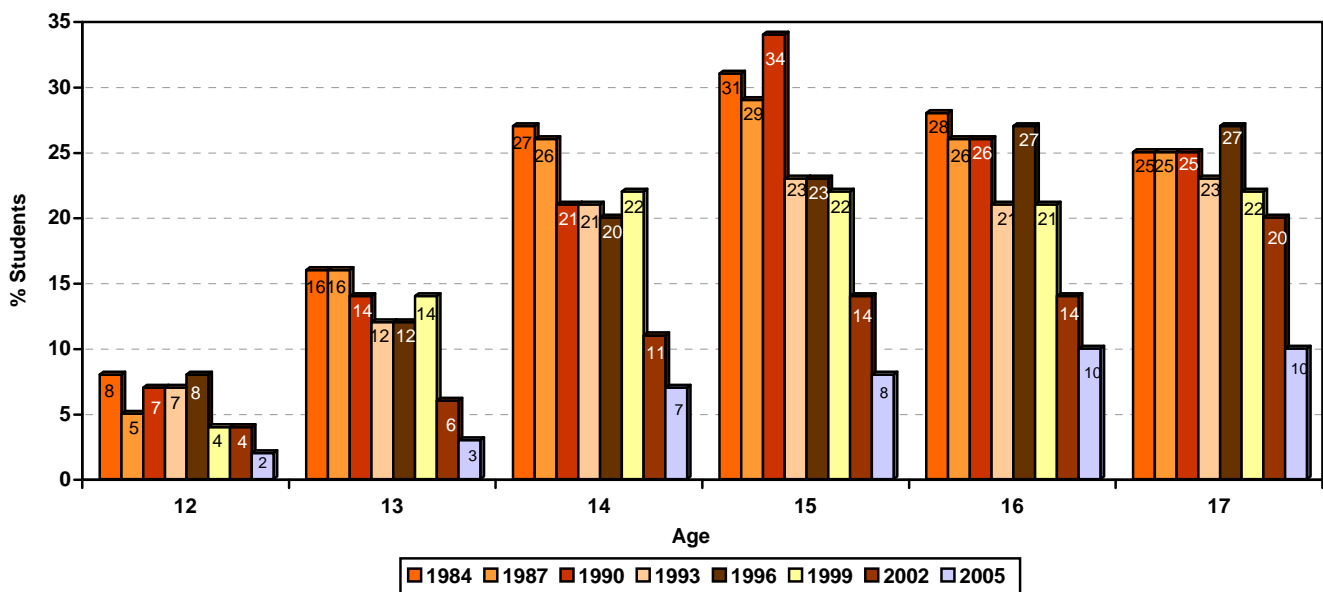
Based on the survey results, it is estimated that in 2005, approximately 45 661 Western Australian school students 12 to 17 years of age had ever smoked, and 25 542 had smoked in the last 12 months. Approximately 8 899 students aged 12 to 17 had smoked in the last week (approximately 4 039 males and 4 860 females), of whom 4 860 were aged 12 to 15 years.

Comparison of the prevalence of smoking between 1984 and 2005 in Western Australia

Overall, In Western Australia the prevalence of smoking among students aged 12 to 17 years decreased between 1984 and 2005. In both younger and older students, the prevalence of smoking across all recency periods was lowest in 2005 than at any other time since the survey began in 1984.

Among the total sample of 12 to 17 year-old school children, current smoking prevalence has decreased from 10% in 2002 to 6.1% in 2005. As shown in Figure 2, across all ages except 12 year-olds, the prevalence of smoking was at its lowest levels ever in 2005. While current smoking remained constant among 12 year-olds, over the last two surveys there were some dramatic decreases in prevalence. The proportion of **12 to 15 year-old** smokers has nearly halved from 8% in 2002 to 5% in 2005. The proportion of **16 to 17 year-old** current smokers has declined from 16% in 2002 to 9.8% in 2005. Even among 17 year olds girls (where we saw smoking increase from 18% in 1999 to 23% in 2002) smoking has declined from 23% in 2002 to 10% in 2005.

Figure 2: Percentage of **all** WA school students aged 12 to 17 years in WA who smoked in the last week: 1984 to 2005



For the complete results of cigarette consumption among Western Australian School Students in 2005, based on the results from the 2005 Australian School Students Alcohol and Drug (ASSAD) Survey, go to <http://www.dao.health.wa.gov.au/Publications/tabid/99/DMXModule/427/Default.aspx?EntryId=693>