

ALCOHOL ABUSE THE FACTS



Here are the facts and stats on alcohol and Canadians

The following statistical information appeared in the Sept. 1 edition of The Journal, a monthly publication put out by the Addiction Research Foundation.

Portions of its section on alcohol have been taken from Statistics on Alcohol and Drug Use in Canada and Other Countries, Volumes 1 and 2. The information is based on data available in 1988.

1. How many Canadians drink?
A 1987 national Gallup poll shows 78 per cent of Canadian adults aged 18 years and older have ever had "occasion to use alcoholic beverages such as liquor, wine, or beer" and are not total abstainers.

In Ontario in 1987, 83 per cent of adults said they had used alcohol, with 54 per cent of users having five drinks or more at a single sitting and 12 per cent reporting daily drinking.

2. How much do Canadians drink?
In 1985/86, Canadians consumed 205.4 million litres of absolute alcohol, which works out to 10.3 litres per person aged 15 years and older, or 11.6 drinks per week or two drinks per day per customer.

About 50 per cent of what Canadians drink is in the form of beer.

3. How much alcohol advertising is there in Canada?

In 1984, 8 per cent of all advertising to which viewing, listening or reading Canadians were exposed, as measured by time on radio and television and space in newspapers and magazines, was paid for by breweries, distilleries and wineries.

Also, a 1986 Canadian Gallup survey reports 54 per cent of adults favor banning all liquor advertising.

4. How much money do Canadians spend on alcohol?

In 1985/86, Canadians spent \$8.2 million for alcohol in retail stores and another estimated \$3.1 billion for alcohol consumed in taverns, restaurants, and hotels (1984).

5. How much money do Canadian governments make on alcohol?

In 1985/86, Canadian federal and provincial government revenue derived directly from the control and sale of alcoholic beverages reached \$3.8 billion, or 1.9 per cent of all government revenue.

If general retail sales taxes and federal taxes on producers and distributors are included, the figure would be roughly \$5.1 billion.

6. What are the social costs of alcohol problems in Canada?

Alcohol-related social costs due to excess use of health care, reduced labor productivity, law enforcement, and social welfare reached \$6.4 billion for Canada and \$1.8 billion for Ontario in 1984.

7. How many alcoholics are there in Canada?

Based on liver cirrhosis deaths in Canada in 1984, there were an estimated 503,000 alcoholics, that is people whose alcohol consumption was sufficiently high to cause them physical damage.

8. How many Canadians contravene alcohol-related legislation?

In 1986, there were 259,238 liquor act offences and 207,964 people were charged with criminal offences under the liquor control acts. The number of offences exceeds the number of persons charged, as one person may have been charged on more than one occasion.

Drugs take toll on lives

How many Canadian youngsters die of drug-related disorders?

In 1985 in Canada, there were 30 deaths from drug-related diseases: drug dependence, non-dependent abuse of drugs, and poisonings from analgesics, sedatives, hypnotics and psychotropics.

Approximately 25 per cent of Canadians charged were charged with more than one alcohol-related offence during the year.

9. How many Canadians contravene alcohol-related traffic laws?

In 1985, alcohol-related traffic offences accounted for 62 per cent of all traffic offences under the Criminal Code and for 92 per cent of all people charged for traffic offences under the Criminal Code.

In 1986, there were 150,571 alcohol-related traffic offences: 135,900 driving while impaired and 14,671 failure or refusal to provide a breath or blood sample.

The 128,797 people charged with traffic offences included 119,344 for driving while impaired and 9,453 for failure or refusal to provide a breath sample for testing. Approximately 17 per cent of Canadians were charged with more than one alcohol-related traffic offence during 1986.

The legal drinking age in Ontario is 19.

In 1986 in Ontario, 19-year-old drivers had the highest rate of motor vehicle accident rates. Meanwhile, a 1986 Canadian Gallup survey reports 62 per cent of adults favor raising the legal drinking age, and 62 per cent favor raising the legal driving age.

10. How many Canadians were sent to jail for alcohol offences?

In 1985/86, there were 22,938 admissions for drinking-and-driving offences — or 17 per cent of all admissions — and another 8,777 admissions for liquor act offences — or 7 per cent of all admissions — to provincial/territorial adult correctional facilities, which hold prisoners sentenced for less than two years.

11. How many Canadians receive disability pensions for alcohol problems?

In a one-month period in 1986, beneficiaries received disability pensions for alcoholic psychoses, alcoholism, liver cirrhosis, and toxic effects of alcohol.

12. How many Canadian divorces are due to alcohol?

In 1985, there were 880 divorces with "addiction to alcohol" given as the reason for marriage breakdown. This represents 3.2 per cent of all divorces due to marriage breakdown, or 1.1 per cent of all grounds for divorces.

13. How many Canadians are treated for alcohol problems?

In 1983/84, there were 37,633 cases in general hospitals of alcoholic psychoses, alcohol dependence syndrome, non-dependent abuse of alcohol, chronic liver damage and cirrhosis, toxic effects of alcohol, alcoholic cardiomyopathy, alcoholic pellagra, excessive blood level of alcohol, and suspected damage to the fetus from maternal alcohol addiction, listeriosis, or toxoplasmosis.

There were 4,182 cases treated in mental hospitals for alcoholic psychoses, alcohol dependence syndrome, and non-dependent abuse of alcohol.

Alcohol's legal, but can still prove destructive

It takes many forms, as it is dressed up with fancy fruits, colored with bright mixes or served bubbling in a fluted glass, but the fact remains: it is alcohol and though it is legal, it is as deadly as any other drug.

According to statistics in a Shopper's Drug Mart report, 23 per cent of all traffic fatalities and 18 per cent of all traffic injuries are impaired driving related. The pamphlet says "alcohol-related traffic fatalities are among the leading causes of death among 16 to 19-year-olds."

In Canada, says the report, 83 per

cent of all teenagers use alcohol, and five per cent of all Canadian teens have five or more drinks at a single sitting, four or more times per month.

"The average age of alcohol use starts at about 13, and the average age of teenage drinking on a regular basis is 16," says the report.

Released in 1986, the report suggests that parents reach children early with information on alcohol abuse, preferably by the time the children are 10 years old.

This theory coincides with

Hilton's drug education practice. The Halton Board of Education teaches children about alcohol abuse in the Grade 3 level, and in Grade 5 children discuss "alcohol as a drug," says Sue Amos, the Board's co-ordinator of Physical and Health Education.

Alcohol abuse can cause such conditions as liver damage and heart and pancreas conditions as well as increasing the risk of mouth, larynx, esophagus and liver cancer.

Heavy drinking may lead to malnutrition, stomach irritation,

lowered resistance to disease, and irreversible brain and nervous system damage.

"On the average, the life span for a heavy drinker is shortened 10 to 12 years," says the Shopper's Drug Mart report.

In Halton schools, health education and drug abuse information are combined.

"You can't teach it in isolation," says Ms. Amos, adding the Board's goal is to have children "always value their well-being."

Marijuana tops the list

What is the most used drug by young people in Canada.

Cannabis.

A national Gallup survey in 1985 shows 18.6 per cent of teenagers aged 12 to 19 — or 600,000 teens — indicated they had used marijuana at least once in the previous 12 months.

Cannabis use varied from a high of 36 per cent in Saskatchewan (1980, based on use in the last six months for youngsters aged 15 to 19), to a low of 15 per cent in Alberta (1983, based on use among those aged 12 to 17 in the past six months) and in Quebec (1984, secondary school students, based on use in an unspecified period). In Ontario, 15.9 per cent of students surveyed in Grades 7, 9, 11 and 13 reported having used cannabis in the previous 12 months (1987).

Among young adults aged 18 to 29, marijuana was used by 20 per cent — or an estimated one million young Canadians — based on a 1987 Ontario survey.

How many young Canadians were involved in cannabis-related crimes? There were 4,179 juveniles charged with cannabis-related criminal offences (1986).

No drug stereo types according to committee

What is addiction?

It's when "someone needs something to get through the day," according to Drug Abuse Committee program consultant Kristin Bulmer.

"Addiction is not physical, it's emotional," said the DAC counsellor. Ms. Bulmer said what she frequently sees is addictions to marijuana and hashish, alcohol, cocaine and LSD. DAC's goal is to get to the root of the problem, and not to blame an addictive drug for the situation.

Those who use drugs have no standard characteristics, she said. They could be neglected or abused children, over-achievers, or they could be wealthy children "who don't know where to spend their money," she said.

Through counselling, DAC defines individual needs and either provides treatment or sends the client in the appropriate direction.

The Drug Abuse Committee of Halton Hills is located at 164 Guelph Street, Georgetown, phone 877-9105.

Facts on alcohol

Ethyl alcohol or ethanol is the main type of alcohol found in alcoholic beverages, according to literature available from the Addiction Research Foundation of Ontario.

Although it can be made synthetically, that used in beverages must be produced naturally by fermentation of fruits, vegetables or grains. In Ontario, most regular beers contain about 5 per cent alcohol by volume, and light beers on average 3.5 per cent.

Most table wines contain 10 to 14 per cent alcohol, but fortified wines such as sherry, port, and vermouth contain 14 to 20 per cent. In Ontario, distilled spirits — whisky, rum, gin, vodka, etc. — contain 40 per cent al-

cohol. A 340 mL (12 oz.) bottle of regular beer contains approximately the same amount of alcohol as a drink made with 45 mL (1½ oz.) of spirits, 140 mL (5 oz.) glass of table wine, or an 85 mL (3 oz.) glass of fortified wine.

Short-term effects are those that appear rapidly after a single dose and disappear within a few hours or days. Alcohol, in proportion to its concentration in the bloodstream, decreases

the activity of parts of the brain and spinal cord.

Drinking heavily over a short period of time may produce a hangover (headache, nausea, shakiness, and possibly vomiting) beginning eight to 12 hours later. A hangover is the body's reaction to too much alcohol.

In part it is related to poisoning by alcohol and other components of the drink, and in part it is the body's response to withdrawal from alcohol.

Kids stand up to be CHICKEN



These children will admit that they're CHICKEN. They are not interested in drugs, and they think they are cool without them.

CHICKEN, an anti-drug, anti-peer pressure group was launched by the Optimists of Georgetown in 1980, and today has over 1,000 members. (Herald photos)

To deal with the ever-increasing pressure on school-aged children to try drugs and alcohol, the Georgetown Optimists initiated the CHICKEN anti-peer pressure program in 1980.

CHICKEN children say no to drugs, and don't mind being called 'chickens' for not trying narcotics or alcohol, according to Optimist past president Sandy Booth.

"The whole idea is to counter peer pressure with the CHICKEN T-shirt," said Mr. Booth. CHICKEN (students who are Cool, Honest, Intelligent, Clear-headed, Keen, Energetic, and Not interested in drugs) is a preventative as opposed to a rehabilitative program.

CHICKEN offers Grade 4 and 5 students an "honest" alternative to alcohol and drug use. Over 1,000 CHICKEN members from 14 schools in Halton Hills participate in the membership program that gives them discounts on bowling and mini-

golf evenings, special prices on pizza dinners, and will soon present movies at the John Elliott Theatre in Georgetown. Students need only wear their CHICKEN T-shirts to get discounts, said Mr. Booth.

So why the emphasis on such young children for drug abuse?

"This is where we've found the drug problem starts," said Mr. Booth. He added that activities provided by CHICKEN membership enhance the young people's leisure time.

Membership for the CHICKEN club is \$1, and that doesn't even cover the cost of the \$4.50 T-shirts, but it's a membership students can wear proudly.

"We started here with three schools," said Mr. Booth.

Today, there are over 1,000 kids in Halton Hills who don't mind being called CHICKEN when it comes to drugs.



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