

Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco and Gambling – Recent Results from Quebec Study

According to the 2002 Quebec Survey on Tobacco Use among Secondary School Students, the rate of tobacco use among high school students has declined from 30% in 1998 to 23% in 2002. Of those students who smoke, up to 67% still reported trying to quit in the year preceding the study. The survey, conducted by the Quebec Institute of Statistics, collected data from more than 4800 students in over 160 Francophone and Anglophone private and public schools.

Despite improvements in tobacco use, approximately 69% of students still reported using alcohol and 41% experimented with drugs in the 12 months preceding the study. The survey also assessed the risk of substance abuse and estimated that approximately 11% of secondary students currently face an emerging substance use problem while another 5% are at a level requiring treatment intervention.

Gambling participation was also

examined with more than 50% of students reporting having gambled in the last 12 months. In addition, the survey found that 7% of secondary students would be considered problem gamblers. These results are consistent with other studies of a similar kind, estimating that between 4-8% of students have a gambling problem.

For more information or for a complete copy of the survey: www.stat.gouv.qc.ca

Working with the Industry towards preventing youth gambling problems

Last month, for the first time, Loto-Quebec, together with the International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors, issued a joint press release recommending that parents, friends and relatives refrain from buying children or youth lottery tickets or scratch cards as Christmas gifts.

This press release was partly spurred by a recent survey indicating that more than 30% of Quebec secondary school students had received one or more lottery products as a gift in the past year. This concerned both youth gambling researchers and the

industry alike. These products are not suited for children or adolescents and are considered illegal to purchase for anyone under the age of 18.

Health communication strategies are one way of raising awareness and informing the public of the risks of gambling to youth. Building partnerships with community groups and the Industry and working together towards a common goal of prevention are simple and effective means of addressing youth gambling.

