

2022 ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BERMUDA DRUG INFORMATION NETWORK

Gender Differences & Substance Use

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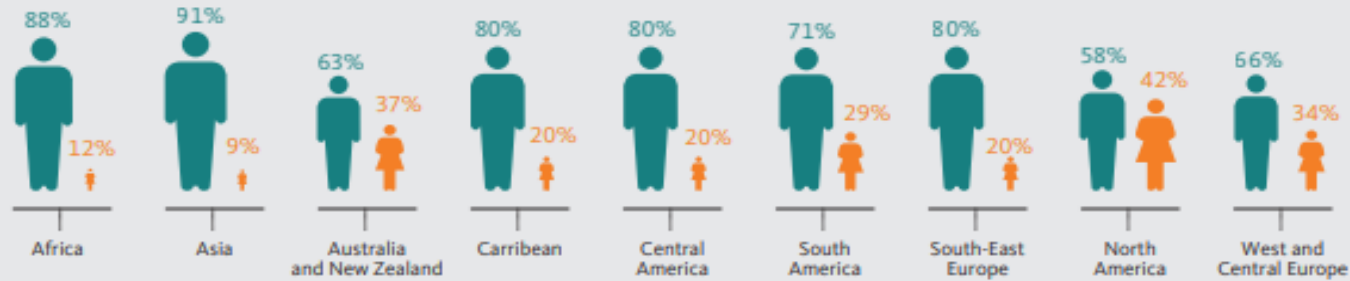
Tradewinds Auditorium
Bermuda Underwater Exploration Institute
November 4th, 2022



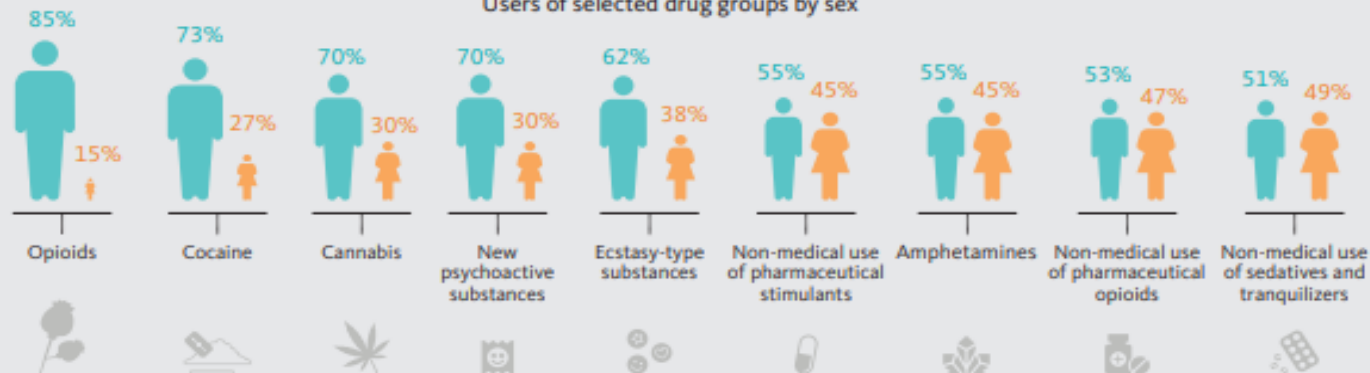
WORLDVIEW TRENDS

PEOPLE WHO USE DRUGS BY SEX

Users of cannabis by sex and region



Users of selected drug groups by sex

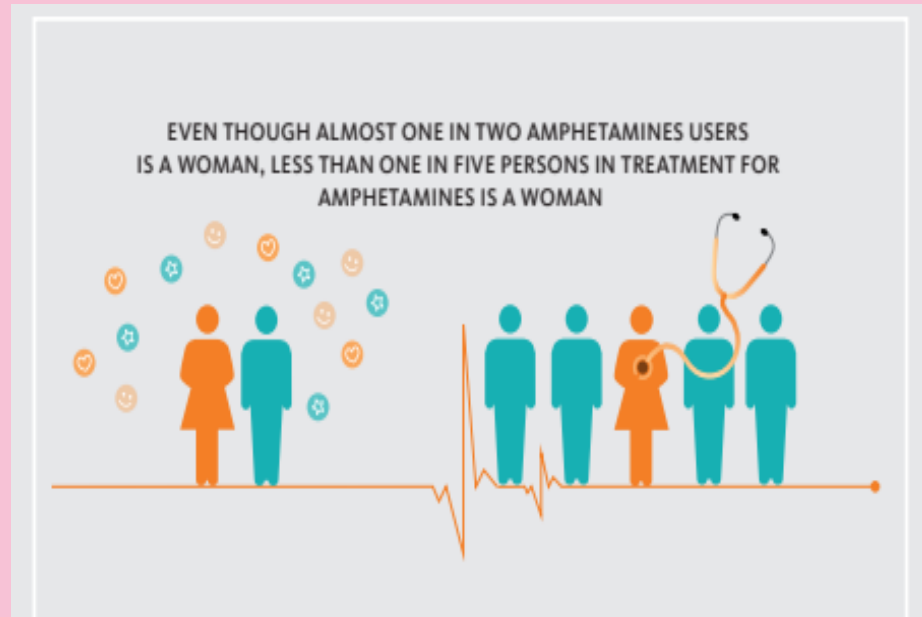


Women and Substance Use

- Research has shown that women often use drugs differently, respond to drugs differently, and can have unique obstacles to effective treatment.
- Substance abuse is more prevalent among men, but women are as likely as men to develop substance use disorders after initiation.
- The gender gap is narrowing as young women are more likely to mirror male patterns of drug use than older women.

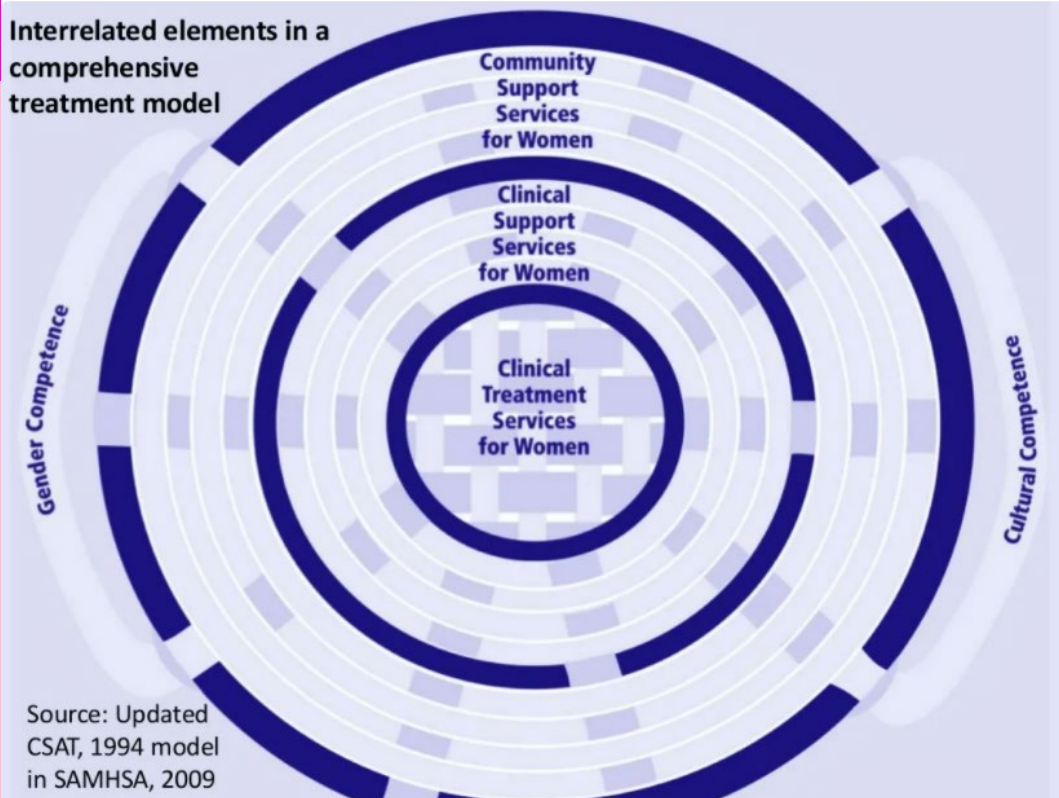
WORLDVIEW TRENDS

Women Underrepresented in Drug Treatment



Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) World Drug Report 2022

Interrelated elements in a comprehensive treatment model

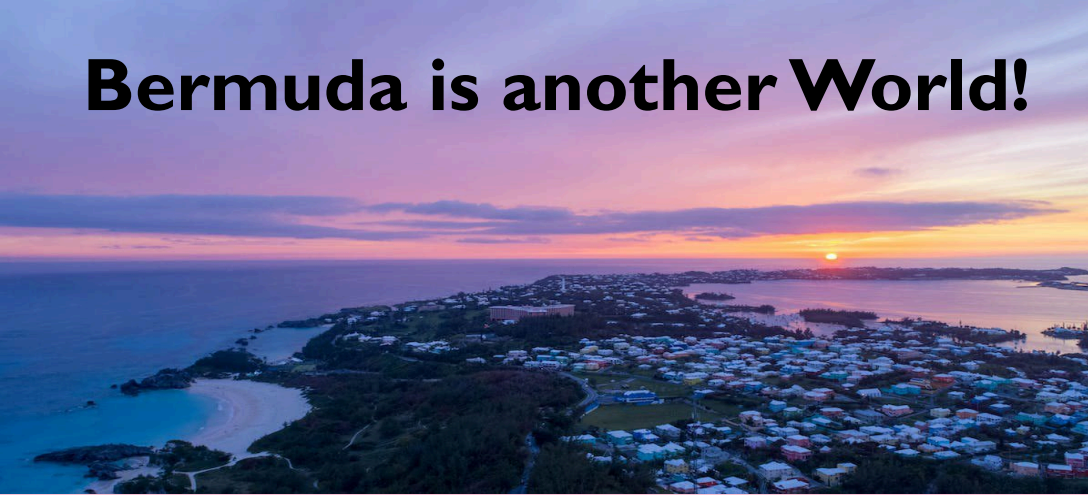


Source: Updated CSAT, 1994 model in SAMHSA, 2009

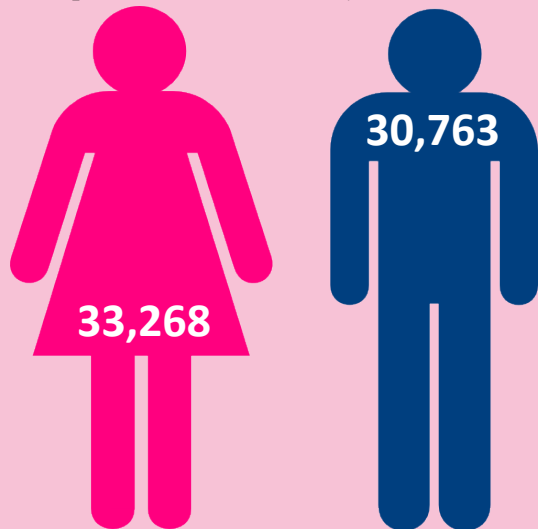
- Shorter history of using certain substances such as cocaine, opioids, marijuana, or alcohol.
- Enter substance use disorder treatment with more severe medical, behavioral, psychological, and social problems.

TRENDS IN DRUG USE

Bermuda is another World!



Bermuda Population Projections (2022): 64,031



Source: Bermuda's Population Projections 2016- 2026

What is the Difference?

- **Majority of people who use drugs in Bermuda are men; however, women use some drug types nearly as much as men, although women continue to be underrepresented in substance use treatment.**
- **Research shows that women who use drugs tend to progress to drug use disorders faster than men do.**
- **The gender gap is narrowing as women are more likely to mirror male patterns of drug use.**

NATIONAL SCHOOL SURVEY

Lifetime and Current Use of ATODs and Energy Drinks by Sex of Survey Respondents

Substance	Lifetime Use (%)				Current Use (%)			
	Male (n = 1,292)	Female (n = 1,414)	NS (n=58)	Total (n = 2,764)	Male (n = 1,292)	Female (n = 1,414)	NS (n=58)	Total (n = 2,764)
Alcohol	39.9	49.5	53.4	45.1	11.5	14.3	24.1	13.2
Cannabis Resin	6.0	2.6	10.3	4.4
Cigarettes	6.5	4.2	3.4	5.2	2.1	1.4	1.7	1.7
Cocaine	1.3	0.6	1.7	0.9	0.3	0.3	-	0.3
Crack	0.8	0.6	3.4	0.7	0.3	0.2	-	0.3
Ecstasy	2.3	1.2	5.2	1.7	0.9	0.4	3.4	0.6
Energy Drinks	57.1	46.8	55.2	51.8	23.8	15.3	15.5	19.2
Hashish	4.3	2.3	8.6	3.4
Heroin	0.9	0.7	1.7	0.8	0.4	0.1	-	0.2
Inhalants	10.0	10.5	10.3	10.2	2.3	2.1	3.4	2.3
Marijuana	17.8	18.5	24.1	18.3	8.2	7.0	19.0	7.6
Other Drugs	2.4	2.1	3.4	2.2	1.2	0.8	1.7	1.0

Males – Lifetime and Current Prevalence

- More males reported the use of cigarettes and some of the illegal drugs for the lifetime and current use reference periods.
- Males recorded higher prevalence-of-use for marijuana in the current reference period.

Females – Lifetime and Current Prevalence

- Alcohol use was more prevalent for both reference periods.
- Marijuana prevalence was higher for females at the lifetime use reference period.

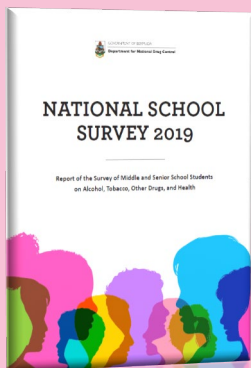
NATIONAL SCHOOL SURVEY

AGE OF ONSET

- For the majority of the substances, females initiated use earlier than their male counterparts.
- Males indicated first use of inhalants as early as 8.9 years old and use of cocaine as late as 14.9 years.
- Females began use of amphetamines and methamphetamines as early as 9.0 years old and use of hashish as late as 14.4 years.

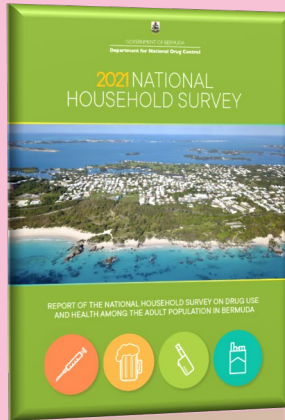


Figure 3.1.9. Average age of onset for all lifetime users for selected substances by sex of respondent

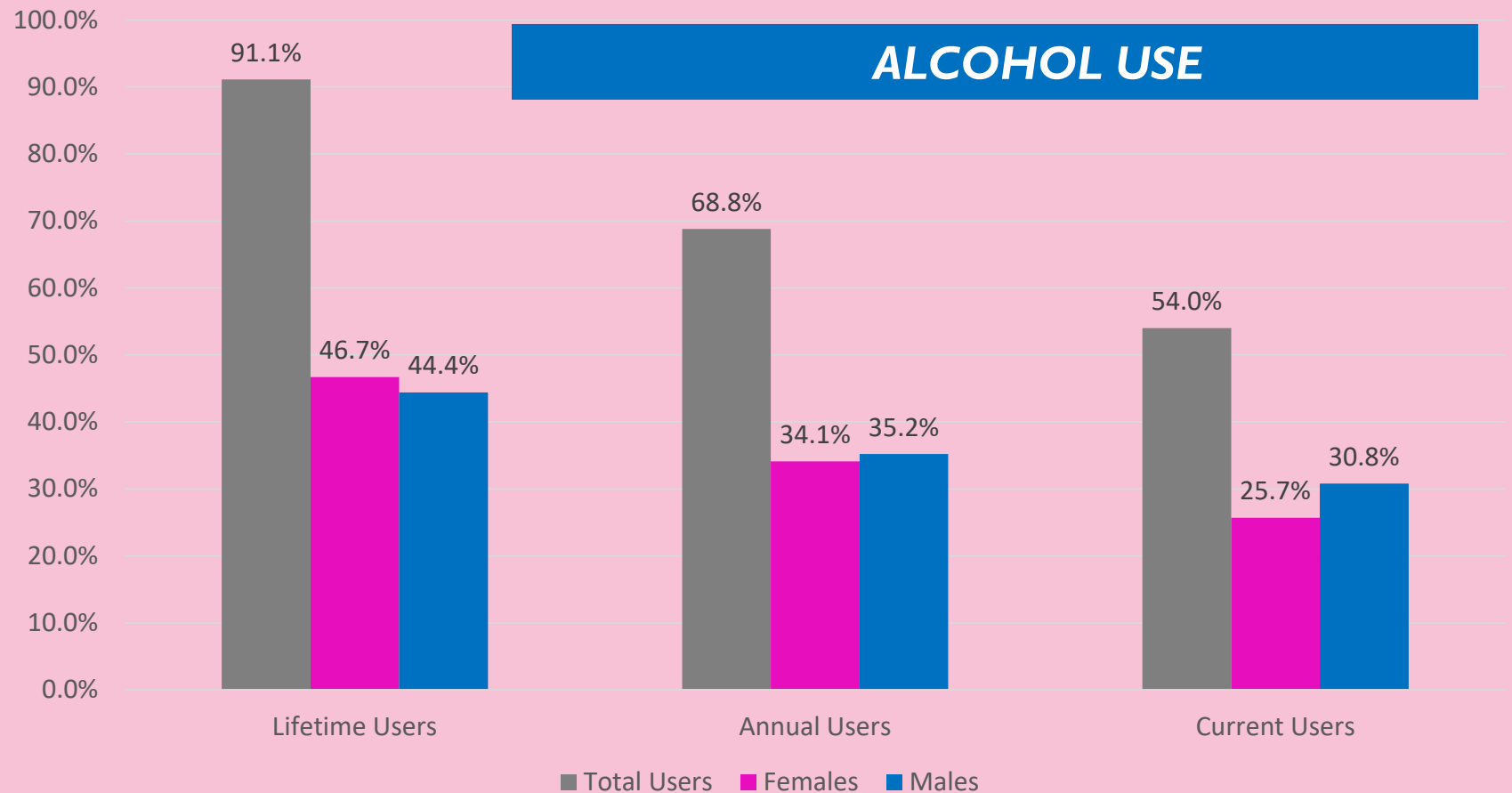


NATIONAL HOUSEHOLD SURVEY

GENDER DIFFERENCES WERE APPARENT BUT MARGINAL



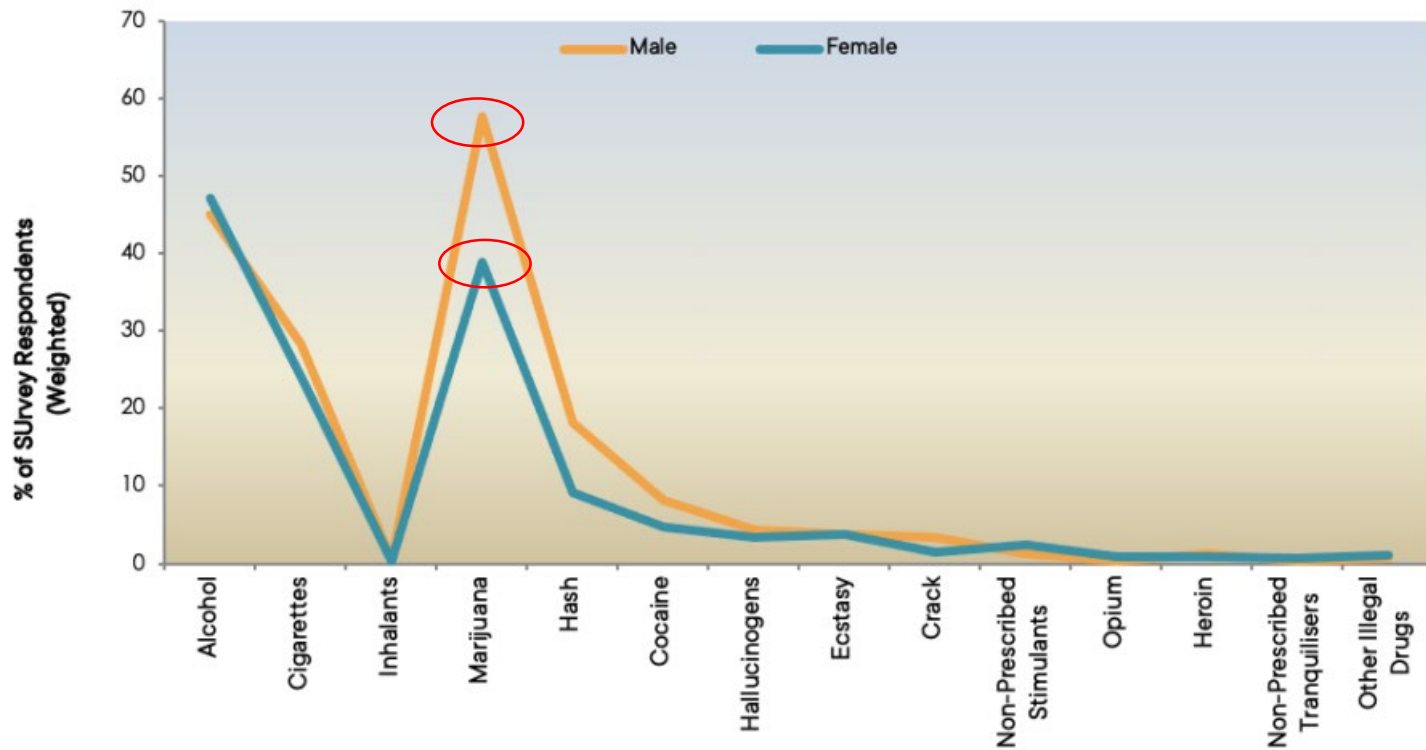
Males reported higher prevalence:
for cigarettes, marijuana,
cocaine, crack, and other
named illegal drugs at all
three reference periods.



NATIONAL HOUSEHOLD SURVEY

The Gender Gap is Narrowing

LIFETIME USE OF ATODs BY SEX OF RESPONDENT



Although cannabis, the easiest drug to access on island, is used by more men than women, the gender gap is narrowing.

NATIONAL HOUSEHOLD SURVEY

AGE OF ONSET

Males were more likely to be underage drinkers, since they reported first drinking alcohol at an average of 16.7 years (with 18 years being the legal drinking age in Bermuda).

Females age of initiation for ecstasy was earlier at 19.2 years in comparison to males.

AVERAGE AGE OF ONSET BY SEX OF SURVEY RESPONDENT

Substances	Average Age of First Use (Years)		
	Males	Females	Total
Legal Drugs			
Cigarettes	17.3	17.4	17.4
Alcohol	16.7	18.2	17.5
Inhalants	21.0	28.4	24.4
Illegal Drugs			
Non-Prescribed Tranquilisers	16.0	46.9	31.5
Marijuana	17.8	18.9	18.4
Hash	19.7	19.2	19.5
Ecstasy	23.4	19.2	21.3
Cocaine	27.7	21.6	24.7
Non-Prescribed Stimulants	30.1	20.5	25.3
Hallucinogens	21.7	19.6	20.7
Crack	28.8	21.4	25.1
Opium	24.0	17.6	20.8
Heroin	25.2	21.3	23.3

NATIONAL HOUSEHOLD SURVEY

FREQUENCY OF ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION BY TYPE OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE AND SEX OF SURVEY RESPONDENT
(Percentage of Weighted Survey Respondents)

Frequency of Use	ALCOHOL CONTENT								
	Low			Medium			High		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
Some Week Days	6.1	1.1	7.2	5.7	7.3	13.0	5.0	1.5	6.5
Daily	1.3	0.1	1.4	2.1	1.6	3.7	1.3	0.1	1.4
Weekends	9.8	4.5	14.3	8.0	9.9	17.9	7.8	4.3	12.2
Not Applicable	11.8	19.4	31.2	13.2	6.2	19.5	14.9	19.1	34.0
Total Current Users	29.0	25.0	54.0	29.0	25.0	54.0	29.0	25.0	54.0

Males mainly drank beverages with low alcoholic content, as well as high alcoholic content, especially on weekends.

Females mainly drank beverages of medium alcoholic content.



RISK FACTORS OF SUBSTANCE USE FOR WOMEN

**Family History
and Trauma**

**Unemployment
and Financial
Stress**

**Untreated
Mental Illnesses**

**Relationships and
Partner's
Behaviour**

**Race and
Ethnicity**

WHAT CAN WE DO?

A Call to Action

- Women have been largely underrepresented in addiction research
- Much-needed research on gender difference in treatment response and gender-specific treatments
- Increase efforts to reduce the stigma and discrimination faced by women who use substances
- Adopt a multidisciplinary, holistic, comprehensive approach to treatment, prevention and health promotion
- Coordinated and integrated systems of care and services with gender and cultural competence created

National
Household
Survey

Treatment
Demand
Indicators

National
School Survey



Thank You!

Questions & Discussion

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