



17th St. & Constitution Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006
United States of America

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P. 202.458.3000
www.oas.org

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STUDY ON ALCOHOL AND DRUGS IN THE YOUNG OFFENDER POPULATION WITHIN THE NEW
OPPORTUNITY CORPS.
MRS. MAGDA GRIFFITH-WILLS
GUYANA


STUDY ON ALCOHOL AND DRUGS IN THE YOUNG OFFENDER POPULATION WITHIN THE NEW OPPORTUNITY CORPS, GUYANA.

**49th Regular Session of CICAD
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Prepared by: Magda Griffith-Wills



FORMAT OF PRESENTATION

- ✦ Brief description of 'New Opportunity Corps'
 - ✦ Objectives of the study
 - ✦ Methodology
 - ✦ Data Collection and Field Work
 - ✦ Socio-demographic description of the sample population
 - ✦ Analysis of Survey Data
 - ✦ Main Findings
 - ✦ Recommendations
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THE NEW OPPORTUNITY CORPS (NOC)

- ✦ The NOC is the only Juvenile Facility in Guyana. It is located in Region 2 on the Essequibo Coast at Onderneeming. It is a coeducational facility.
 - ✦ Students enter the facility upon an order from the court.
 - ✦ Students ages range from ten (10) to eighteen (18)
 - ✦ The duration of sentences range from a minimum of one year to a maximum of three years.
 - ✦ Skills training programmes are offered to the students as a form of rehabilitation which include classes in electrical installation, handicraft, joinery, information technology, tailoring and garment making, welding and fabrication, carpentry and masonry.
 - ✦ Academic classes are also held on the centre and selected students attend school in the community.
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OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Main

- ⌘ **The research sought to test a new methodology that will be used to measure drug use in relation to criminal, activities.**

Objectives

- ⌘ Assess the prevalence of alcohol and drug use among the young offender population;
- ⌘ Establish the intensity of drug use vis-à-vis assessments of abuse and dependence;
- ⌘ Assess the severity of drug use vis-à-vis trajectory analysis, precocity and multiple substance use;
- ⌘ Establish the relationship between crime and alcohol/drug use among the young offender population
- ⌘ Establish the treatment needs and the disposition of this population to receive rehabilitation.

METHODOLOGY

Target Population

- ⌘ The consultant received a list of 192 students as the NOC population as of January 2010.
- ⌘ The target population after adjustments was 152.

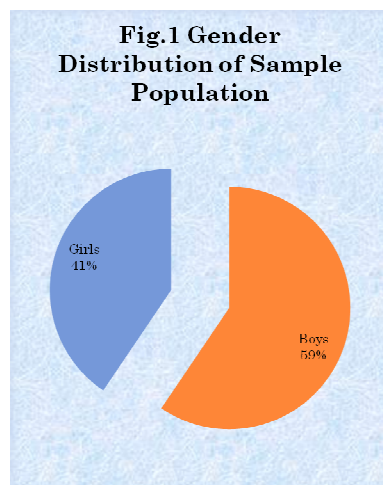
Sample

- ⌘ For the sample to be statistically representative 111 students were interviewed.
- ⌘ The sample was then selected randomly in SPSS
- ⌘ Convenience sampling had to be employed in the field due to inconsistencies between the published list and actual enrolment.

DATA COLLECTION AND FIELD WORK

- ❖ Questionnaires through face to face interviews were done with trained interviewers
- ❖ Interviewers were placed at desks in an open space. (away from ears within the institution and fellow students)
- ❖ Students were brought in batches of five to complete the process. (Five persons interviewing)

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE POPULATION



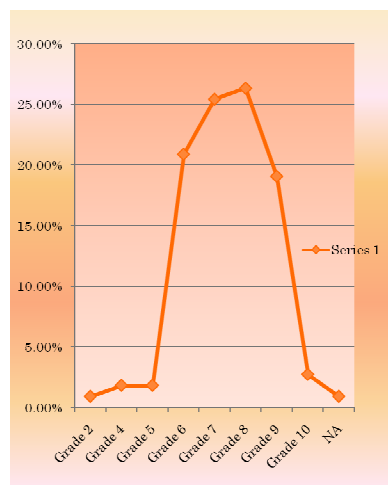
- ❖ The student population sampled represented the overall student population of the institution with the male female ratio of males sixty: forty for the females

ETHNIC DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE POPULATION

Fig 2. Ethnic

☞ The majority of the students as seen in Fig. 2 were of African descent (39.64%) followed by mixed (32.43%) then by east Indians (24.32%) and the remaining 3.6% were Amerindians; the four main ethnic groupings found within Guyana.

GRAPH 3 – LAST YEAR OF SCHOOLING COMPLETED



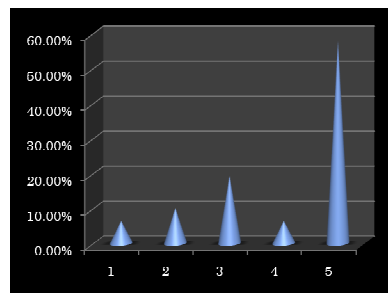
☞ The majority pointed to not having gone beyond third form (9th Grade), yet it was very difficult for them at times to understand simply phrased questions.

SEX OF GUARDIAN

- There is a heavy female influence within the homes of the young offenders, where 84.68% of the homes are female guided whether it is by a mother, grandmother or aunt as against 6.31% male directed and 9.01% male and female directed.



LAST CRIME OF ARREST

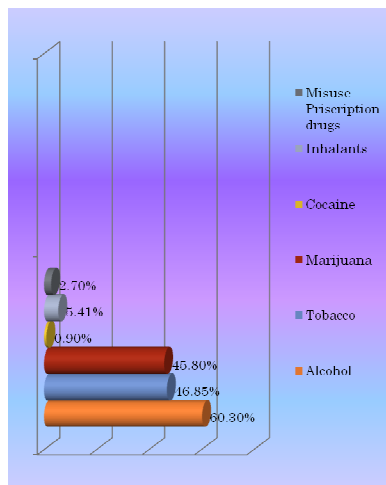


- Traffic or Sell Drugs 6.42%
- Assault or rob someone while threatening to use force 10.09%
- Broken into a house or place to steal something 19.27%
- Commit a theft or rob a person or place without using force 6.42%
- Other 57.80%



ANALYSIS OF SURVEY DATA

PREVALENCE OF ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE AMONG THE YOUNG OFFENDER POPULATION



⊕ In assessing lifetime prevalence of substance use at some point in their lives the data shows that alcohol, tobacco and marijuana were the most prevalent drugs. With the exception of misuse of prescription drugs, usage proved to be more prevalent among males.

✓For those who reported alcohol usage 3.6% said they had consumed it within the month as against 16.22% who reported more than a month ago but less than a year, as against 38.74% more than a year ago.

✓It is also interesting to note that for marijuana and tobacco users, the data suggests that the two drugs were more accessible than any other, as 5.41% in both cases reported using marijuana and tobacco during the last thirty days of their incarceration.

✓The prevalence rates suggest that current usage was low and this may be due to lack of access to the particular substance by persons in the facility.



INTENSITY OF DRUG USE

⊕ 60% of the students who claimed to have used alcohol or drugs at some point in their lives, not many it would seem continued that usage beyond the first years of onset. The statistics show that there was minimal usage of the drugs mentioned within the month as against over a month or a year ago. Usage could have drastically decreased based on incarceration.



RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CRIME AND ALCOHOL/DRUG USE

- Students revealed a predominance of theft without force (25.23%), and break and enter for the purpose of stealing (28.83%) as the most prevalent crimes. These crimes were more prevalent than assault or robbery while threatening to use force (18.92%), and the trafficking/selling of drugs (16.36%). No student has committed a murder, while less than one percent stole cars. Sex crimes are not prevalent, less than 5% of the students committed this crime.
- The evidence show that fewer students were likely to use drugs prior to committing crimes – in fact approximately 10 used marijuana prior to committing a crime. Of that 60% or six out of the ten students indicated that they could not commit the crime had they not used the drug.
- Therefore, while drug use prior to crime is not very prevalent there are clear indications of dependency (seven students or 6% of the NOC sample population are physiologically dependent according to the criteria set out in the protocol) on drugs to commit crime. Hence, there exists a psychopharmacological connection as there is evidence to show that drug (particularly marijuana) is used to commit crime.



RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CRIME AND ALCOHOL/DRUG USE

- On the other hand, in a minority of the cases, crimes are being committed to buy or obtain drugs – 4.55% while most are not (94.55%)
- Marijuana seems to be the substance which shows the strongest evidence of a psychopharmacological link to crime, so too is the case for using the drug to aid in committing the crime among drug users. This is consistent with data in table 7, which shows that on the day of the crime drug users among the student population at NOC used marijuana - 6.6%.
- 9.91% of marijuana users said they were high on marijuana and 2.7% of students under the influence of alcohol when they committed their crime.
- Students indicated that on average they were arrested more than 6 times, but stood before a court twice on average for breaking the law, compared to being sentenced/ referred to a juvenile facility or center once.
- Note however that the vast majority – 57.8%, of the respondents were not arrested, tried or convicted for serious crimes.



TREATMENT NEEDS AND THE DISPOSITION OF THIS POPULATION TO RECEIVE REHABILITATION

- Respondents using alcohol and drugs are not likely to receive treatment, while participation in drug or alcohol treatment at some point in life is low. More than 68% of the NOC population interviewed, said that they have never been treated for drug or alcohol use; only 2% have ever received treatment or is currently undergoing such.
- Above a third of the respondents expressed the demand for treatment – 35%; 12% are yes probably; 2.7% no definitely; and 16% no probably.
- Respondents (40%) indicated their willingness to participate in an in-patient programme for receiving professional help.




MAIN FINDINGS


- The lifetime prevalence of alcohol and drug use among students was: alcohol 60.3%, tobacco 46.85%, marijuana at 45.95%, inhalants 5.41%, misuse of prescription medication 2.7% and cocaine use at 0.9%.
- Males were more likely to report usage of Marijuana, alcohol, inhalants and tobacco than their female counterparts.
- Students revealed a predominance of theft without force (25.23%), and break and enter for the purpose of stealing (28.83%) as the most prevalent crimes. These crimes are more prevalent than assault or robbery with threatening force (18.92%), and the trafficking/selling of drugs (16.36). No student has committed a murder, while less than one percent stole cars. Sex crimes are not prevalent, less than 5% of the students committed this crime.
- The average age of onset of criminality ranged from late adolescent to early teens. For example, the average age of onset for assault or robbery while threatening the use of force is 12. On the other hand, theft without having to use force, break and enter for stealing, trafficking/selling drugs etc average onset is 13 years old; car theft onset on average at age 14.
- In the case of marijuana use prior to crime, of the 10% who were likely to use it 60% indicated that they could not commit the crime had they not used the drug.
- The majority of students, 94.55% indicated that crimes are not being committed to buy or obtain drugs
- Marijuana seems to be the most prevalent drug used for committing crime (9.91% were under the influence of marijuana as against 2.7% who committed the crime under the influence of alcohol.
- More than 68% of the NOC population interviewed, said that they have never been treated for drug or alcohol use; only 2% have ever received treatment or is currently undergoing such. The evidence showed earlier, that from the age of seven a number of persons claimed to have used alcohol or drugs.



IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- ⌄ Review of the juvenile justice system would be useful to identify needs for counselling for children and guardians before sentencing to NOC.
 - ⌄ Development of exit strategies and follow up to reduce recidivism, a tracking system should be developed to see whether after NOC comes Camp street jail. (a post-release tracking system will give a better assessment as to the further relationship between drug and crime.
 - ⌄ There needs to be a closer look at issues related to parenting such as single parent households and related risk factors.
 - ⌄ Given the limitations on treatment and rehabilitation, such as the absence of programmes or trained personnel, there is need for institutional treatment and rehabilitation programmes to be accessed in the facility.
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IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- ⌄ The methodology worked well, but this pilot allowed us to see the areas that need to be reviewed and improved.
 - ⌄ The information generated from this study goes beyond the issue of drug use and crime to include areas such as treatment needs, sentencing practices, and treatment needs
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Acknowledgements

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Thank you

