

ABSTRACT

A study was conducted among 127 persons in 42 households in a community in western Jamaica. The study was to provide information on the prevalence and pattern of the use of specified drugs (alcohol and tobacco) and illicit ones (marijuana and cocaine).

The demographic variables - sex, age, education, religion, employment were also looked at. The instrument used was a questionnaire administered by an interviewer. Systematic sampling with a random starting point was done.

This study showed a significant increase in the use of cocaine when compared with the 1987 National Household Survey. 9.4% (12) of the sample reported that they had used cocaine. 6.2% were in the 15-24 age range. The number of times most of these persons used cocaine were five times or more per week. These persons said they had no church affiliation. All said they had no desire to stop the habit. Most started while they were in school.

The use of marijuana has decreased according to the findings in this study. 19.7% said they have never tried to stop. 26.8% of the present sample said they had used marijuana compared to 36.8% in the 1987 National Household Survey. It was also seen from the comparison that the use of cocaine is higher in metropolitan areas than rural ones and the use of

marijuana is higher in rural than urban areas.

There is no dramatic increase in the use of cigarette use but alcohol use in the present study has more than doubled that of the 1987 national survey.

The modal age persons begin to use drugs remains at 17 years while they are attending school.