

Drug Abuse in Jamaican Urban Secondary
Educational Institutions:
A Survey in Four Schools

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The problem of drug abuse has in recent years become a major concern.

A survey was conducted among 394 students in secondary schools, to assess the knowledge, attitude and practices of these students with regard to four drugs (alcohol, tobacco, cannabis and cocaine), using a questionnaire.

Knowledge about the uses and effects of the drugs was limited. Students were most knowledgeable about the uses and effects of alcohol. Most students had a negative attitude toward drugs. Attitude was related to sex, educational level, knowledge score and usage pattern of drugs by parents. In the sample, 60.7% admitted to having tried one or more drugs. The usage prevalence rates for females and males in the sample were 50.2% and 63.0% respectively.

Alcohol was the most commonly tried drug. A small minority (1.3%) had tried cocaine.

Recommendations were made for further, more comprehensive studies and for more prominence to be given in educational programmes to the fact that alcohol and tobacco are drugs that are potentially harmful to health.