

ABSTRACT

Drug Abuse in All Age Schools

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Drug abuse is a serious problem in Jamaica and around the world, affecting people from all walks of life. The most significant impact is among our youths who remain the most affected by drug abuse. A survey designed to assess knowledge, attitude and practice of students with regard to drug use was undertaken in schools. The study was conducted among 200 students in four All Age schools, in the metropolitan area. In order to do the study a random sample was selected and a self administered questionnaire was used to collect the data.

The results revealed that drug abuse was rising and was more common in males than females, in some cases the male to female ratio being four to one. Alcohol was the most commonly used drug, followed by tobacco, cannabis and inhalants. Among the licit drugs, alcohol was most commonly used, 90% of alcohol users became regular users. Among the illicit drugs, cannabis was most prevalent. For both crack and cocaine, the prevalence for current usage had increased significantly since 1987. Twenty percent of students believed there was no risk

involved in taking drugs. In general the trend of drug use and abuse is on the rise and fifty percent of students taking drugs began before ten years of age.

The author concluded that the problem of drug use and abuse had risen and made recommendations, including that institutions should be set up to deal with drug abuse in adolescents and existing educational programmes be strengthened and targeted at the lower age groups.