

## Home, School, and Work Experience Among Students in the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit, 2017 Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey (OSDUHS)

Physical environments and social supports are well-known social determinants of health that contribute to the health and well-being of people. (1) For children, this includes their home, school, and work, and the relationships that they have. Family, peer, and community support are important factors in promoting positive health among children, with family support being the most critical, while school climate is crucial to preventing bullying and violence. (2) The purpose of this *inFORM* is to highlight findings on home and school experience from the 2017 Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey (OSDUHS) among students within the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit (HKPRDHU).

### Methods & Data Notes

The OSDUHS is a population survey of Ontario students from grade 7 through grade 12, conducted every two years, that is distributed within publicly-funded schools within Ontario. (3) The survey is self-administered, anonymous, and considered representative of all Ontario students in both English and French language schools, within the Public and Catholic School Boards. (3) In 2016/17, the HKPRDHU purchased an over-sample of the OSDUHS in order to obtain estimates for youth residing within the HKPRDHU. In total, there were 1215 surveys completed for the 2016/2017 OSDUHS survey by students within the HKPRDHU; 585 by elementary-school students and 630 by high-school students. Male students accounted for 43.4% and female students accounted for 55.6% of respondents. Surveys were completed for students in grade 7 (n=232), grade 8 (352), and grades 9 – 12 (629)<sup>†</sup>. The median age of respondent was 14 years of age (mean: 14.1; standard deviation (SD): 1.72).

### Results

#### Home life

- Over one-in-six (18.4%, 95% confidence interval (CI): 16.3, 20.7) grade 7 – 12 HKPRDHU students reported that they live with a single parent (birth, foster/adoptive, or step-parent) or without a parent. The estimate for HKPRDHU students is not significantly different than the rest of Ontario students ( $p > 0.05$ ).
- Almost one-in-five (18.6%, 95% CI: 16.0, 21.5) grade 7 – 12 HKPRDHU students reported that their time is split between two or more homes. The estimate for HKPRDHU students is significantly higher than the rest of Ontario students (14.1%, 95% CI: 12.4, 16.0,  $p < 0.05$ ).
- One-in-nine (11.7%, 95% CI: 9.5, 14.4) grade 7 – 12 HKPRDHU students reported that they talk about their feelings or problems with at least one of their parents all of the time, half (51.8%, 95% CI: 48.0, 55.6) reported usually or sometimes, and over one-in-three (36.5%, 95% CI: 33.4, 39.7) reported rarely or never. These estimates for HKPRDHU students are not significantly different than the rest of Ontario students ( $p > 0.05$ ).

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<sup>†</sup>Two surveys did not report the grade of the student; summing the number of students by grade will not match the total sample size.

- Over one-in-six (17.8%, 95% CI: 15.7, 20.2) grade 7 – 12 HKPRDHU students reported they perceived the family’s subjective social status with Canadian society to be low, four-in-six perceived their family status as average (67.2%, 95% CI: 65.4, 68.8), and one-in-six perceived their status as high (15.0%, 95% CI: 12.2, 18.4). These estimates for HKPRDHU students are not significantly different than the rest of Ontario students ( $p > 0.05$ ).
- Almost one-in-five (18.8%, 95% CI: 16.5, 21.3) grade 7 – 12 HKPRDHU students perceived their social hierarchy status at school as low, three-in-five (59.9%, 95% CI: 54.0, 65.6) reported their social status at school as average, and one-in-five (21.3%, 95% CI: 16.7, 26.7) reported their social status at school as high. These estimates for HKPRDHU students are not significantly different than the rest of Ontario students ( $p > 0.05$ ).

### School life

- Almost two-in-five (37.7%, 95% CI: 30.0, 46.1) grade 7 – 12 HKPRDHU students reported liking school very much or quite a lot, significantly lower than the rest of Ontario (46.7%, 95% CI: 43.7, 49.7;  $p < 0.05$ ) while over two-in-five (44.0%, 95% CI: 37.7, 50.4) HKPRDHU students reported liking school to some degree, significantly higher than the rest of Ontario students (34.0%, 95% CI: 31.8, 36.4;  $p < 0.05$ ). Nearly one-in-five (18.3%, 95% CI: 14.0, 23.6) grade 7 – 12 HKPRDHU students reported not liking school very much or at all, which is not significantly different than the rest of Ontario students ( $p > 0.05$ ).
- About one-in-seven (15.0%\*, 95% CI: 10.3, 21.3) grade 7 – 12 HKPRDHU students reported ever being suspended or expelled from school in their lifetime. The estimate for HKPRDHU students is not significantly different than the rest of Ontario students ( $p > 0.05$ ).
- Most (88.0%, 95% CI: 85.7, 90.1) grade 7 – 12 HKPRDHU students strongly or somewhat agreed that they feel close to people at their school, significantly higher than the rest of Ontario students (84.8%, 95% CI: 82.9, 86.6,  $p < 0.05$ ), and that they feel like part of their school (88.0%, 95% CI: 85.2, 90.4), not significantly different than the rest of Ontario students ( $p > 0.05$ ).
- Most (94.4%, 95% CI: 92.5, 95.8) grade 7 – 12 HKPRDHU students strongly or somewhat agreed that they feel safe at school, not significantly different than the rest of Ontario students. However, one-in-ten (10.3%, 95% CI: 8.6, 12.4) grade 7 – 12 HKPRDHU students reported that they are very or somewhat worried about being harmed, threatened, or having something stolen from them while at school, significantly lower than the rest of Ontario students (13.0%, 95% CI: 11.3, 14.8,  $p < 0.05$ ).

### Work outside school

- Over two-in-three (68.1%, 95% CI: 57.2, 77.3) grade 9 – 12 HKPRDHU student reported working for pay outside of the home during the school year. Almost one-in-four (23.5%\*, 95% CI: 15.3, 34.2) grade 9 – 12 HKPRDHU students reported working 16 or more hours per week. These estimates for HKPRDHU students are significantly higher than the rest of Ontario students (work: 42.5%, 95% CI: 37.5, 47.6,  $p < 0.05$ ; work 16 hours or more: 11.8%, 95% CI: 8.9, 15.4).
- About two-in-five (38.0%, 95% CI: 32.0, 44.4) grade 7 – 12 HKPRDHU students reported spending less than one hour a week on homework, while one-in-eight (12.9%\*, 95% CI: 8.1, 20.0) reported spending about 5 or more hours a week. These estimates for HKPRDHU students are significantly lower for less than one hour and higher for five or more hours, compared to the

rest of Ontario students (less than one hour: 21.6%, 95% CI: 18.7, 24.7,  $p < 0.05$ ; 5 or more hours: 28.3%, 95%CI: 26.0, 30.8,  $p < 0.05$ ).

## Public Health Messaging

Family support has been linked with many positive health outcomes in children, such as being physically active, getting enough sleep, less substance use, and life satisfaction. (4) Having a healthy and supportive relationship with your child can also build trust and security in knowing that you are there for them. The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health provides the following tips for parents on building healthy relationships with their teenagers: (5)

- Be honest and open; for example, talking about dating and sexuality means they will be more open talking about these things with you
- Be authoritative not authoritarian; parent with warmth and firmness, enforce standards for your teen with consistent discipline
- Think “harm reduction”, not zero tolerance; discuss the pros and cons of adult activities (substance use, sex, etc.) in a non-threatening way, let them know that you want them to be safe
- Don’t believe everything you read or hear; don’t jump to conclusions about what high-risk behaviours your teen might be doing based on what the media says
- Monitor and supervise your teen’s activities with parental sensitivity; be present for them and ask questions without accusation, don’t over-intrude or unnecessarily invade their privacy
- Accentuate the positive; try to create genuine positive interactions, even if experiencing conflict with your teen
- Encourage your teen to be involved in extracurricular activities; these can have a positive influence on academic achievement and prosocial behaviours
- Encourage flexibility in gender roles and behaviour; speak with them about these pressures and choices that may be influenced by fear
- Address any abusive or inappropriate language with a firm and clear message; tell them what language limits you have, talk about language that puts others down even if they use it unknowingly or as a joke
- Be an active participant (to a point) in your teen’s life; know their interests and hobbies and participate in them together

For school climate, each public school in Ontario is required to have a safe schools team made up of parents, students, teachers, non-teaching staff, and a community partner. Additionally, each school board must follow the Ontario Code of Conduct and have a bullying prevention and intervention plan and procedure. (6) The Ministry of Education provides resources for schools to promote a positive school climate. (7)

## References

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8. **Canadian Pediatric Society.** Your child's mental health. [Online] May 2017. [Cited: January 15, 2020.] [https://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/mental\\_health](https://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/mental_health).

## Limitations

Only students attending a school in the Catholic or Public-School system were including in the sampling for the OSDUHS. Students attending private schools, students that are home-schooled, and school-aged children that are not attending school (dropped out) were not eligible to participate in the survey.

Although individual school boards agreed to allow the OSDUHS to be administered in their schools, the decision for a school to participate or not was at the discretion of the school's Principal, which may lead to over- or under-reporting for students in certain areas within the HKPRDHU's region.

All responses provided by the students are self-reported may be subject to some amount of bias—potentially more so with questions considered to be sensitive—however, it is not possible to confirm or refute the responses provided. Children absent on the day the survey was administered or children who declined to participate in the survey may also contribute to potential bias in the data, if these children systematically differed from those who participated.

## Definition of Terms

**Estimate** – The estimate is the per cent or value observed/reported in the sample that is generalized to the broader population with similar characteristics (e.g., grade 7 – 12 students).

**95% confidence interval (95% CI)** – Confidence intervals (CIs) are the range of variability around an estimate. The 95% CI displays the range surrounding an estimate in which there is a 95% probability that the population value occurs.

**Significantly different ( $p < 0.05$ )** – When estimates are said to be significantly different (or statistically significant;  $p < 0.05$ ), this indicates that the differences observed are not likely due to chance alone. Additional factors may be present (or absent) to a greater degree in one or more of the groups being compared.

**Mean** – The mean (or average) is calculated by adding the observed values together and dividing by the number of observations.

**Standard Deviation (SD)** – The standard deviation (SD) indicates how much the observed values vary from the mean. A lower SD indicates that more of the observed values are closer to the mean (higher precision), whereas a higher SD would indicate that the observed values are spread out more widely around the mean (lower precision).

**Coefficient of Variation (CV)** – The coefficient of variation is the ratio of the standard deviation to the estimate, displayed as a percentage. The CV indicates the size of the standard deviation compared to the estimate. As the variability around an estimate increases so too does the CV. For example, a CV of 33% indicates that the SD is 33% or one-third the size of the estimate.

**Sample-size** – The sample-size is the number of responses or individuals observed. As the size of a sample increases the SD decreases, and the ability to detect differences (power) increases.

\* – A single asterisk (\*) indicates that the reported estimate has a higher degree of variability and should be interpreted with caution. When a single asterisk (\*) is used, the CV for the estimate is within the range of 16.6% – 33.3%.

\*\* – A double asterisk (\*\*) indicates that an estimate has been suppressed. Data are suppressed when the CV or an estimate is equal to or greater than 33.3%. Additionally, values have been suppressed when the reported sample-size (the number of people responding to a question) is less than 30.



Table. 1 Home and School Determinants and Risk Factors, HKPRDHU vs. Ontario

Topic	Response	HKPRDHU	Ontario	Difference
LIVE WITH PARENT	Live with one or no parent	18.4 (16.3-20.7)	19.7 (17.8-21.7)	
	Live with more than one parent	81.6 (79.3-83.7)	80.3 (78.3-82.2)	
LIVING SITUATION AT HOME	Live in one home only	81.4 (78.5-84.0)	85.9 (84.0-87.6)	↓
	Split time between two or more homes	18.6 (16.0-21.5)	14.1 (12.4-16.0)	↑
TALK ABOUT PROBLEMS FEELINGS WITH PARENT	Always	11.7 (9.5-14.4)	11.2 (9.8-12.7)	
	Usually or sometimes	51.8 (48.0-55.6)	49.5 (47.8-51.3)	
	Rarely or never	36.5 (33.4-39.7)	39.3 (36.8-41.8)	
FAMILY STATUS ON LADDER	Low subjective social status	17.8 (15.7-20.1)	19.3 (17.0-21.8)	
	Average subjective social status	67.2 (65.4-68.8)	64.3 (61.4-67.1)	
	High subjective social status	15.0 (12.2-18.4)	16.4 (15.0-18.0)	
SCHOOL STATUS ON LADDER	Low subjective social status	18.8 (16.5-21.3)	18.6 (16.9-20.5)	
	Average subjective social status	59.9 (54.0-65.6)	60.3 (59.0-61.6)	
	High subjective social status	21.3 (16.7-26.7)	21.1 (19.5-22.9)	
HOW STUDENTS FEEL ABOUT SCHOOL	Likes school very much or quite a lot	37.7 (30.0-46.1)	46.7 (43.7-49.7)	↓
	Likes school to some degree	44.0 (37.7-50.4)	34.0 (31.8-36.4)	↑
	Doesn't like school very much or at all	18.3 (14.0-23.6)	19.3 (17.5-21.2)	
EVER BEEN SUSPENDED OR EXPELLED FROM SCHOOL	Yes	15.0 * (10.3-21.3)	16.7 (14.0-19.8)	
	No	85.0 (78.7-89.7)	83.3 (80.2-86.0)	
FEEL CLOSE TO PEOPLE AT SCHOOL	Strongly or somewhat agree	88.0 (85.7-90.1)	84.8 (82.8-86.6)	↑
	Strongly or somewhat disagree	12.0 (9.9-14.3)	15.2 (13.4-17.2)	↓
FEEL LIKE PART OF THEIR SCHOOL	Strongly or somewhat agree	88.0 (85.1-90.4)	85.0 (83.3-86.6)	↑
	Strongly or somewhat disagree	12.0 (9.6-14.9)	15.0 (13.4-16.7)	
FEEL SAFE AT SCHOOL	Strongly or somewhat agree	94.4 (92.5-95.8)	92.3 (90.5-93.8)	
	Strongly or somewhat disagree	5.6 (4.2-7.5)	7.7 (6.2-9.5)	
WORRIED SOMEONE WILL HARM OR THREATEN AT SCHOOL	Very or somewhat worried	10.3 (8.6-12.4)	13.0 (11.3-14.8)	↓
	Not very worried or worried at all	89.7 (87.6-91.4)	87.0 (85.2-88.7)	↑
HOURS PER WEEK WORK FOR PAY, YES OR NO	Work for pay outside home	68.1 (57.2-77.3)	42.5 (37.5-47.6)	↑
	Don't work for pay outside home	31.9 (22.7-42.8)	57.5 (52.4-62.5)	↓
HOURS PER WEEK WORK FOR PAY	5 hours or less	14.5 * (9.5-21.5)	12.3 (10.5-14.3)	
	6 to 10 hours	14.9 (11.7-18.8)	11.0 (9.6-12.7)	↑
	11 to 15 hours	15.2 * (8.2-26.2)	7.4 (5.8-9.2)	
	16 or more hours	23.5 * (15.3-34.2)	11.8 (8.9-15.4)	↑

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Topic	Response	HKPRDHU	Ontario	Difference
	Don't work for pay outside home	31.9 (22.7-42.8)	57.5 (52.4-62.5)	↓
HOURS PER WEEK SPENT ON HOMEWORK	Less than 1 hour	38.0 (32.0-44.4)	21.6 (18.7-24.7)	↑
	About 1 to 2 hours	31.8 (27.1-37.0)	27.4 (25.3-29.6)	
	About 3 to 4 hours	17.3 (14.2-20.8)	22.8 (21.1-24.5)	↓
	About 5 or more hours	12.9 * (8.1-20.0)	28.3 (26.0-30.8)	↓

↑ Indicates a significantly higher estimate compared to the rest of Ontario; ↓ Indicates a significantly lower estimate compared to the rest of Ontario.