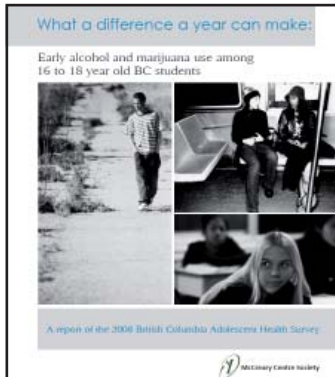


Hot Off The Press



New Report: What a difference a year can make: Early alcohol and marijuana use among 16 to 18 year old BC students.

The latest full length report to be published by McCreary Centre Society is titled *What a difference a year can make: Early alcohol and marijuana use among 16 to 18 year old BC students*. The report uses data provided by the 10,000 16 to 18 year olds who completed the 2008 BC Adolescent Health Survey. The study notes that youth are waiting longer than their peers a decade ago to try these substances. The report also identifies the different health behaviours and outcomes between those who use alcohol or marijuana at 12 and younger and those who wait longer to try these substances. It also shows the improved health outcomes seen among youth who drank or used marijuana at a young age but have not used recently.

A companion bulletin *Drug use among 16-18 year old BC students* has also just been released and shows that while the use of alcohol and marijuana is widespread among 16-18 year olds, the use of other substances is much less common. Those youth who do use these substances are often coping with negative experiences in their lives and need the support of family, schools, peers and their communities.

Both of these publications are free to download at www.mcs.bc.ca or can be ordered in hard copy for a small fee by contacting mccreary@mcs.bc.ca

Worth The Wait

Accessing McCreary information through our website has sometimes been challenging but things are about to improve. We are currently in the process of launching our new website, which can be accessed by visiting www.mcs.bc.ca.

We have improved our design and functionality, and have added many features and resources to the site. We ask for your patience over the next few months as we complete the addition of new content and the search feature for the site. We will also be adding more multi-media content and PowerPoint resources in addition to our existing video clips and PDF resources.

If you have any questions and/or suggestions when you use the site, please contact sherry@mcs.bc.ca.



Community Research Partnership

The partnership between McCreary, PLEA Community Services Society, and Douglas College continues to produce quality research projects and to answer important questions about the youth who access PLEA services and the types of services they benefit from. Two Douglas College students recently on practicum at McCreary analyzed PLEA data to gain a better understanding of service recipients who are on Youth Agreements. They presented their findings at PLEA, and this interaction proved to be an excellent example of research informing practice and of practice informing research. Two students recently completed practicums focusing on youth at PLEA with mental health and addiction diagnoses, and another is focusing on risk and protective factors associated with gang involvement.



AHS IV Next Steps

Following the release of the 2008 Adolescent Health Survey results, we have been busy taking the results back to youth across the province in a variety of ways. Using our Next Steps model we are presenting the findings of the survey to youth in a meaningful way and engaging them in action to improve youth health in their community.

Achieving a lot in a day: Qualicum

Qualicum Beach School District recently invited McCreary staff to present a one day workshop in which youth, teachers, and youth-service providers came together to learn about, discuss, and address youth health issues in Qualicum.

Following a presentation of the survey results, youth created claymation films, supported by Reel Youth. At the same time the adults received the AHS IV regional survey results and developed action plans based on the results. In the afternoon, the adults presented their action plans to the youth and the youth presented their films which focused on sexual health, the need for more community youth events, and promoting caring relationships.

A dialogue session between youth and the adults followed, and they worked together to create concrete plans to address the health needs of local young people.

Currently, Qualicum is continuing to develop initiatives based on the discussions held at the Next Steps workshop. Examples include: educating other community



members and school staff on the AHS IV regional survey results, forming a community youth planning committee to develop more youth-led events, following up on sexual health concerns expressed by youth, and integrating AHS IV survey results into school curriculum.

Four Months, Four Communities, Four Projects

The results of the survey have also been taken back to youth in four communities across the province over the course of 4 months through McCreary's Next Steps Workshop Series. This version of the Next Steps included a series of workshops in which youth learned the results of the survey, created Claymation videos with Reel Youth and planned and delivered a community project based on the results. A \$2000 grant was provided to support each of the projects.

Burnaby

A group of youth from across Burnaby came together for a district-wide Next Steps. Participants discussed local and provincial results of the AHS IV and made videos on a variety of issues relevant to youth in Burnaby. Their project addressed the challenges grade 7 students face in the transition from elementary school to high school. Participants created a mentorship program in which high school youth provide by-youth for-youth advice to grade

7 students about navigating the transition into high school. The project included a workshop with a graphic facilitator where youth turned their messages into a dynamic mural to be used during the presentations. Presentations are planned to be held before the end of the school year with the support of youth workers from two Burnaby high schools.

"I learned that youth have a larger role to play in the future of this community"

Male youth aged 16

Slocan

A dedicated group of youth in Slocan were excited to give voice to the experiences of young people living in rural BC and to discuss youth health issues unique to the Kootenay Boundary region. Their Claymation videos



focused on the impact school closures have on isolated communities where young people often commute for hours a day to attend school. Their concern about school closures motivated the youth to organize a project to bring people of all ages together to celebrate their community and to give people a fun family event. The event was a huge success with an estimated 500 people taking part. The community plans to make the Slocan Community Celebration an annual event.



Powell River

Powell River youth aged 14-18 from two different schools came together to join the Next Steps project. The youth quickly concluded that to engage the youth and cultivate protective factors they needed a project that included awareness about the environment, considering it inseparable to youth's health and well being. They decided to engage youth through the creation of the first Amazing Eco-Challenge, a city-wide race that involved team-building and educational opportunities/experiences on environmental issues. The pouring rain didn't dampen the spirits of over 30 dedicated adult volunteers, including Powell River's transit system and many local eco-friendly organizations, and the 25 youth who participated in the full day event that ended in a celebration.

If you are interested in bringing a 'Next steps' workshop or workshop series to your community, please contact stephanie@mcs.bc.ca

Prince George

McCreary took the Next Steps to a grade 7 class at Harwin Elementary School in Prince George. For their project, the students worked with an art therapist to create a piece of art that reflects the qualities they are most proud of in themselves. Personalized paintings were created on wooden cut-outs of the head of a lion, Harwin's school mascot. The art pieces were debuted along with the youth's Claymation videos at a community showcase attended by students, families and school staff. The lions' heads will soon be fixed along the fence of the school as a unique mark left by the class of 2010.



McCreary's Student Group

Congratulations to Joanne Magtoto and Bonnie Miller, two members of McCreary's Student Group, who successfully defended their theses for the Bachelor's Honours Psychology Program at SFU. Joanne's study considered body image and weight control among immigrant youth, and Bonnie's study looked at Canada's Age of Consent Law and young adolescents' sexual behaviors. The two studies used data from AHS IV.

The results of both of these studies will soon be available in fact sheet form.

We would like to welcome Stephanie Callaghan, a Master student from UBC School of Nursing. She is using data from McCreary's 2000 Street Youth Survey to look at the functions of pregnancy in the lives of street involved young women in BC.

Any student interested in working with McCreary data and joining the student group should contact weihong@mcs.bc.ca



Breaking Barriers & Building Bridges 2010

The 13th annual Breaking Barriers and Building Bridges (B4) youth health conference took place from March 19-21st at beautiful Camp Sasamat in Belcarra.

The theme for this year's conference was "Building Healthy Relationships". The weekend featured workshops from local youth serving agencies on a variety of topics, including healthy dating relationships, stress management and self care, building positive sexual self-esteem and healthy peer relationships. This year the Youth Advisory Council (YAC) invited Reel Youth film makers to support participants in creating Claymation films to highlight their messages about important issues related to youth health. Working together, participants created 8 films which can be viewed at www.reelyouth.ca.

Members of McCreary's YAC, including many new faces who joined us in 2009, contributed countless hours of their time and brought fresh ideas to the table in the organization of this year's conference. Their hard work and organization paid off with youth from across the province attending the B4 2010. Several of those participants will be staying involved in McCreary projects over the next year and we welcome them all.

Our thanks to sponsors: Vancouver Foundation, Coast Capital and the Central Okanagan Foundation.



Changes Afoot

At McCreary's 2009 Annual General Meeting over 50 members and guests enjoyed a chance to network and review McCreary's work over the past year before a key note speech from the new head of Adolescent Medicine at BC Children's Hospital, Dr. Curren Warf.

During the business part of the meeting McCreary offered thanks and a fond farewell to outgoing board members Tim Agg, Suzanne Dorey, Negar Ghavami and YAC representative Silvia Hua. Their contributions to the Society are greatly appreciated and we wish them well in their future endeavors.

New Board members elected at the meeting were Michelle Hawco, Susan Rabinovitz, Suzanne Vardy, Lucy Shen and Lily Zhou.

Dr. David Cox received an award in appreciation of his involvement with McCreary over the past three decades and retiring Chair Pat Mauch was also honoured for her work. David and Pat will both continue to serve on McCreary's Board. Pat's role of Chair has been taken by co-chairs Opreet Kang and Cathy Still.



Presentations

McCreary has been taking advantage of new Webex technology to hold online presentations of recent reports. This spring, McCreary held five online presentations. Four of these were to share the findings of McCreary's "What A Difference A Year Can Make" report, and the accompanying bulletin on substance use among 16-18 year old students in BC. These presentations were widely attended by both Public Health and School District representatives, including staff from School Districts that did not participate in the 2008 Adolescent Health Survey.

Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine (SAHM) was held in Toronto, Ontario from April 7-10, 2010. This conference represents an excellent opportunity to disseminate McCreary work to a multidisciplinary group of adolescent health professionals, and this year the 2008 BC Adolescent Health Survey was the basis for two presentations at the conference.

Elizabeth Saewyc, our Research Director, presented a poster (co-authored by Weihong Chen and Pam Hirakata) titled "Quantifying the influence of violence exposure on adolescent risk behaviours in Western Canada". This poster presented findings indicating that a significant proportion of adolescent risk behaviours (such as alcohol and marijuana use, suicide attempts, and pregnancy involvement) can be attributed to experiences of physical and/or sexual violence.

Secondly, Colleen Poon, one of our research associates, presented a platform presentation (co-authored by Yuko Homma, Elizabeth Saewyc and Annie Smith) titled "Is cultural connectedness a protective factor?" This presentation discussed findings showing that students who were more highly connected to their ethnic or cultural group were less likely to engage in several risk behaviours (such as binge drinking and attempting suicide) and more likely to endorse positive health indicators (such as liking school, having plans to graduate college or university, and rating their health as good or excellent).



Society for Research on Adolescence

The biennial meeting of the Society for Research on Adolescence (SRA) was held in Philadelphia from March 11-13, 2010. Maya Peled, one of our research associates, presented a poster titled "Deliberate self-harm and its relation to suicide attempts in adolescence", which drew on 2008 AHS data. Results indicated that youth who engage in self harm are more likely to experience high-risk behaviours and circumstances than those who do not self harm. However not all adolescents who self harm are suicidal, and self harm and suicide attempts should be regarded as related yet independent behaviours.

Vancouver Foundation's Housing Youth Forum

McCreary was also invited to present at the Vancouver Foundation's Housing Youth forum. Attended by service providers, funders and youth, McCreary staff shared the early process and outcome results from our evaluations of Vancouver youth housing programs.

For further information about McCreary's evaluation services, please contact maya@mcs.bc.ca.



Recent Academic Journal Publications Using McCreary Centre Society Data

Peled, M., & Smith, A. (2010). Alternative education programs in BC: Meeting the needs of vulnerable students. *Education Canada*, 50(2), 56-59.

Saewyc E, Chen W, Hirakata P. (2010). Quantifying the influence of violence exposure on adolescent risk behaviours in Western Canada. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 46, S65.

Poon C, Homma Y, Saewyc E, Smith A. (2010). Is cultural connectedness a protective factor? *Journal of Adolescent Health*. 46, S4.

Devries KM, Free C, Morison L, Saewyc E. (2009). Factors associated with pregnancy and STI among Aboriginal students in British Columbia. *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, 100(3), 226-230.

Saewyc EM, Kim KJ, Anderson J, Smith A. (2009). The context and challenges of employment among street-

involved youth in Western Canada. In *The Strategy for Youth Competence Development to Cope with Global Trends*, proceedings of the 20th Anniversary Symposium of the National Youth Policy Institute, Seoul, South Korea; 25 June 2009.

Devries K, Free C, Morison L, Saewyc E. (2009). Factors associated with sexual behaviour of Aboriginal youth: Implications for health promotion. *American Journal of Public Health*, 99, 855-862.

MacKay L. (2009). School connectedness: It matters to student health. *Visions, BC's Mental Health and Addictions Journal*, 5(2), 18-19.

Saewyc, E. (2009). Alcohol and other drug use among BC students: Myths and realities. *Visions, BC's Mental Health and Addictions Journal*, 5(2), 8-9.

Saewyc EM, Homma Y, Skay CL, Bearinger L, Resnick M, Reis E. (2009). Protective factors in the lives of bisexual adolescents in North America. *American Journal of Public Health*, 99, 110-117. PubMedCentral ID#: PMC2636603.

Donation Form:

The support of government, business and community members is critical as we look toward funding more priority initiatives, conducting future research and implementing community-based youth leadership projects. McCreary needs your support to ensure that we can continue to address the unmet health needs of young people and their communities.

I would like to contribute to the McCreary Centre Society

Name Address.....

Postal Code..... Phone NumberEmail.....

Enclosed, please find my donation of:

\$50 \$75 \$100 \$150 Other _____

Please send donations and forms to: The McCreary Centre Society, 3552 E. Hastings, Vancouver, BC, V5K 2A7 (Registered Charity # 1294218632 RR0001) A tax receipt will be issued to acknowledge your generosity.

Thank you for making a difference in the lives of young people in BC.

