

# Survey Report of Street Youth Drug Abuse in Macao 2018

## Abstract

The survey was conducted by the Sheng Kung Hui Macau Social Services Coordination Office, under the sponsorship of Social Affairs Bureau. Since 2002, the same survey has been conducted every four years, this is the fifth survey. Its objectives are: (1) to understand the situation of drug abuse among street youth, including the opportunities and extent of their exposure to drugs and their attitudes towards drug abuse; (2) to understand the risk factors of drug abuse among street youth; (3) to understand the positive factors leading the study subjects to reject drug abuse; (4) to understand the substance that the youth abuse relatively frequently and their level of use; (5) the knowledge of new drugs by the adolescents who had been involved in drug abuse.

The respondents of the survey were specifically defined as street youth between 12 and 24. The survey was conducted from July to December 2018, and different organizations were invited to work together to complete the survey. The organizations involved include Community Youth Working Team of General Union of Neighborhood Associations of Macao, Christian New Life Fellowship of Macao - Smart Youth, Young Men's Christian Association of Macau - Organic Teen. The survey used the purposive sampling procedure of non-random sample to select respondents. After explaining to the respondents by social workers, the questionnaires were sent to the respondents and were completed by them. Among the valid sample of 344 individuals, 40 respondents (11.6% of the total respondents) indicated that they had been involved in substance abuse.

Structural characteristics of respondents: males accounted for 62.3%, females accounted for 37.7%, the average age was 16.99, at-school students and out-of-school youth accounted for 75.7% and 24.3% respectively, education level was mainly concentrated in junior secondary schools (58.7%). The characteristics of respondents who had abused drugs: males accounted for 48.7%, females accounted for 51.3%, hence no significant difference by sex, their average age was 19.10, at-school students accounted for 47.5%, and out-of-school youth accounted for 52.5%, education level was mainly concentrated in junior secondary schools (56.7%).

The main results of the survey are as follows: The proportion of respondents who reported drug abuse was 11.6%, lower than the 18.7% in 2014; Compared with the data of 2014 and 2018, the types of drug abuse in the interviewees were different from the

previous years; the proportion of respondents who had smoked marijuana had risen markedly compared with the past, from 2.1% to 22.5% in 2018. However, the proportion of ice and ketamine had declined (ice: 23.4% in 2014, 15% in 2018; ketamine: 19.1% in 2014, 7.5% in 2018). The causes of drug abuse were "reducing stress" (48.7%) and "relieving boredom" (46.2%). The proportion of drugs obtained from Macao increased to 65.2% in 2018, compared with 2014 (59.6%) and 2010 (33.3%), showing a continuous upward trend. The results showed that drug abuse done locally was more prevalent. Places of drug abuse among the respondents who had abused drugs were primarily "friend's home", secondly "bar", and thirdly "one's own home". The overall situation was different from the previous two surveys, but similar to the more concealed places in 2014. The situations of first-time use among the respondents who reported drug abuse: the average age was 15.54, 42.1% used ice, 42.1% used it in a friend's home and 78.9% used it together with a friend. The situations of smoking, drinking and e-cigarette smoking in 2018: compared the data on adults and juveniles, juveniles were much more likely to use them as more than 50% of juveniles had used tobacco, alcohol and e-cigarettes.

The results showed that Macao should strengthen substance abuse prevention and education advocacy among adolescents to cope with the changes of the new era. Secondly, Macao needs to pay attention to the physical and mental health of adolescents, strengthen the training of front-line social workers, and increase the awareness of potential drug use by youth. In addition, attention should be given to the situation of cigarette smoking, drinking and e-cigarette smoking among the adolescents and more effort in communication and education should be undertaken. Finally, services should be appropriate based on the characteristics and needs of the clients, strive to strengthen the relationship between the adolescents and their families, and promote the healthy growth of the adolescents.