



Parents and Teachers Are Strongest Anti-drug Influencers: Youth Perception Survey 2013

NCADA Urges More Community Involvement In the Fight Against Drugs

1. **13 Feb 2014** – The National Council Against Drug Abuse (NCADA) today released findings from its survey on the perceptions and attitudes of Singapore youths towards drug abuse. The key findings are that:

- Parents and teachers continue to be strong influencers in dissuading young people from experimenting with drugs;
- Youths view drugs and drug abuse negatively but older youths are more likely to accept liberal attitudes towards drugs; and
- Current anti-drug laws are effective.

2. The NCADA Youth Perception Survey was commissioned in 2013 and involved 2,075 youths aged between 13 and 21. NCADA will use the survey results to advise and work with partners in the anti-drug ecosystem. This will include fine-tuning preventive drug education (PDE) efforts, fostering greater community involvement, especially of parents, to entrench the awareness of the dangers of drug abuse.

Harnessing the influence of parents and teachers

3. The Survey found that television remains an important source of information about drugs, with 63.1% of youths surveyed listing the television as a source of information about drugs. However, parents and teachers continue to be effective in dissuading youths from drug abuse. About one in two youths surveyed indicated that they would approach their family, in particular parents, if they had any questions about drugs. Two in five youths surveyed also look to their teachers and counsellors for information.

4. Underscoring the influence parents have, the Survey found that 96.5% of youths whose parents had spoken to them about drugs and drug abuse reported that those conversations have deterred them from taking drugs.

5. A/P Narayanan Ganapathy, Chairperson of NCADA's Research Sub-Committee said: "There are some television programmes that normalise drug abuse. As youths, especially those who are younger, are still highly impressionable, parents and guardians should monitor their media consumption and guide them to evaluate the information which they have obtained from the mass media."

6. He added that as parents and teachers appear to be the first source of information, it is crucial for them to keep informed in matters relating to drug abuse so as to effectively advise youths on drug related matters.

7. Only 40.6% of all Survey respondents said that they have had conversations with their parents on drugs. A/P Ganapathy urged more parents to initiate conversations with their children about drug abuse and its dangers.

Nurturing anti-drug values is key

8. When the youths were asked what would happen if they were offered drugs, 97.3% were confident that they would decline. Most respondents expressed strong objections to drug abuse in their responses to the following statements:

<u>Statement</u>	<u>Percentage of respondents who agreed</u>
I believe taking drugs will harm one's health	89.1%
I believe taking drugs will affect my education	87.6%
I would try taking drugs if it was not illegal	8.1%

9. Similarly, when asked what they associated "drugs" with, 68.4% of them chose "An illegal/harmful/dangerous substance" (43.3%) or "A substance that can be addictive" (25.1%). 87.3% of the youths also said they felt that Singapore's laws against drugs are effective in controlling the local drug situation.

10. However, the Survey found that a small percentage of youths (about 4.4%) display liberal attitudes towards drugs and were more likely to agree with the statement "It's alright to try drugs for a new experience". This group consisted of older youths aged 17 to 21.

11. A/P Ganapathy said: "Although this group is small, we will not ignore them and will factor their attitudes into the development of our PDE programmes and initiatives."

12. "Overall, the Survey results are reassuring. Singaporean youths view drugs negatively and believe that our drug laws are effective. NCADA and our partners in the anti-drug ecosystem will continue to nurture these anti-drug values in them", he added.

Maintaining a zero-tolerance policy on drug abuse

13. Mr Victor Lye, Chairman, NCADA said: "Findings from the Survey will be used to guide how we develop preventive drug education programmes and ensure that they remain relevant. For example, the finding that older youths tend to hold more liberal attitudes towards drugs and that younger youths are more susceptible to peer pressure, suggest that we need to adapt our current preventive education strategies to address these groups more effectively. NCADA will engage our anti-drug ecosystem partners in developing a more targeted approach in our ongoing fight against drug abuse."

14. He also said that NCADA will continue to conduct such surveys to track attitudes and perceptions towards drugs and drug abuse.

15. "More countries are giving in to liberal positions on drugs due to shifting societal attitudes in containing disease transmission and the uphill fight against drug abuse. In Singapore, we are fortunate to have contained drug abuse despite external challenges. Singapore must maintain a "zero-tolerance" stance against drug abuse. While the number of drug abusers arrested in Singapore remains low, we cannot take this situation for granted. The responsibility of protecting our future generations from the scourge of drugs requires the concerted effort of parents, educators and community leaders," he added.

Notes to Editors

For more information on the findings of the Youth Perception Survey 2013, please refer to the presentation slides on the survey findings in [Annex A](#).

About National Council Against Drug Abuse (NCADA)

The National Council Against Drug Abuse (NCADA) was formed in January 1995 as an advisory council¹ to the Minister and the Ministry of Home Affairs on policies and measures necessary to curb drug abuse in Singapore and to mobilise and sustain public support for the anti-drug programmes undertaken by government departments and voluntary organisations. Together with the Home Team departments, relevant agencies and community partners, NCADA organises and coordinates anti-drug activities as well as assists other organisations, institutions, bodies and persons who are interested in tackling the drug problem. NCADA also aims to promote preventive drug education programmes to educate the public on the drug menace and rally them in support of the government's efforts against drug abuse.

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¹ As an advisory council, NCADA is a separate entity on its own and unlike a statutory board, an advisory council is not part of any ministry or government body.



Youth Perception Survey 2013

Ms Leung Chi Ching
National Council Against Drug Abuse
Briefing to Press on findings of Youth Perception Survey 2013
13 Feb 2014



Scope of Presentation

2

- Findings from the 2013 Youth Perception Survey (YPS)
- Summary of findings
- Key take-aways for NCADA

Objectives

Examine youths' perceptions of and attitudes towards the act of drug-taking



Explore youths' knowledge of drug abuse and determine their sources of information



Examine youths' perceptions of and support towards drug laws and anti-drug policies in Singapore



Assess youths' perceptions of and attitude towards the annual Anti-Drug Campaigns/Exhibitions



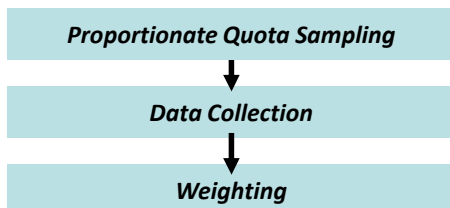
- First survey in 2009: covered Sec school (Sec) students
- Second survey in 2012/2013: covered youths from Sec, JC, ITE, Polytechnic (Poly) and Out-of-School youths (OSYs)

Methodology

PHASE I: QUANTITATIVE SURVEY



- Representative sample of youths aged between 13 to 21, including students from Sec, JC, ITE, Poly and OSYs
- Sample size: n=2075
- Confidence level: 95%



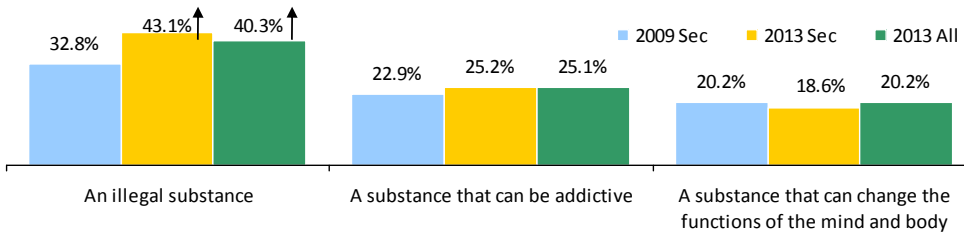
PHASE II: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS



- In-depth interviews thru open-ended, discovery-oriented method to give a vivid picture of respondents' feelings and perspectives on the topic.
- Qualitative info obtained thru interviews useful to provide rich insights into perceptions and attitudes of respondents.
- Paired in-depth interviews, i.e. two youths were interviewed together
- 15 paired in-depth interviews completed

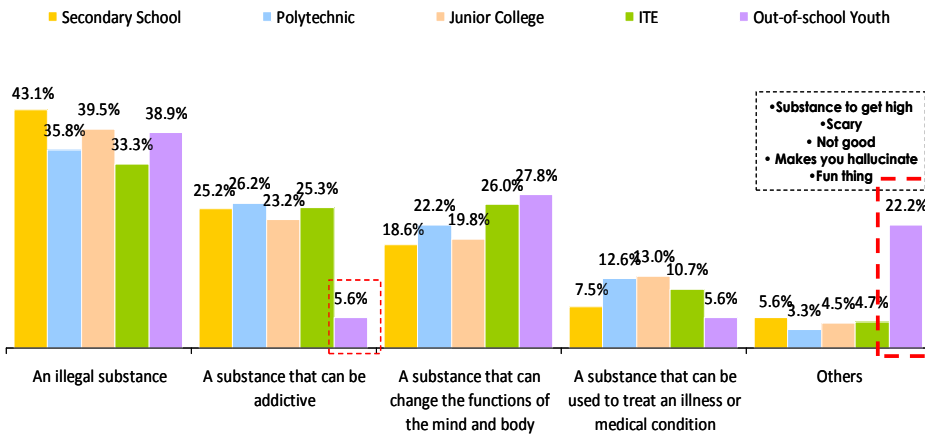
Perceptions & Attitudes towards Drug Taking

When you think of the word "drugs", what is the first thing that comes to your mind? (Overall Findings)



Youths generally perceived drugs and drug use negatively

Breakdown (by youth category)

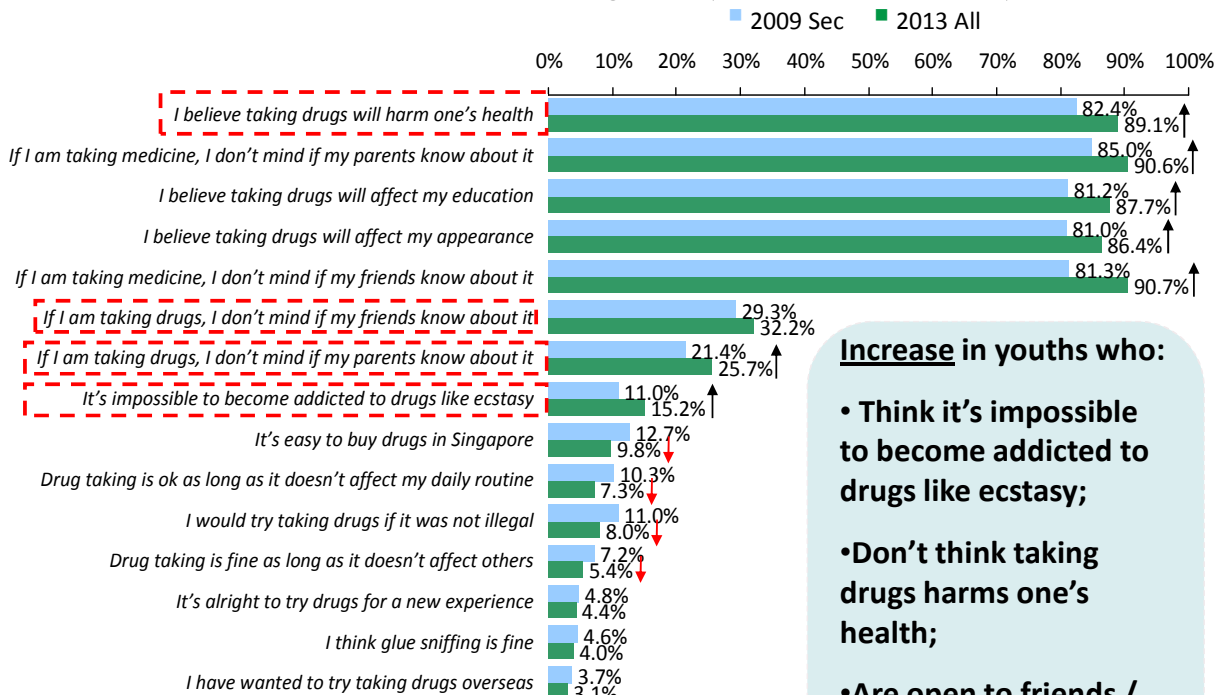


OSYs more likely to describe drugs as "substance to get high", "fun thing"

Note: Weighted n: Secondary School students n=1219; Polytechnic students, n=499; Junior College students, n=189; ITE students, n=148; Out-of-school youth, n=20.

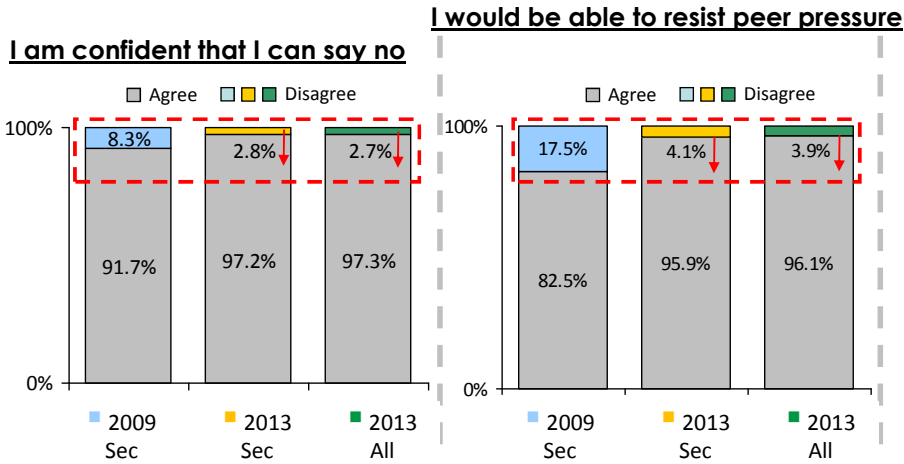
Perceptions & Attitudes towards Drug Taking

Attitudinal Statements about Drug Taking (% of Those Who Agree)



Increase in youths who:

- Think it's impossible to become addicted to drugs like ecstasy;
- Don't think taking drugs harms one's health;
- Are open to friends / parents knowing about drug-taking behaviour



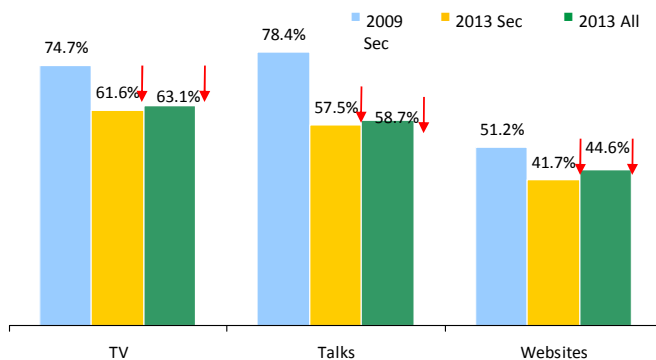
• Youths perceive that they are confident to refuse drugs when offered.

• Secondary School and OSY least likely to be able to resist peer pressure

Mean Score	Secondary School	Polytechnic	Junior College	ITE	Out-of-school youth
I would be able to resist peer pressure	5.18	5.33	5.35	5.44	4.85

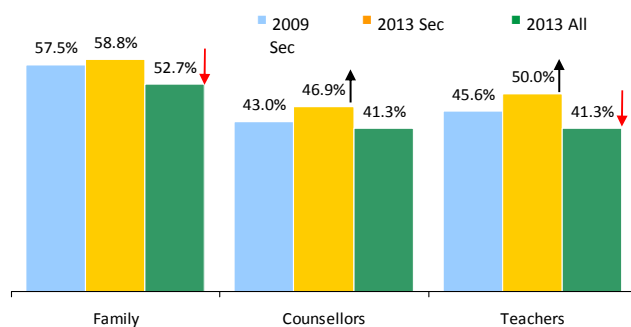
Figures in the table are mean scores, on a scale of 1 to 6 where 1 means "Strongly Disagree" and 6 means "Strongly Agree"

Sources of Information



Youths are more likely to obtain their information on drugs / drug abuse from **TV, talks and websites**

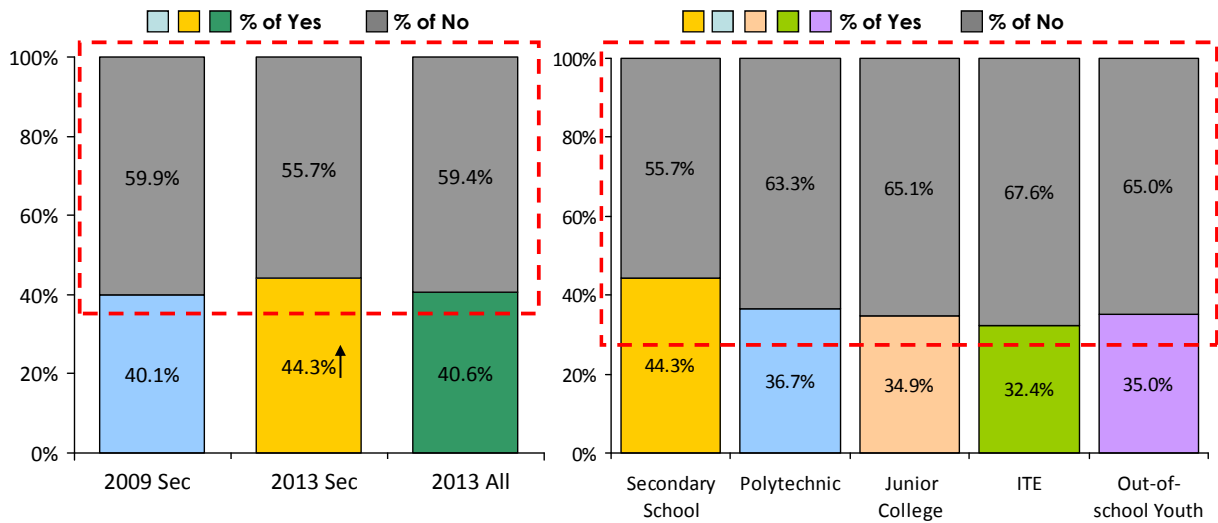
Preferred Sources of Information



Youths are likely to turn to **family, counsellors and teachers** if they have questions on drugs

Sources of Information

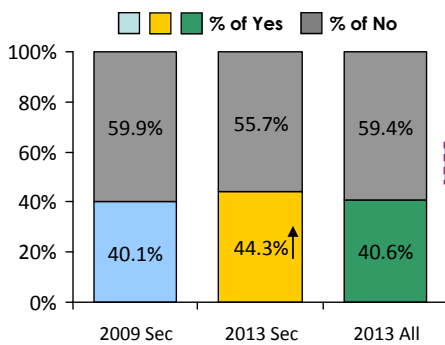
Have your parents spoken to you about drugs/ drug abuse?



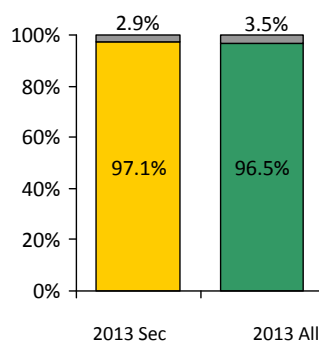
Less than half of the youths had conversations with their parents/ guardians on drugs and drug abuse

Sources of Information

Have your parents spoken to you about drugs/drug abuse?

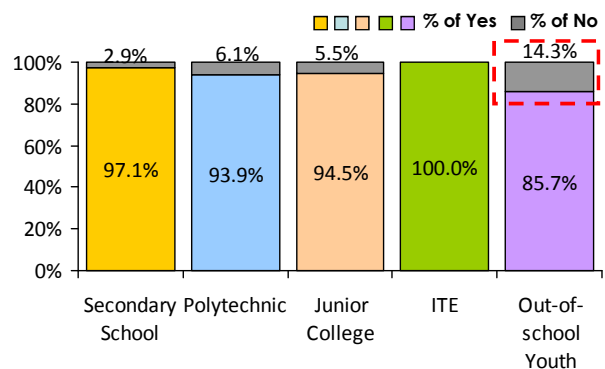


Has the conversation deterred you from taking drugs?



Huge majority whose parents have spoken to them were deterred from taking drugs

OSYs least deterred by the conversation with parents on drugs



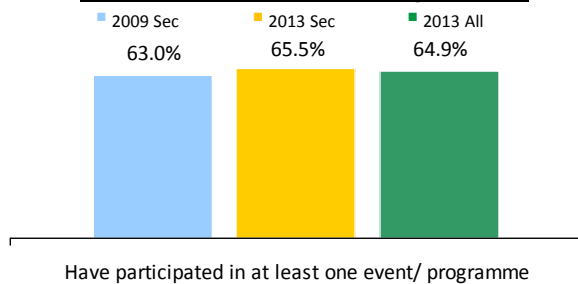
- **Overwhelming percentage of youths agree Singapore law on drugs is effective.**
- **Poly and OSYs more likely to think that some drugs should be legal.**

Attitudinal Statements about Drug Laws (% of Agree)

Attitudinal Statements	Sec school	Poly	Junior college	ITE	Out-of-school youth
<i>The Singapore law on drugs is effective in controlling the local drug situation</i>	87.1%	86.8%	86.5%	90.2%	94.0%
<i>I am aware that consuming drugs overseas is a crime in Singapore</i>	79.9%	72.3%	66.7%	82.1%	86.0%
<i>The death penalty is appropriate for drug trafficking</i>	79.4%	70.4%	71.8%	82.6%	77.6%
<i>I think some drugs should not be illegal</i>	12.0%	21.0%	19.9%	17.4%	20.0%

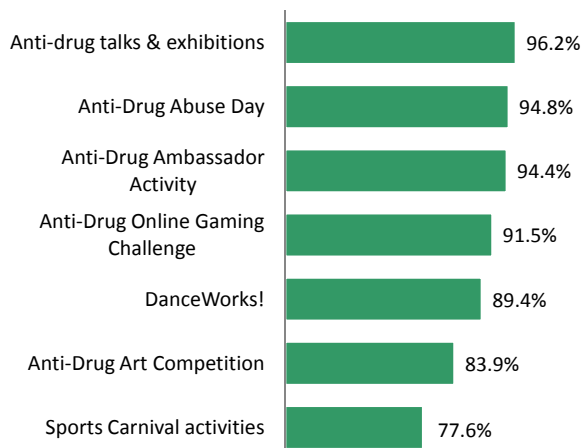
Participation in Anti-drug events/programmes

Participation in Events/ Programmes



About 2/3 of youths surveyed have participated in at least one anti-drug event/ programme.

Usefulness of the event/ programme



Youths generally felt that participating in anti-drug events were useful in helping them to understand more about drugs and drug abuse.

Summary of Findings

Youths' perceptions and attitudes towards drugs

- Youths generally perceive drugs and drug use negatively
- More liberal attitudes in older youths
- Youths are more confident* they can refuse drugs when offered
- Youths are more "open" and communicative*

Youths' knowledge of drug abuse and sources of information

- TV, talks, websites are main information sources
- Online resources preferred
- Less than half of the youths had conversations with parents on drugs issue
- Such talks perceived to have high deterrent effect

Youths' perceptions and support towards drug laws and drug policies

- 87% think Singapore's drug laws and anti-drug policies are effective
- 77% aware that taking drugs overseas is a crime
- 15% think some drugs should be legal

Youths' perceptions and attitude towards PDE platforms

- About 2/3 have participated in at least one PDE
- Talks and large-scale events deemed most effective

* As compared to the 2009 sample.

Thank you