Research Note

Marijuana and Heroin Use in Hong Kong Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

Data on marijuana and heroin use were obtained from 969 nonrandomized adolescent boys and girls in Hong Kong. Drug use prevalence rates were very high which was due to the fact that a large part of the sample was institutionalized offenders. All but two of the heroin users were incarcerated. Drug use frequencies were highly associated with psychosocial variables such as peer drug use, family drug use, susceptibility to peer pressure, perceived control to gain access to drugs, and perceived adverse consequences of drug use.

Key words. Drug use; Adolescents; Delinquents; Sensation seeking; Peer pressure; Social influence; Heroin; Marijuana

INTRODUCTION

According to the statistics released by the Hong Kong Central Registry of Drug Abuse (1993), among 2,904 newly reported addicts in 1992, 52% began using drugs before they reached the age of 20. Most of them started to use drugs when they were between 14 and 18 years of age. As compared with 1991, there was a marked increase of 34.6% of newly reported addicts aged under 21. Overall, the mean age of first illicit drug use decreased from 22.6 years in 1991 to 21.6 years in 1992. The proportion of newly reported young

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