Introduction

Lower academic achievement and higher risk of dropping out of high school have been associated with smoking in students. Using tobacco at an early age has been associated with other risk behaviours, including problem alcohol and substance use. Additionally, the younger one starts to smoke, the more likely he/she is to become strongly dependent on nicotine.

Rates of Tobacco Use

The graphs below illustrate the number of students at each grade level, by gender, who have tried smoking and those who are current smokers. Most established smokers start experimenting with cigarettes between the ages of 10 and 18. Students are considered current smokers if they smoked at least 100 cigarettes in their lifetime and have smoked in the 30 days preceding the survey. In New Brunswick, by grade 12, 9% of girls and 18% of boys are current smokers.

- 27% of all students reported that they had tried smoking
- 7% of all students were current smokers, and 12% reported having smoked in the 30 days preceding the survey
- 5% of all females and 9% of all males were current smokers
How Students Obtain Cigarettes (Among Students Who Have Tried Smoking)

• 37% of students reported that cigarettes were given to them by their parents, siblings, friends, or someone else
• 14% of students reported asking someone else to buy cigarettes for them
• 16% of students reported buying cigarettes for themselves
• 13% of students reported obtaining cigarettes from other sources (bought them from a friend or someone else)

Students at risk of future smoking (Susceptibility to Smoking)

Students who have never smoked (73%) were asked about their intentions to remain smoke-free and their confidence in resisting peer-pressure to smoke.

Overall, 24% of students who have never smoked a cigarette demonstrated being at risk of future smoking. The highest susceptibility to smoking occurs in grades 8 (29%), 9 (28%) and 10 (25%).

The rates of susceptibility to smoking varied across grades and by sex, with the biggest difference between males and females demonstrated in grade 12. Females were almost as susceptible to smoking as males in grades 8, 9 and 10 (grades where susceptibility to smoking is most prevalent)

Perceptions and attitudes around smoking

Notable differences in perceptions and attitudes around smoking were reported between susceptible and non-susceptible students. Students susceptible to future smoking were more likely to have pro-smoking attitudes as compared to non-susceptible students. The graph on the next page shows differences between susceptible and non-susceptible students for several perceptions and attitudes.
Other Substance Use  
(Grades 9-12)

Using tobacco at an early age has been associated with other risk behaviours, including problem alcohol and substance use. Among students in grades 9 to 12, 96% of those who are current smokers had tried drinking alcohol and 91% had tried using marijuana. In contrast, 73% of those who are not current smokers had drunk alcohol and 34% had tried using marijuana.

- 95% of students who reported trying cigarettes (even just a few puffs) also indicated they had tried alcohol, whereas 63% of other students reported trying alcohol.
- 76% of students who reported trying cigarettes (even just a few puffs) also claimed to have tried marijuana, whereas 17% of other students reported trying marijuana.

Although tobacco use rates are in decline, the following graph indicates that a significant number of New Brunswick youth continue to use or be susceptible to (at higher risk of) the use of tobacco products. In addition to tobacco use, the use of marijuana and being susceptible to the use of marijuana (at risk of future use) was also explored using the same definition as research methods previously established with tobacco use. Marijuana seems to be even more popular than tobacco among youth in New Brunswick, with more students using it in the past year. Even among non-users, almost 1 in 3 students who never tried marijuana is at risk of future use, in comparison to about 1 in 4 students who never tried tobacco being at risk of future smoking.
Comparison of Results

The following provides a comparison of 2009-2010 and 2012-2013 outcomes of selected New Brunswick Wellness Strategy indicators and targets related to tobacco use:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wellness indicator</th>
<th>2009-2010</th>
<th>2012-2013</th>
<th>Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth who have never smoked by grade 12</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>🔺</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth who have smoked in the last 30 days</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth reporting susceptibility to starting to use tobacco</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>🔺</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Previous values recalculated due to methodology change

The New Brunswick Student Wellness Survey (NBSWS) is a provincial initiative of the Department of Healthy and Inclusive Communities in cooperation with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Data collection and analysis is conducted by the New Brunswick Health Council. The purpose of the survey is to examine the health and wellness attitudes and behaviours of students in grades 6 to 12, and to share data to promote action around wellness. The data was collected from 35,954 students across 177 schools in New Brunswick. The fact sheets are available at [http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/dhic/wellness/content/research.html](http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/dhic/wellness/content/research.html)

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