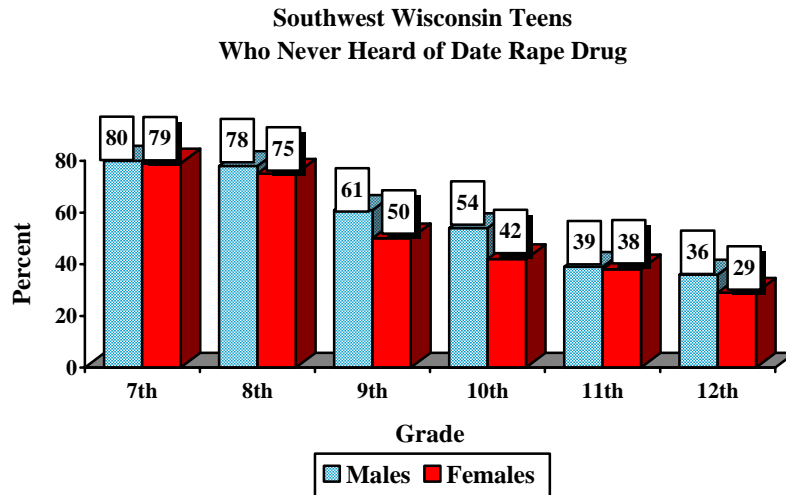


MANY TEENS UNAWARE OF “DATE RAPE” DRUG



Over half (54%) of southwest Wisconsin teens have never heard of GHB, which is commonly referred to as the date rape drug. Fourteen percent (14%) of teens have tried marijuana and 10% of teens report using marijuana in the past month. Fewer teens have experimented with other drugs such as inhalants, cocaine, ecstasy and methamphetamines. Active parenting is linked to lower levels of drug experimentation and use.

These are among the findings of the Southwest Wisconsin Youth Survey (SWYS) survey conducted by 15 school districts and more than 3700 students. UW-Extension faculty and academic staff in Crawford, Grant, Lafayette, and Richland counties are involved in processing and presenting the findings. The 7th –12th grade students who took the survey attend schools in the Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA) District 3.

“Teens were asked if they ever used GHB which was also referred to in the survey as the date rape drug. Fifty-seven percent (57%) of males and 51% of females never heard of GHB”, says Tom Schmitz, Grant County Youth Development Educator. According to the National Institutes of Health, the date rape drug is odorless, colorless and tasteless. It can be put in someone’s drink unknowingly and will incapacitate the victim for hours. The victim has little or no recollection of what takes place while under the influence of the drug and unsuspecting females have been sexually assaulted after being given the drug. “Though more older females are aware of the drug, 29% of 12th grade females and 38% of 11th grade females have never heard of GHB. Clearly it would be better if all females knew about the drug and how to protect themselves”, adds Schmitz.

“When asked how often they use marijuana, 86% said they have not tried marijuana, 10% had used in the past 30 days and 8% had used marijuana more than once a week at some point in their lives”, according to Pam Hobson, Richland County 4-H Youth Development Agent. “Obviously experimentation and use increases in the upper grades. While only 3% of seventh graders have tried marijuana, 28% of 12th graders have tried marijuana. Sixteen percent (16%) of 12th grade females and 14% 12th grade males used marijuana at least once in the past month and half of these have used it on six or more different occasions.

“Families factor in to whether or not a teen chooses to use marijuana” says Bev Doll, Grant County Family Living Agent. “For example, only 6% of teens who strongly agreed that their family loves them and gives them support when they need it used marijuana in the past month while 30% of teens who strongly disagreed reported using marijuana in the past month. The data also shows that high levels of parental monitoring, consistent enforcement of consequences for violating family rules, and helping teens understand that as parents you will report school code violations are all linked to lower 30 day use rates among teens.”

“Teens who see a moderate to great risk in using marijuana and those who feel it is wrong or very wrong to use marijuana report lower rates of marijuana use”, adds Amy Mitchell, Crawford County 4-H Youth Development Agent. “Other factors that play into teen marijuana use include self esteem, community attachment and school satisfaction.”

“While marijuana is the third most used drug among teens, behind alcohol and tobacco, some teens are experimenting with other drugs”, according to Jessie Potterton, Lafayette County 4-H Youth Development Educator. “Seven percent (7%) of teens have tried inhalants like glue or aerosols, five percent (5%) have tried cocaine, three percent (3%) have tried meth and three percent (3%) have tried ecstasy. While 30-day use rates of these substances was generally higher in the upper grades, it was interesting to note that 30-day use rates of inhalants was relatively flat at about four percent (4%) across the grade levels.”

The school districts of Argyle, Belmont, Benton, Black Hawk, Cassville, Cuba City, Darlington, Fennimore, Iowa-Grant, Ithaca, Lancaster, Platteville, Potosi, River Ridge, and Seneca participated in the survey, which was conducted in September of 2005. The study was funded by participating school districts and the Grant County Drug-Free Coalition.

A full report on the SWYS survey results is due out this summer. Hobson, Schmitz, Doll, Mitchell, and Potterton are also giving community presentations on the data. For more information on the survey contact your local school district, Schmitz and Doll at 608-723-2125, Potterton at 608-776-4820, Mitchell at 608-326-0223, or Hobson at 608-647-6148.

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