

# STIMULANTS

## Use

Among Toronto students, about 3% reported past year use of non-medical stimulants, such as diet pills, in the 2003 student survey. This percentage decreased non-significantly from 2001 (5%), and is much lower than the level found in 1983 (14%).

While methamphetamine (a.k.a. speed) appears, anecdotally, to be growing in popularity among certain mainstream groups in Toronto, the most recent Toronto data does not reflect this trend.<sup>14,15,24,54 58,59</sup> Use of methamphetamine was found to be 3% among Toronto students, similar to the low levels found in past years (fluctuations between 1% and 4%). Past year use of "Ice" (d-methamphetamine hydrochloride), a smokeable form of methamphetamine, was reported by less than 1% of Toronto students in 2003 (data not tabled). Ice use has declined since 1993, when it was found to be just over 3%.

The 2004 Youthlink survey indicated that methamphetamine use is more popular among Toronto street youth, with 37% stating they used the drug monthly or more. Monthly or more frequent meth use was also acknowledged by 14% of the street youth interviewed for the 1999 SHOUT survey. These numbers point to an increase of the use of this drug among street youth since the 1992 survey, in which only 9% of those interviewed indicated they had used methamphetamine in the 12 months preceding their interview.

## Enforcement Data

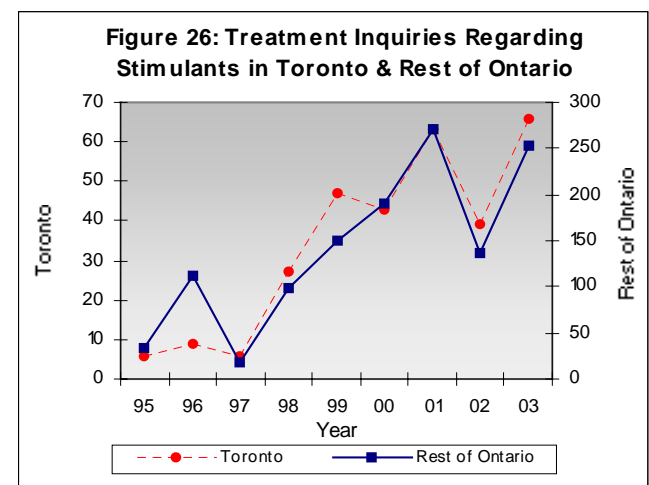
Seizure data on methamphetamine date back only to 1995. Between 1995 and 1998, both the numbers of seizures and the quantities seized were relatively low. However in 2000 and 2001, there were 46 and 48 seizures, respectively. In 2000, only about .15 kg was seized, but this quantity increased substantially in 2001 when about 7 kg was seized (data not tabled).

Seizures declined in 2002 (19 seizures; .15 kg), and remained low in 2003 (17 seizures; .17 kg). Methamphetamine seizures accounted for less than 0.5% of all drug seizures in 2003.

The average purity level of the methamphetamine seized in 2000 was about 48% (based on 17 samples; data not tabled).

## Treatment Data

Inquiries regarding treatment of stimulant-related problems are classified under the category of Amphetamines by the Drug and Alcohol Registry of Treatment. However, because inquiries regarding MDMA, or ecstasy, are also included in this category, it is not possible to distinguish between these two drugs when examining the DART data. Although the total of 66 inquiries regarding amphetamines during the most recent reporting period represented less than 2% of all those received, there is evidence of an increase over the nine years reviewed, with .3%, .5% and .3% reported in the mid-1990s. With respect to the rest of Ontario, the 252 requests representing 1.8% of all calls indicate a proportion quite close to that of Toronto. A general increase for inquiries in this category is also evident for this geographic region.



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## **D**rug-Related Deaths

Stimulants were detected in 4 individuals dying of drug-related causes during the period 1999-2001. This included 2 (1.3%) of the 150 individuals dying from drug-related causes in 1999, 1 (less than 1%) of 119 individuals in 2000, and 1 (less than 1%) of the 106 drug-related decedents in 2001. Since monitoring began in 1986, a total of 10 stimulant-related deaths have occurred in Toronto.

The lethality studies for these four deaths indicate stimulants were lethal alone in 1 (25%), part of a lethal combination in 1 (25%) and non-lethal in the remaining 2 (50%) cases.

Three of these four decedents were male. Their ages spanned two decades, from those in their twenties, to those in their forties. The median age at death was 32.5 years.

Three of these deaths were accidental, while one was the result of suicide.

**For more information on  
Methamphetamine Use in this report, see:**

- **Use of Designer Drugs among Adolescents and Young Adults and**
- **Emerging Trends in General Population Drug Use.**