



# Young People in 2000

*The Health Related Behaviour Questionnaire  
results for 42,073 young people between the ages of 10 and 15*

## **5 Legal and Illegal Drugs**

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# 5 Legal and Illegal Drugs

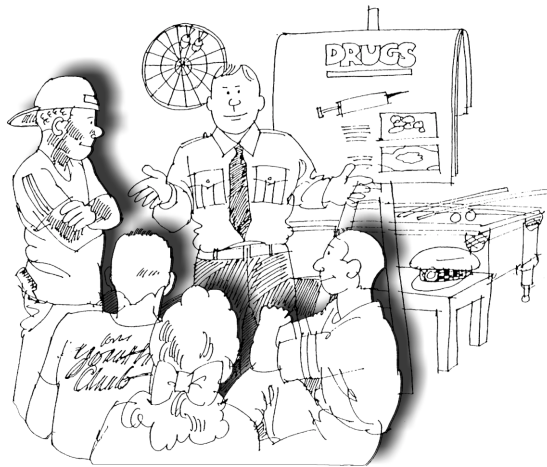
Information about the use of drugs, whether legal or illegal, is often sensationalised. It is an area where the teacher may feel handicapped by a lack of knowledge about people's degree of use, and a confidential questionnaire offers the best chance of deriving reliable information. Although tobacco and alcohol are in a general sense 'legalised', some of the questions reveal the extent of under-age purchase of alcoholic beverages. Information about personal and local use of 'illegal' drugs is presented, together with the perceived danger associated with their use. *Young People and Illegal Drugs in 2000* (Balding, 2000) provides a more detailed analysis of the findings.

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# 5 Legal and Illegal Drugs



Question

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# Alcoholic drinks

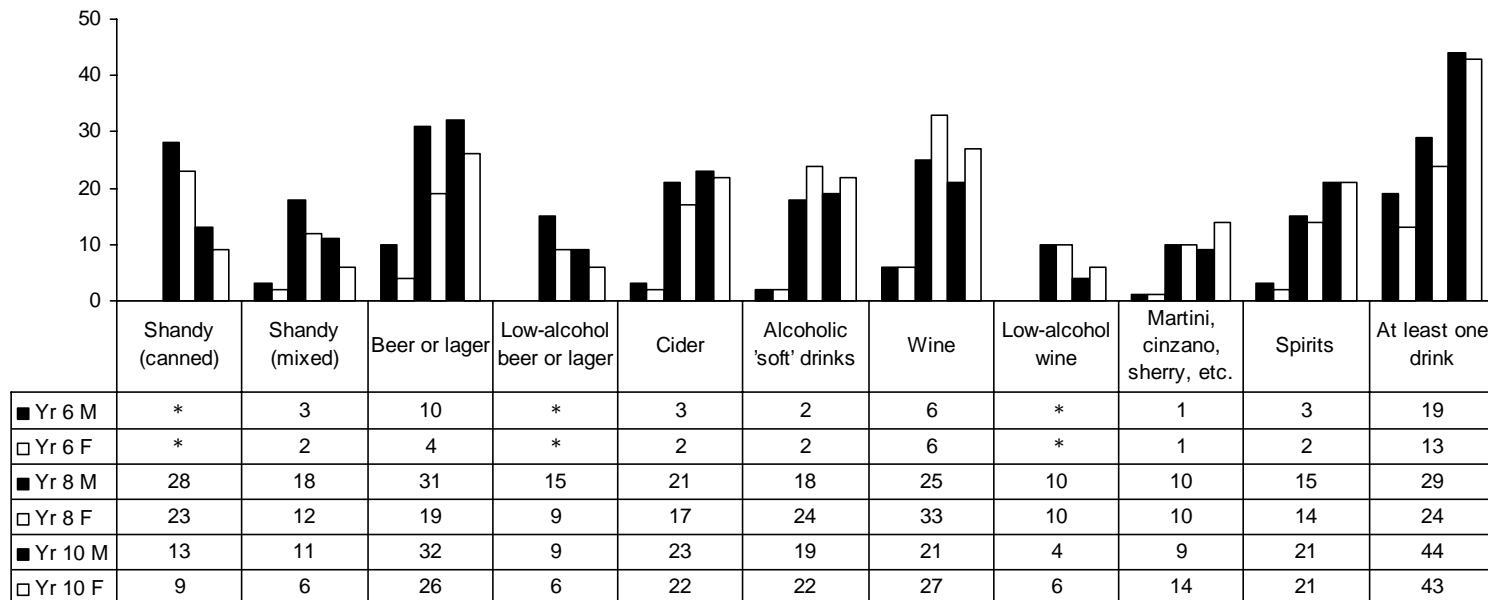
At least 43% of the Year 10's had consumed at least one drink

## During the last 7 days, have you had any of these alcoholic drinks? (D2) (Pri.35)

### Comments

1. Wine is the most popular drink for the females, and beer or lager for the males. The table shows that more than 25% of the Year 8 pupils, and nearly half the Year 10 pupils, had consumed at least one of these drinks.
2. The inclusion of figures from Year 6 suggests that alcohol careers are established at an early age.
3. 'Alcopops' are also popular, especially for females, who also have a taste for lager and spirits.

1. Canned shandy is barely alcoholic, but is recorded here to distinguish it unambiguously from mixed beer shandy.
2. Low-alcohol drinks have various strengths.
3. We note that as many Year 10 females as males drank spirits; in the 1999 book we explored how gender choices have changed over the years.



\* This option was not available for Year 6

Available sample	
Yr 6 M (10-11 yrs)	6511
Yr 6 F	6391
Yr 8 M (12-13 yrs)	7180
Yr 8 F	7548
Yr 10 M (14-15 yrs)	7034
Yr 10 F	7409

# Canned shandy

A young males' drink

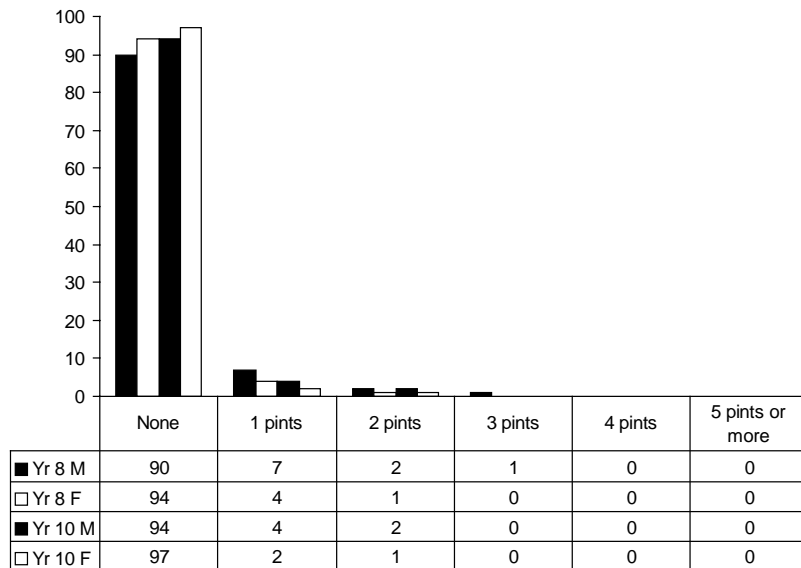
## During the last 7 days, how many pints of canned shandy have you drunk? (D2)

One small can is counted as half a pint, and half-pints are rounded up to the next whole pint. Canned shandy is not included in total alcohol intake.

1. This drink appeals mainly to Year 8 males.

### Comments

1. Canned shandy is not very alcoholic, but its associations with 'real' drink may make it appealing. It may also be less sweet than other canned drinks.
2. We have seen a decline in the popularity of both canned and mixed shandy, *Young People in 1998* (Balding, 1999). Have 'alcopops', which appeared at the beginning of shandy's decline, had anything to do with it?



Valid responses	
Yr 8 M (12-13 yrs)	7009
Yr 8 F	7439
Yr 10 M (14-15 yrs)	6923
Yr 10 F	7336

# Mixed shandy

A young males' drink

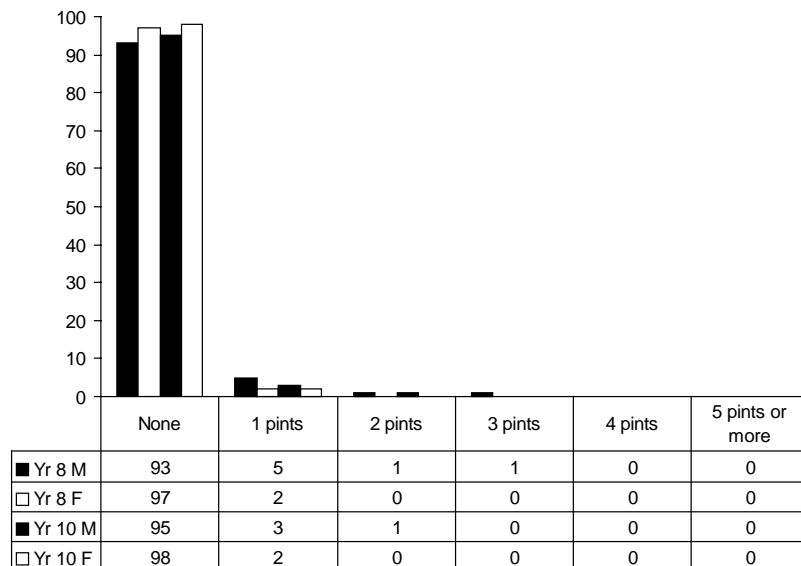
## During the last 7 days, how many pints of mixed shandy have you drunk? (D2)

### Comments

Half-pints are rounded up to the next whole pint. One pint is taken as one unit of alcohol when assessing total alcohol intake.

- 1. The Year 8 males are the principal drinkers of mixed shandy.
- 2. It is less popular with the females, and with the older pupils.

- 1. Beer and lemonade are needed to produce a mixed shandy. The message seems to be that the Year 10s are less keen to dilute their beer with lemonade.
- 2. As suggested previously with canned shandy and supported by the decline with age, the mixing of shandy with lemonade may serve as an introduction to the taste of beer to the younger age group.



Valid responses		
Yr 8 M	(12-13 yrs)	7023
Yr 8 F		7434
Yr 10 M	(14-15 yrs)	6922
Yr 10 F		7337

# Beer or lager

30% of the Year 10 males drank at least 1 pint

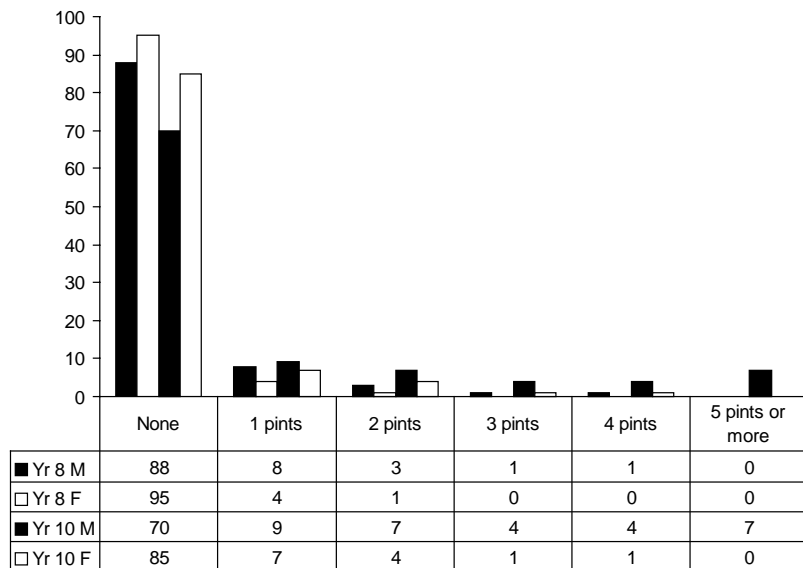
## During the last 7 days, how many pints of beer or lager have you drunk? (D2)

One pint is counted as two units of alcohol when assessing total alcohol intake, and half a pint is counted as one unit.

1. The attraction of beer or lager is much greater to the Year 10s, and to the males in particular, although 18% of the Year 10 females report drinking beer or lager in the last 7 days.

### Comments

1. Beer or lager is a predominantly male type of drink, although in 1995 a quarter of the females had drunk some — we suspect that this may have been lager rather than beer.
2. There are many high-strength beers on the market today, so the assumption of two alcohol units per pint (3.5%) is probably below the average.



Valid responses	
Yr 8 M (12-13 yrs)	6999
Yr 8 F	7438
Yr 10 M (14-15 yrs)	6866
Yr 10 F	7310

# Low-alcohol beer or lager

7% of males  
drank at least 1 pint

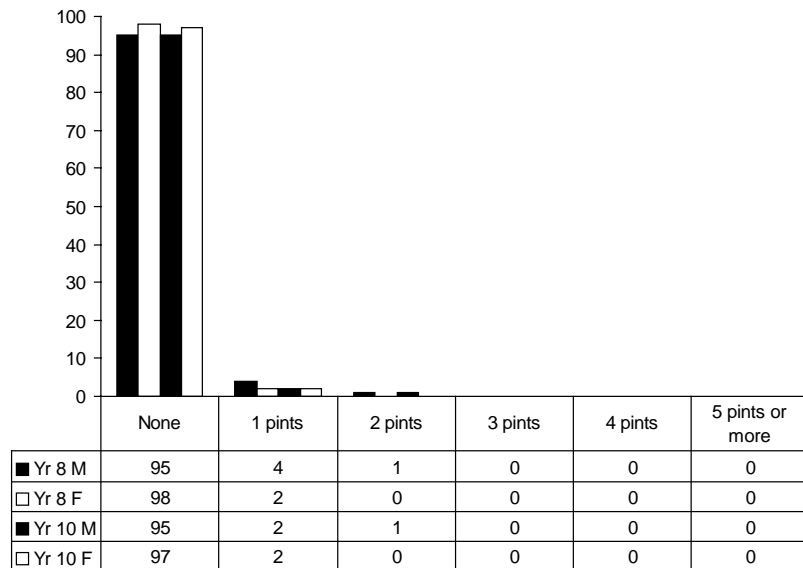
## During the last 7 days, how many pints of low-alcohol beer or lager have you drunk? (D2)

One pint is counted as two units of alcohol when assessing total alcohol intake, and half a pint is counted as one unit.

1. These beverages have very moderate appeal, which is more to the males.

### Comments

1. Perhaps these drinks become more important to young people when they need to worry about drinking and driving.
2. We wonder if all the respondents recognise what is meant by low-alcohol beer or lager. They should not be confused with non-alcoholic drinks from which alcohol has been removed.



Valid responses		
Yr 8 M	(12-13 yrs)	7014
Yr 8 F		7443
Yr 10 M	(14-15 yrs)	6915
Yr 10 F		7331



# Cider

At least 12% of the Year 10 group drank one or more pints

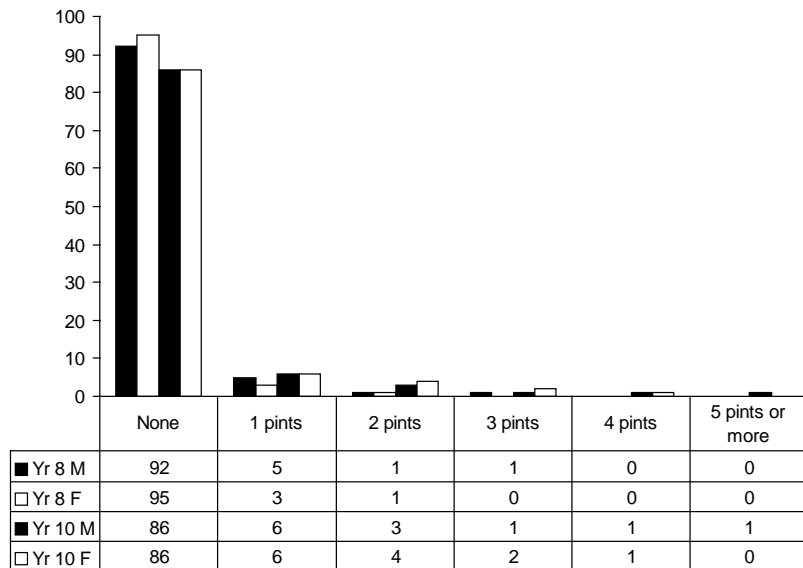
## During the last 7 days, how many pints of cider have you drunk? (D2)

One pint is counted as two units of alcohol when assessing total alcohol intake, and half a pint is counted as one unit.

### Comments

1. Cider appeals to both genders.

1. We have noticed from our regional surveys that cider consumption does vary across the UK.



Valid responses		
Yr 8 M (12-13 yrs)		7022
Yr 8 F		7429
Yr 10 M (14-15 yrs)		6894
Yr 10 F		7307

# 'Alcopops'

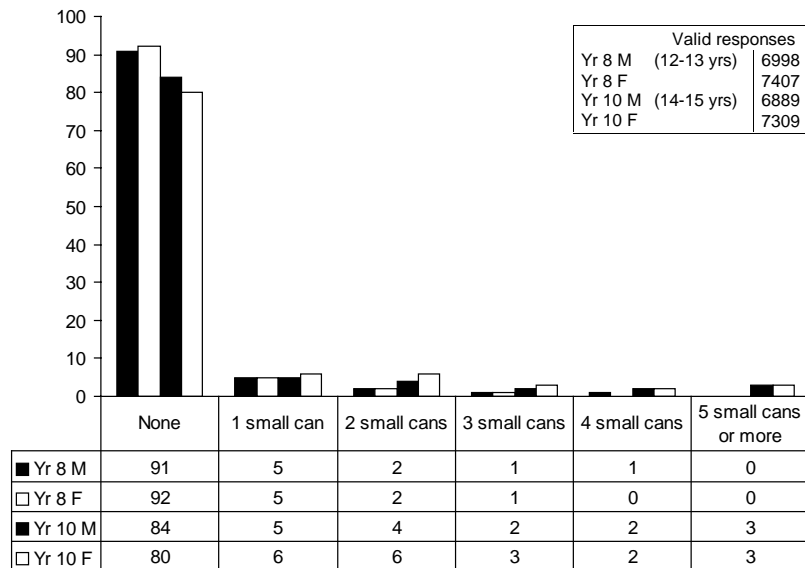
18% of Year 10 females drank at least 1 small can

## During the last 7 days, how many small cans or bottles of 'alcopops' have you drunk? (D2)

One small can or bottle is taken as half a pint, and half-pints are rounded up to the next whole pint. One small can or bottle is taken as one unit of alcohol when assessing total alcohol intake,

### Comments

1. Alcopops have a similar appeal to both genders, although more Year 10s are consuming them.



1. These controversial drinks were launched with a lot of publicity, and were immediately added to the questionnaire checklist. They achieved a high initial rating, being the alcoholic beverage recorded by the greatest percentage of Year 10 females in 1996, and standing very high for all other year/gender groups.
2. 'Alcopops' began as alcoholic 'soft' drinks (e.g. Hooch — an alcoholic lemonade), but the later ones are better described as 'diluted spirits' (e.g. Bacardi Breezer). Respondents may classify these under spirits (page 73), so that the decline suggested in the serial data could refer to the 'alcoholic soft drink' type rather than all types, especially as the prompt is e.g. 'hooch'.
3. A fear was voiced that 'alcopops' would be a gentle way of developing a taste for alcohol, and may have been marketed with that intention. In a detailed discussion of the place of 'alcopops' in young people's drinking patterns, Young People and Alcohol (Balding, 1997), we concluded that the consumers of alcoholic soft drinks tended also to consume a wider variety of other alcoholic drinks, which did not argue the case either way. However, we also discovered that the 'alcopoppers' were more likely to drink alcohol in places away from home compared with the others.

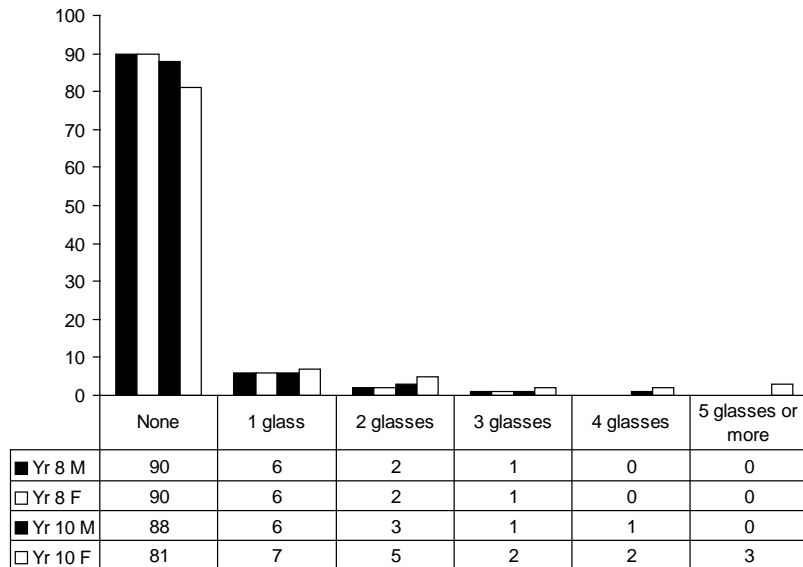
# Wine

19% of older females drank at least *one glass*

## During the last 7 days, how many glasses of wine have you drunk? (D2)

One glass is taken as one unit of alcohol when assessing total alcohol intake.

1. There is no gender difference in Year 8, but in Year 10 significantly more females than males had drunk some wine in the last 7 days.



## Comments

1. Our surveys have usually shown wine to be a 'female' drink'; page 55 shows that it was drunk by more females than males.
2. We suspect that most wine-drinking goes on at home — a big change in UK drinking habits has been buying wine from supermarkets with the family shopping. Drinking with meals is one way of introducing children to alcohol 'responsibly'.
3. As you might expect, preferences for different types of drinks vary from home to home. This can easily be demonstrated with respect to wine, and the type of national daily newspaper seen at home.

Valid responses		
Yr 8 M	(12-13 yrs)	6998
Yr 8 F		7413
Yr 10 M	(14-15 yrs)	6908
Yr 10 F		7306

# Low alcohol wine

Not much appeal for young people

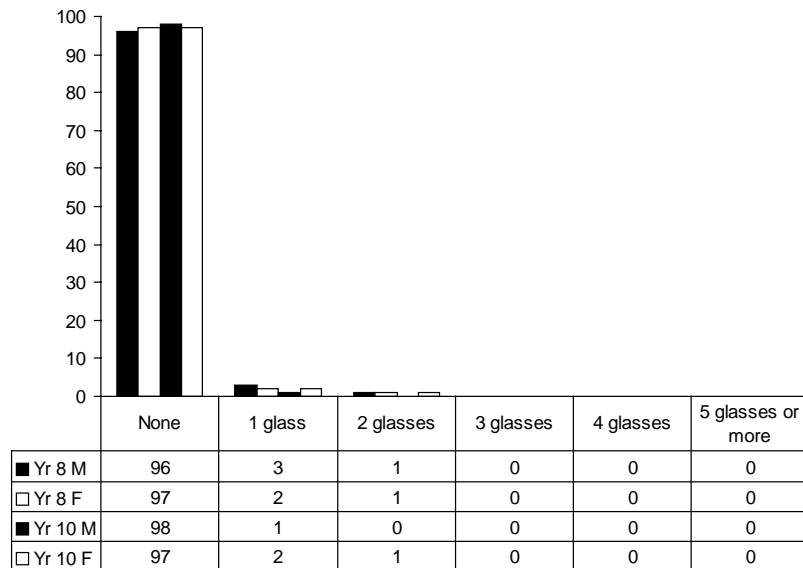
## During the last 7 days, how many glasses of low-alcohol wine have you drunk? (D2)

One glass is taken as 0.3 unit of alcohol when assessing total alcohol intake.

1. This is not a popular beverage, with only about 5% of the respondents having drunk any.

### Comments

1. As with low-alcohol beer, this alternative drink does not seem to be popular with many young people. Is this because only normal-strength wine is available in many homes?



Valid responses		
Yr 8 M (12-13 yrs)		7028
Yr 8 F		7435
Yr 10 M (14-15 yrs)		6919
Yr 10 F		7330

# Fortified wine

Not much appeal for young people

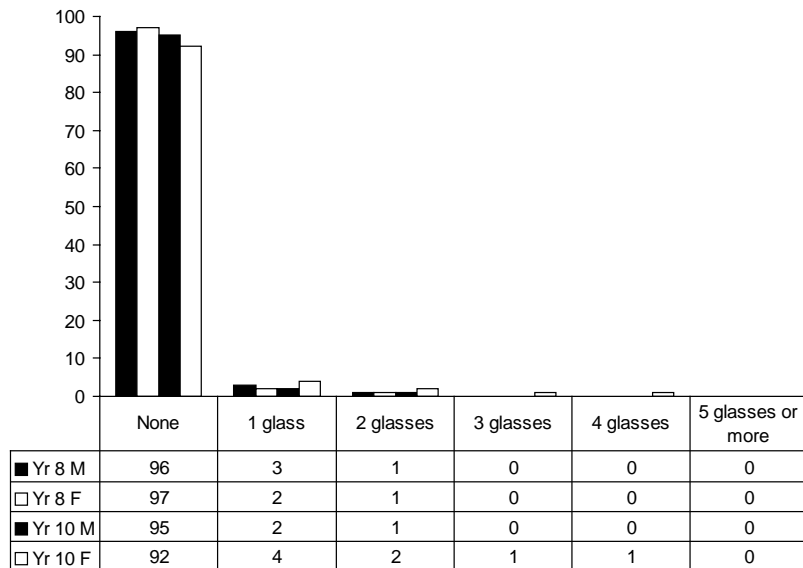
## During the last 7 days, how many glasses of fortified wine have you drunk? (D2)

One glass is taken as one unit of alcohol when assessing total alcohol intake.

1. Few Year 8 pupils had drunk any fortified wine; it is most popular with the Year 10 females.

### Comments

1. The questionnaire gives *Martini, Cinzano, Sherry, etc.* as examples of fortified wine.
2. This clearly is not a popular class of drink for any group of young people; among the drinks listed, we understand that *port* is most commonly chosen.



Valid responses		
Yr 8 M (12-13 yrs)		7029
Yr 8 F		7442
Yr 10 M (14-15 yrs)		6916
Yr 10 F		7321

# Spirits

At least 17% of pupils in Year 10 had drunk one or more measures

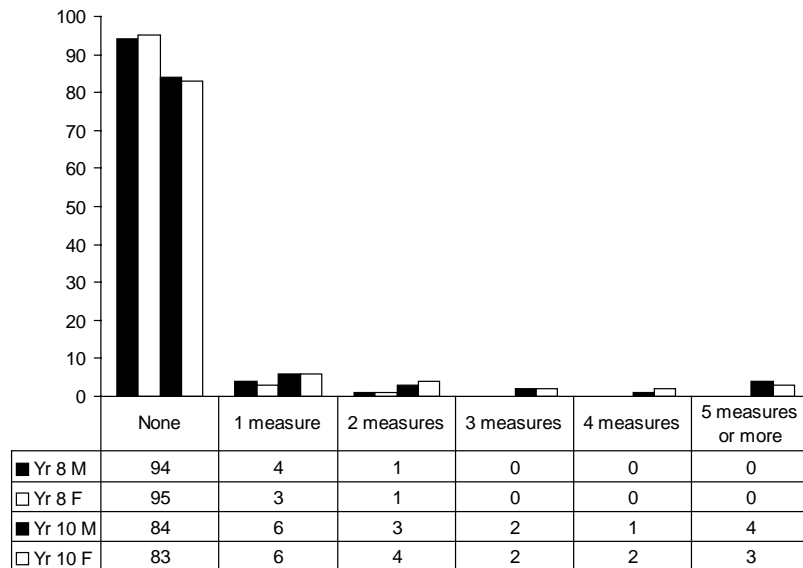
## During the last 7 days, how many measures of spirits have you drunk? (D2)

One measure is taken as one unit of alcohol when assessing total alcohol intake.

1. Very little difference is noticeable between males and females.

### Comments

1. The Year 10 females 'overtook' the males as spirit-drinkers in 1996, although the females have always been behind the males in Year 8. Clearly they develop a taste for strong beverages around the age of 14.
2. We suspect that the amorphous nature of 'alcopops', which now include many spirit-based drinks, have enhanced the recent percentages (see page 61).



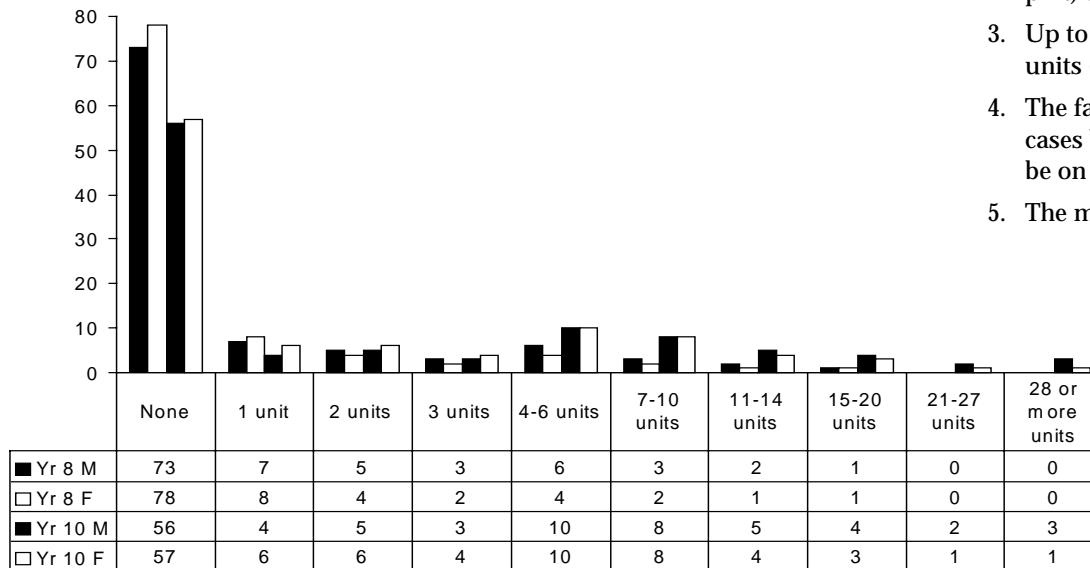
Valid responses	
Yr 8 M (12-13 yrs)	6997
Yr 8 F	7410
Yr 10 M (14-15 yrs)	6866
Yr 10 F	7251

# Alcohol units consumed

9% of the Year 10 females drank over 11 units

## The total number of units of alcohol consumed in the last 7 days (D2)

1. In both year groups, more males recorded having drunk some alcohol, in close agreement with the table on the next page.
2. Almost twice as many males than females in Year 10 drank 15 or more units of alcohol in the previous 7 days.



### Comments

1. If the recorded amount of each individual type of drink includes a half measure, this is rounded up to the next whole amount. We feel this is justified in many cases, since glasses of drink poured between friends are likely to contain more liquid than official measures. However, when calculating the units for the table on this page, the original record is referred to.
2. The number of units of alcohol consumed by beer and cider drinkers is also certainly under-estimated, as the lowest alcohol levels (one unit per half-pint) are assumed for all beers and ciders drunk.
3. Up to December 1995, the maximum weekly totals recommended were 14 units (women) and 21 units (men).
4. The fact that young people's 'measures' of wines and spirits may in some cases be generous is another reason why the derived number of units may be on the low side.
5. The mean number of units drunk by the drinkers is:

	Year 8	Year 10
Males	5	10
Females	4	7

Valid responses	
Yr 8 M (12-13 yrs)	6875
Yr 8 F	7314
Yr 10 M (14-15 yrs)	6769
Yr 10 F	7170

# Alcohol frequency

12% of the Year 10 males drank on 3 days or more

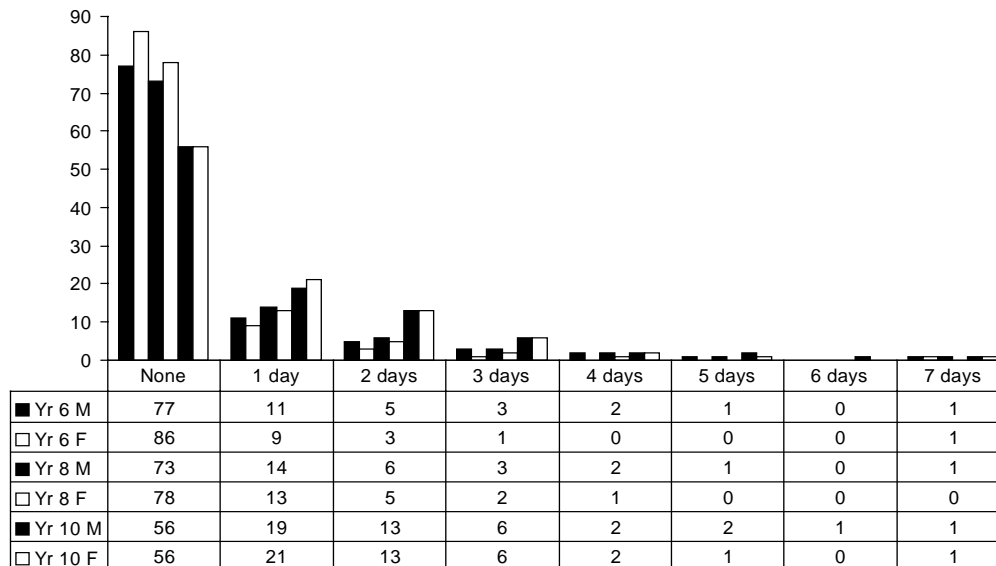
## During the last 7 days, on how many days did you drink alcohol? (D3) (Pri.37)

Canned shandy is not counted as an alcoholic drink.

1. In both year groups, the male drinkers outnumbered the females, and also tended to drink on more days.
2. However, more than half the 'drinkers' drank on only one day during the past week.
3. About 17% of the Year 10 males drank on three days or more.

### Comments

1. We see that by Year 8 at least half the potential Year 10 'drinkers' have already acquired some taste for alcohol.
2. Drinking habits of adults in general are quite regular, while that of younger adults in the 18-25 age range is more likely to feature 'binge' drinking.



Available sample	
Yr 6 M (10-11 yrs)	6511
Yr 6 F	6391
Yr 8 M (12-13 yrs)	7180
Yr 8 F	7548
Yr 10 M (14-15 yrs)	7034
Yr 10 F	7409



# Sources of alcohol

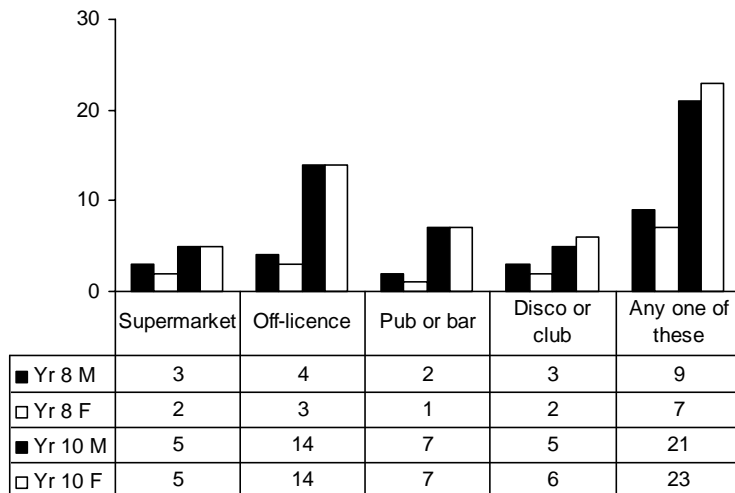
*Off-licences* feature strongly

## Have you bought alcoholic drink at any of these places during the last 7 days? (D4)

1. The *off-licence* is clearly a most important source of purchased alcoholic drink, especially for the Year 10s, with the *pub or bar* as the next major source of alcohol purchased.
2. From the last column we see that about 20% of the Year 10s bought some drink, but from the previous table we discover that around 50% of them drank some.

### Comments

1. The sites for drinking alcohol (whether purchased or not) are given opposite.
2. It is suspected that alcohol purchased by young people is more likely to be connected to alcohol abuse and public nuisance than alcohol supplied in the home.
3. Purchases of alcoholic drink are age-restricted, and while at 16 you may buy cigarettes, you must be 18 before buying alcohol. Other age-restricted products in the questionnaire include National Lottery main draw tickets and 'Instants'. In any one week, many thousands of young people are making illegal purchases of these products.



Available Sample	
Yr 8 M (12-13 yrs)	7166
Yr 8 F	7544
Yr 10 M (14-15 yrs)	7034
Yr 10 F	7409

# Drinking venues

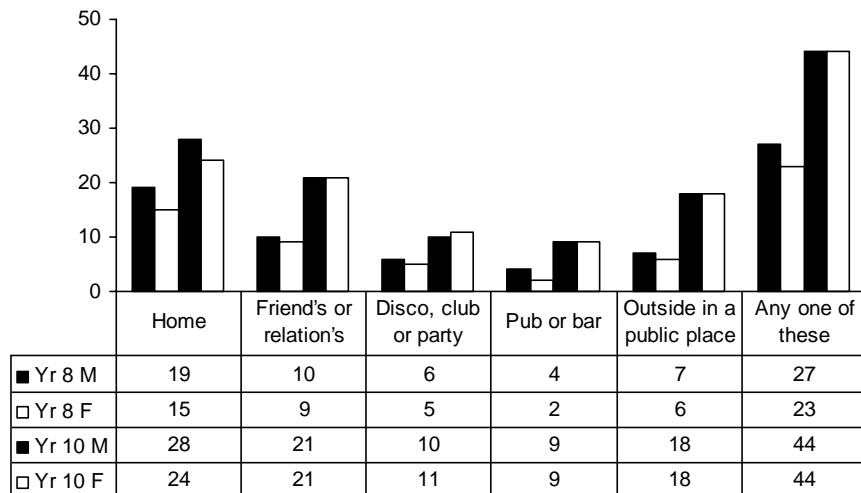
More young people consume alcohol at *home* than anywhere else

## Have you had an alcoholic drink in any of these places during the last 7 days? (D5)

1. At least half the 'drinkers' drank at *home*.
2. Substantial numbers of Year 10 'drinkers' used all the listed venues.

### Comments

1. In 1990 we asked if they had been to a pub or bar, even if they didn't drink anything, and found that over 40% of the Year 10s had done so. If this single year was typical, then far more are visiting public houses (perhaps in a family outing) than are buying or being bought an under-age drink.
2. Newspapers are much exercised by young people's drinking in public venues, either outside or inside, but the most common places are the family home and relations' homes, where there could be greater control over drinking levels
3. It is often observed that the home may be a safe and supportive environment in which to explore the use of alcohol, so that introducing children to alcohol in the home is a responsible thing for parents to do. Thus, we are effectively teaching young people to drink.
4. There is still a colossal burden of damage caused in society by alcohol, so that whatever is being done in the name of health education with children or adults, it has been inadequate to reach the roots of alcohol abuse.



Available Sample	
Yr 8 M (12-13 yrs)	7166
Yr 8 F	7544
Yr 10 M (14-15 yrs)	7034
Yr 10 F	7409

# Drinking at home

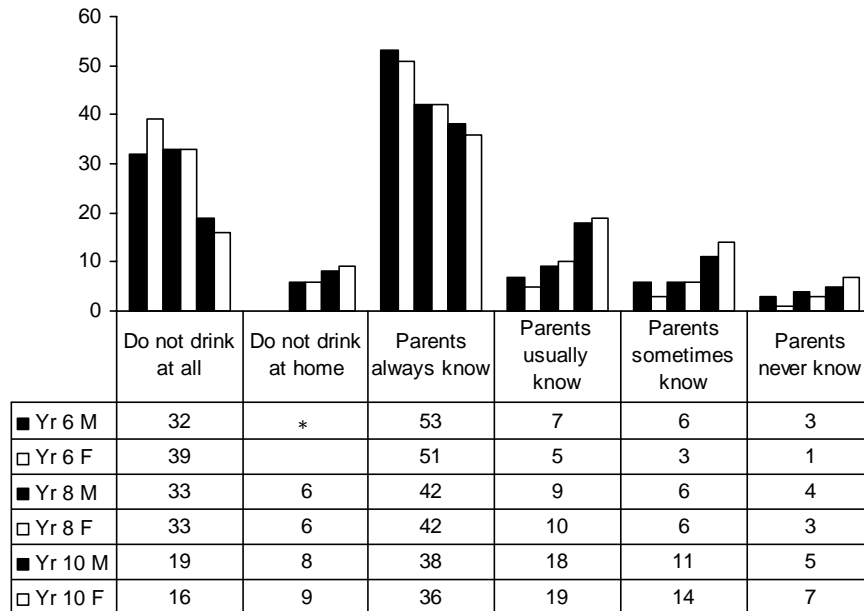
Parents of older pupils are less likely to know

## If you ever drink alcohol at home, do your parents know? (D6) (Pri. 39)

1. Approximately a third of this group do not drink at home.
2. Of those who do drink at home, about half do so with their parents always knowing about it.

### Comments

1. The question was added because of interest in the amount of alcohol being drunk during the previous week at home — always the most popular venue. The answer is that there is quite a lot of clandestine drinking going on.
2. The young people who say they do not drink at home may contain a substantial proportion who do not drink at all. These figures place an upper limit on the proportion of 'never drinkers', as we have no routinely collected information on drinking attitudes and experience to match that with respect to illegal drugs.



\* Option not available for Year 6

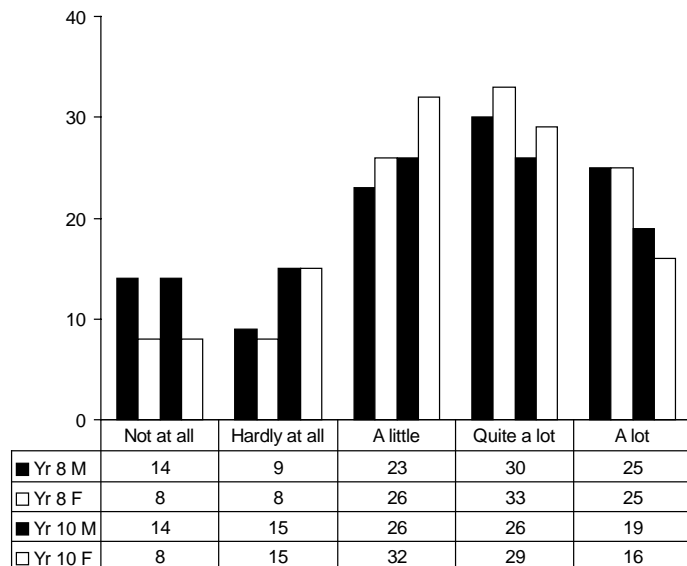
Valid responses	
Yr 6 M (10-11 yrs)	6116
Yr 6 F	6091
Yr 8 M (12-13 yrs)	6934
Yr 8 F	7374
Yr 10 M (14-15 yrs)	6846
Yr 10 F	7261

# Cigarette advertising

As pupils get older they are less influenced by cigarette advertising

## Do you think cigarette advertising influences young people to start smoking? (D7)

1. More males than females hold extreme views on this question (for and against).
2. The Year 8 pupils are more likely to think that advertising has an important effect.
3. The skew to the graph below indicates that a majority of young people report that advertising does influence young people to start smoking.



Valid responses	
Yr 8 M (12-13 yrs)	5933
Yr 8 F	6414
Yr 10 M (14-15 yrs)	5816
Yr 10 F	6262

### Comments

1. Many young people are claiming an effect that manufacturers and advertisers deny is intended.
2. The greater number of Year 8 pupils (57% against 42%) that think advertising has at least quite a lot of effect may indicate that advertising has more effect on this age group.
3. Is this a way for non-smokers to 'knock' smoking? Analysis of the answers given to this question (Young People in 1997, page 65) suggests not, as large numbers of young smokers also agree that advertising can have a significant effect.
4. A study by Willemsen and De Zwart (1999) concluded that the best approach to reducing the levels of young people smoking, was one involving a variety of strategies, including banning advertising. Another measure, they concluded, was limiting the age at which adolescents are allowed to buy cigarettes.

# Cigarettes smoked

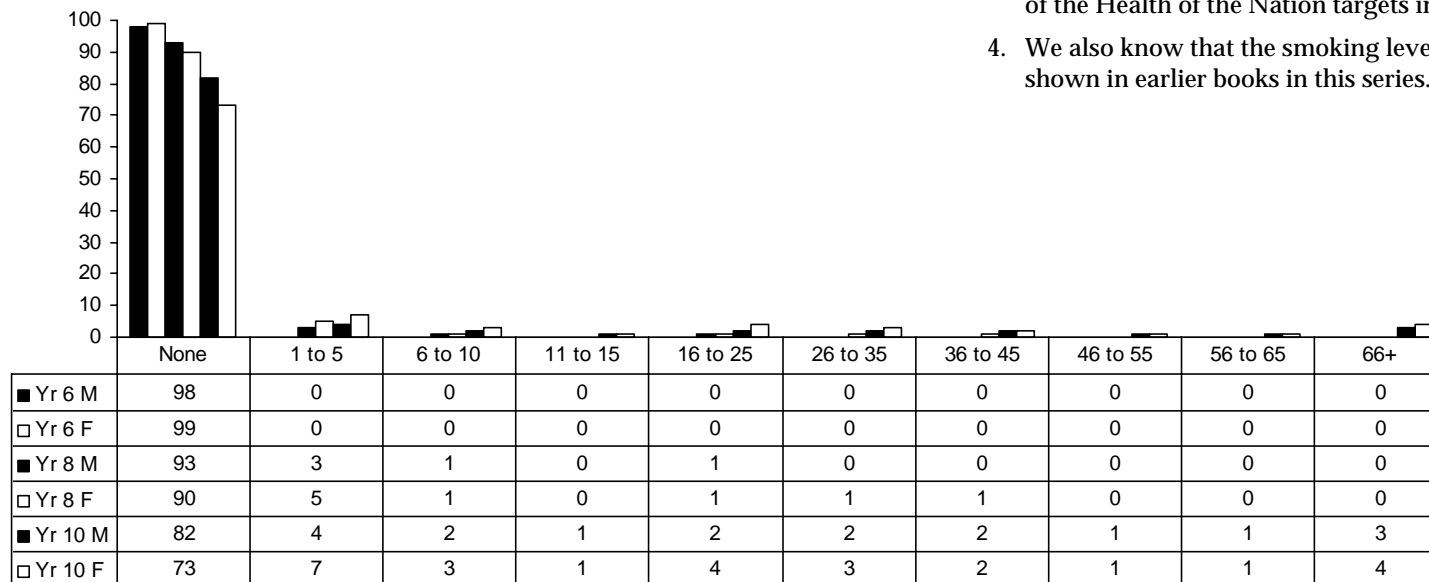
More females than males  
and in particular pupils in Year 10

## How many cigarettes have you smoked during the last 7 days? (D8) (Pri.41)

1. More females than males had smoked (with the exception of Year 6 females) and there were more smokers in Year 10.
2. There is no significant gender difference in those Year 10 pupils reporting smoking more than 25 cigarettes. The majority of smokers smoke up to 25 cigarettes a week.

### Comments

1. Assuming that many females may be going out with males older than themselves, it is possible that the Year 10s partners have smoking levels similar to the ones seen here.
2. Smoking levels of up to 25 a week are hardly addictive in adults; what is known about young people's addiction levels?
3. Smoking levels have increased rather than decreased since the publication of the Health of the Nation targets in 1992.
4. We also know that the smoking levels vary widely from school to school, as shown in earlier books in this series.



Valid responses		
Yr 6 M	(10-11 yrs)	6245
Yr 6 F		6205
Yr 8 M	(12-13 yrs)	6995
Yr 8 F		7438
Yr 10 M	(14-15 yrs)	6896
Yr 10 F		7286

# Sources of cigarettes

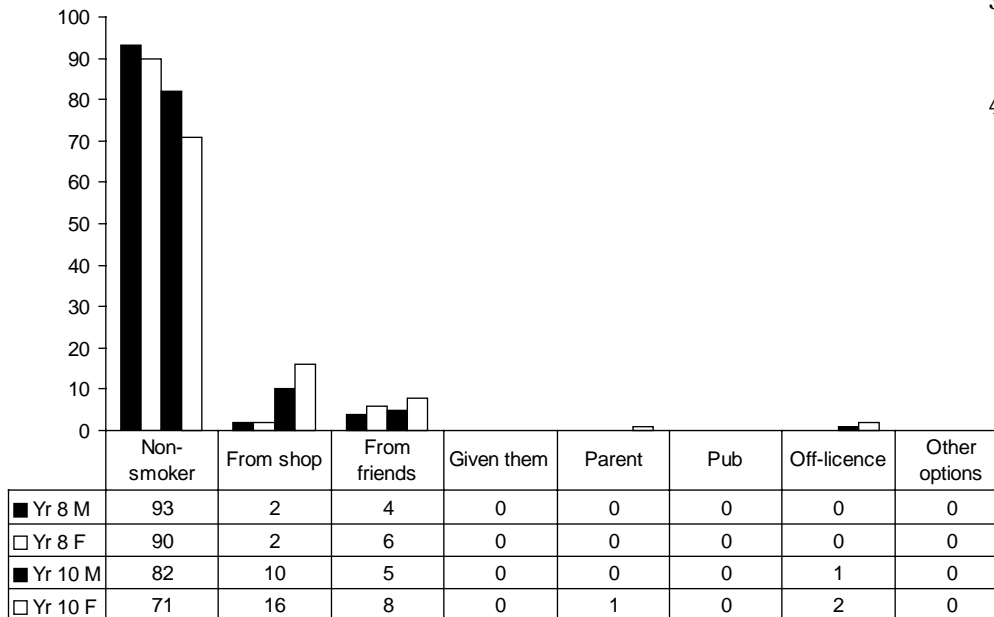
*Shops and friends were the main source*

## If you have smoked recently, where did you get your last cigarettes from? (D9)

- For the Year 8 smokers, *friends* were the main source. In Year 10, *shops* were the most important source.

### Comments

- Purchases by under-16s are illegal, but our sympathies are with any shop-keeper trying to judge the age of 14-15 year olds; fortunately there are age-verification cards available.
- The friends that supplied cigarettes to the Year 8 smokers may be older than themselves.
- The information about cigarette purchases can be related to the question on spending money (page 92). There is a very high degree of overlap — greater than 95%.
- We don't know just what sort of shop the young people use: some specify garage-based shops.



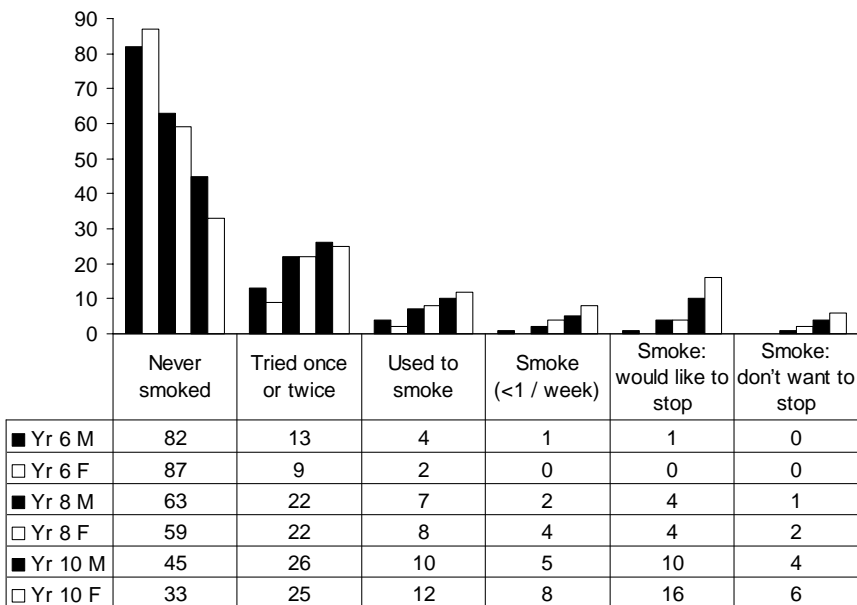
Valid responses	
Yr 8 M (12-13 yrs)	6848
Yr 8 F	7294
Yr 10 M (14-15 yrs)	6623
Yr 10 F	7076

# Type of smoker

About 65% will have smoked by Year 10

## What kind of smoker are you? (D10) (Pri.40)

- Between Years 8 and 10 the number of regular smokers more than triples.
- The majority of the current smokers say that they would *like to stop*.



## Comments

- Two-thirds of smokers want to give up. If addiction is not their problem, can we help them? Raw et al's (1998) publication recommends interventions shown to be effective with adults should be considered for use with young people with the content modified as necessary - this includes stop-smoking groups and the possible use of nicotine replacement therapy.
- We used to ask, *Do we believe the ones who say that they want to give up?* It's an easy claim to make, but it might be offered that if they really wanted to they would. We believe them more since we related their level of anxiety about smoking to their desire to give up: those that want to give up are much more worried about smoking than other smokers, (*No Worries? Balding, 1998*).
- We have seen an overall rise in smoking since 1988. This observation is supported by our other measures, and also by other surveys.
- By the time young people reach Year 10, it is unusual for them not to have tried cigarettes. Is it realistic to try to discourage experimentation? The table shows that fewer than half the number of those who have experimented are currently smoking.
- It has been observed that the children of single or divorced parents are more likely to smoke (Brynin, 1999).

Valid responses	
Yr 6 M (10-11 yrs)	6226
Yr 6 F	6199
Yr 8 M (12-13 yrs)	6960
Yr 8 F	7431
Yr 10 M (14-15 yrs)	6903
Yr 10 F	7320

# Smoker in the family

54% of the Year 10 females have a close friend who smokes

## Do any of these people smoke on most days? (D11)

1. Mother and father are the chief smoking contacts in Year 8, but in Year 10 more people know a smoking friend.
2. Fewer than a third have no close family member or friend that smokes.

### Comments

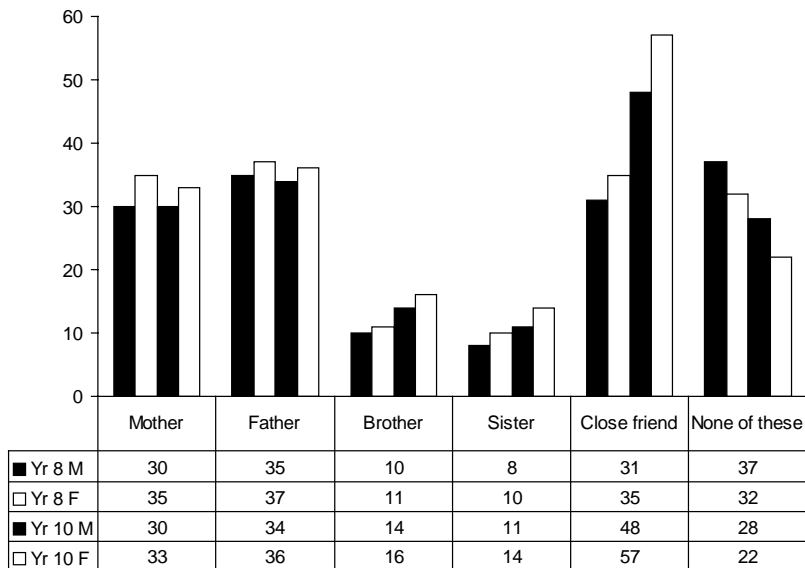
1. The greater the number of people smoking, the greater the incentive to follow suit and the chances of approval (at least from the smokers). We repeat below an analysis first published in *Young People in 1996* showing powerful links between the smoking habit and smoking by family and friends — especially siblings and close friends.

Percentages smoking among Year 10 females, by smoking among family and friends

Smoking by other?	Mother	Father	Brother	Sister	Friend
No	22%	24%	24%	24%	5%
Yes	38%	37%	44%	50%	44%

The contrast in smoking between females with and without friends who smoke is dramatic, but the highest proportion of all is among females with a smoking sister.

2. Moreover, since most young people will have both non-smokers and smokers in their immediate circle, it is clear that examples are not irresistible.



	Available Sample
Yr 8 M (12-13 yrs)	7166
Yr 8 F	7544
Yr 10 M (14-15 yrs)	7034
Yr 10 F	7409



# Smokers in the home

Around 45% live in a 'smoky' home

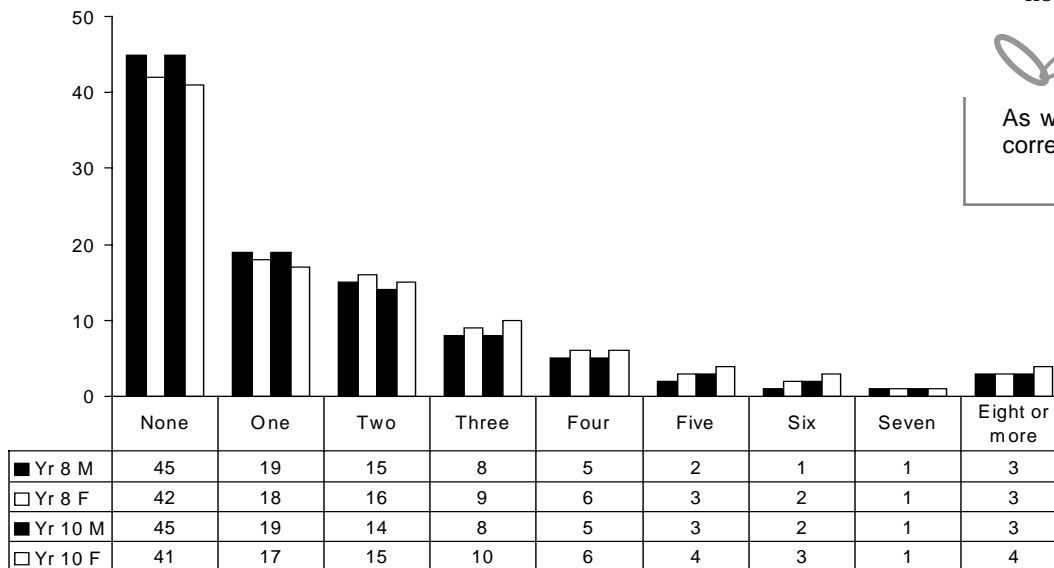
## How many people smoke on most days in your home? (D12)

### Comments

The question asks the respondents to include themselves and regular visitors if they smoke at home.

- 1. Non-smoking households are in a slight minority.
- 2. These figures seem to 'clump': smokers are more likely to be found where there is another smoker.

- 1. 'Smoking in the home' does not necessarily mean that the house is smoky. It could be banned from communal rooms, or smokers could even be sent outside.
- 2. Children in 'smoking' homes may experience approval, rather than just toleration, of smoking, and are more likely to grow up thinking that it is a normal, even expected, behaviour with important pleasures and rewards.



As with the previous question, young people's own smoking habit is strongly correlated with the number of other people smoking at home.

Valid responses		
Yr 8 M (12-13 yrs)		5780
Yr 8 F		6293
Yr 10 M (14-15 yrs)		5725
Yr 10 F		6208

# Beliefs about drugs

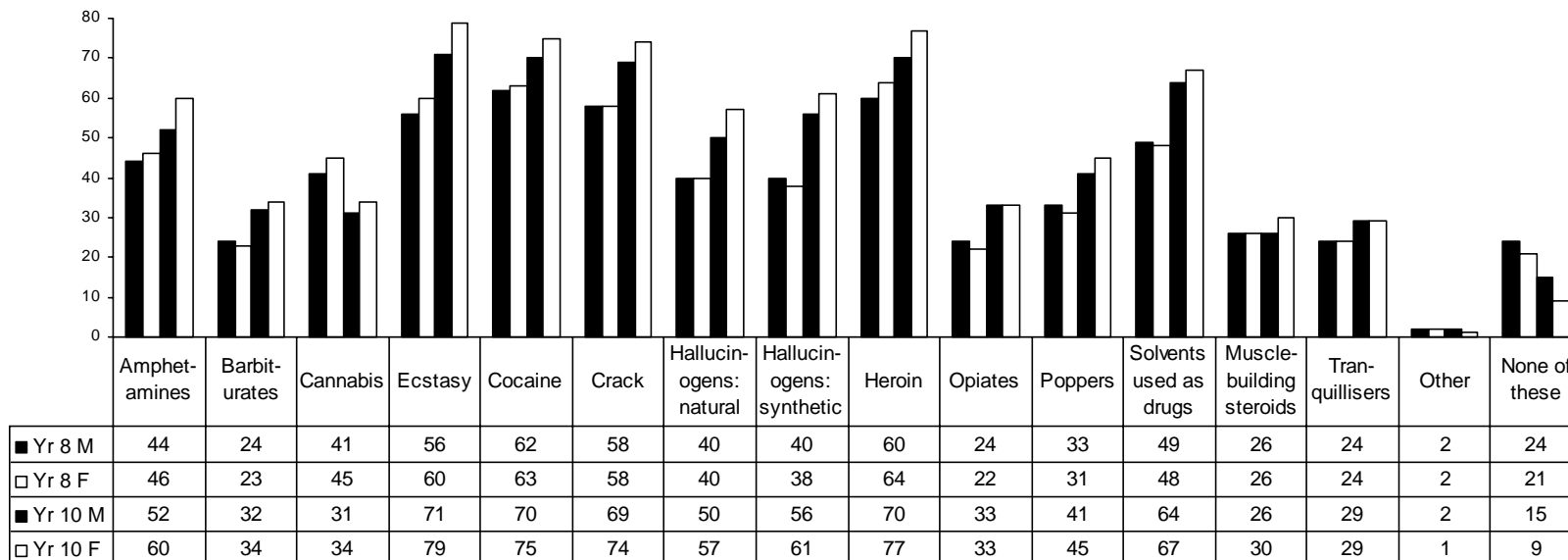
As pupils get older fewer think that cannabis is *always unsafe*

## What do you know about these drugs? (D13) Response to 'always unsafe'

1. For most drugs, Year 10 pupils are much more certain about the dangers than are those in Year 8.
2. There is a 10% fall between the Year 8s and the Year 10s response to the dangers of cannabis.
3. In most cases, more females than males think that a drug will be *always unsafe*.
4. Generally, the most unsafe are *ecstasy, heroin, cocaine, solvents* and *crack*.

## Comments

1. The response options are: *Never heard of them; know nothing about them; safe if used properly, and always unsafe*. Responses to *always unsafe* are listed here. The drugs least often reported as dangerous are *barbiturates, tranquillisers, and opiates*, but rather than voting for *safe* in these cases, pupils are more likely to signal that they *don't know* about them.
2. The dangers of ecstasy are widely discussed — for example, the Leah Betts tragedy. Some ecstasy fatalities were at least partly due to drinking too much water after taking the drug.



Available sample	
Yr 8 M (12-13 yrs)	7166
Yr 8 F	7544
Yr 10 M (14-15 yrs)	7034
Yr 10 F	7409

# Contact with drug users

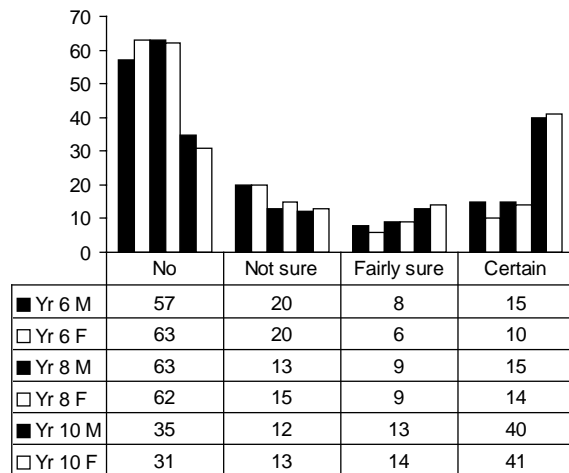
Up to 55% of the 14-15 year olds are *fairly sure* or *certain* that they know a drug user

## Do you know anyone personally who you think takes any of these drugs? (D14 (Pri.46))

1. Similar numbers of males and females thought they knew someone.
2. Around 20% of Year 6s and over 20% of the Year 8s, and up to 55% of the Year 10s, claimed to be *fairly sure* or *certain*.

### Comments

1. Since knowledge of other drug users is a key to obtaining drugs, the proportion of Year 6s reporting that they think they know some one who uses at least one of the listed drugs presents concern for the potential future behaviour of these young people.
2. This does not mean that 30% of Year 6 pupils take drugs, since 99 pupils in a school could all be thinking of the same one person, who may not even be a school pupil. We emphasise personal knowledge to exclude depictions of drug use in the media, and also give a prompt to exclude users of drugs as medicines.



Valid responses		
Yr 6 M	(10-11 yrs)	6073
Yr 6 F		6086
Yr 8 M	(12-13 yrs)	6851
Yr 8 F		7335
Yr 10 M	(14-15 yrs)	6793
Yr 10 F		7224

# Experience of drugs

23% of the Year 10 pupils have taken cannabis

## Have you ever taken any of these drugs? (D17)

### Comments

1. About 1 in 5 pupils in Year 10 — four times as many as in Year 8 — have tried at least one of these drugs.
2. Cannabis is by far the most likely drug to have been tried, with 23% of males and females in Year 10 reporting having taken it. The percentage for other drugs taken are significantly lower, around 4%, for drugs such as amphetamines, poppers and solvents.

1. We have reported elsewhere, *Young People and Illegal Drugs* (Balding, 2000), that levels appear at least to have 'stabilised' and may have fallen, after a long period of increase. When we first saw a fall in our 1997 data, we were hesitant about its interpretation, but we now have three years of lower levels, and new reports from elsewhere are in line with our figures.
2. Clearly the drug careers of young people expand from Year 8 - an indicator of the need to review the timing of drug education within both primary and secondary schools.

