Addressing Substance Use Through Youth Sport Programs

2017 Sport for Life Canadian Summit: Nurturing Excellence

Anna McKiernan, M.A., Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse
January 25th, 2017
Agenda

• About CCSA
• Youth, sport participation and substance use
• Call to action: mobilization, networking and collaboration
• CCSA youth and sport research
• What does this mean?
• Next steps

www.ccsa.ca  •  www.cclt.ca
About CCSA

• **Vision:** A healthier Canadian society where evidence transforms approaches to substance use.

• **Mission:** To address issues of substance use in Canada by providing national leadership and harnessing the power of evidence to generate coordinated action.

• **Value Proposition:** CCSA was created by Parliament to provide national leadership to address substance use in Canada. A trusted counsel, we provide national guidance to decision makers by harnessing the power of research, curating knowledge and bringing together diverse perspectives.

www.ccsa.ca • www.cclt.ca
National Priorities and Areas of Action

Children & Youth
- Problematic Substance use & Co-occurring Issues
- Canada’s Indigenous People
- Monitoring & Surveillance
- Workforce Development
- Treatment & Recovery
- Impaired Driving
- Alcohol
- Prescription Drugs
- Cannabis


www.ccsa.ca • www.cclt.ca
Youth Substance Use

- Substance use during adolescence impacts normal brain development.
- Young people ages 15 to 24 are more likely than adults to use substances and report harms due to use.
Why Look at Sport Participation?

• Sport presents an opportunity to teach youth healthy choices about substance use.

• More than 80% of youth ages 3 to 17 participate in some form of sport.

• Youth sport participation has been associated with increased alcohol consumption and evidence is mixed on the link between use of illicit substances and sport.
Call to Action

- CCSA brought together key stakeholders to discuss priority areas in the field and identify gaps.
- Priority areas included network development, knowledge exchange and more research on the relationship between substance use and sport.
- To address these areas, CCSA created the Canadian Sport and Youth Substance Abuse Prevention Network, which connects 150+ organizations (e.g., health promotion, recreation).
Collaboration and Knowledge Exchange

Previous and current collaborations include:

- SSHRC Positive Youth Development Network project
- Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport
- Respect Group
- York Region Public Health
Complexities of this Issue

Research barriers in the Canadian context:

• Lack of standard definitions and Canadian data
• Lack of research on the relationship between sport and substance use
• Complexities of measuring the effect of sport
Quantitative analysis using National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth found that sport participation was associated with:

- Increased alcohol use;
- Decreased marijuana use; and
- Decreased use of other drugs (e.g., prescription pills, cocaine).
Results revealed a relationship between sport type (i.e., structured, monitored) and substance use:

- In-school sports decreased alcohol use;
- Out-of-school sports increased marijuana use;
- Coached sports decreased marijuana use; and,
- Sports without a coach increased alcohol use but decreased other drug use.
Implications and Next Steps

- Leveraging the school and coach environment may assist in reducing substance use among youth.
- The results from this research can be shared with substance use prevention and health promotion professionals to promote use of sport in prevention.
CCSA completed an environmental scan of all youth sport programs addressing substance use that aimed to:

- Summarize North American youth sport programs that address substance use;
- Identify whether any of these programs reduced substance use among youth; and
- Summarize findings to help program developers potentially use sport to address youth substance use.
Environmental Scan of Sport Programs (cont’d)

- Scan identified 50 peer-reviewed articles and approx. 30 grey literature programs.
- After inclusion criteria were applied, 12 evaluated programs and 14 grey literature programs were included in the scan.
Environmental Scan of Sport Programs (cont’d)

- The most common program types were peer to peer, screening, consultation and counselling, and social norming campaigns.
- Results revealed:
  - Team environment can influence behaviour;
  - Feedback based on screening is more effective; and
  - Social norm campaigns targeted to an audience are more relevant.
What Does this Mean?

Recommendations for using sport to address substance use among youth:

• Include peers, coaches and parents in program delivery;
• Ensure program is relatable and personalized;
• Provide an alternative behaviour; and
• Use multi-pronged program implementation with supportive staff and appropriate materials.
Looking Ahead

Building on previous work, CCSA will:

• Begin to target specific areas of research (e.g., brain injury and substance use); and,

• Continue discussions with national sport organizations and provide subject-matter expertise to inform current or new initiatives.
Save the Date / Dates à retenir

Addiction matters • La dépendance, ça compte

November 13–15
Calgary, Alberta

Le 13 au 15 novembre
Calgary (Alberta)

Call for Abstracts Closes January 27, 2017
L’appel de résumés prendra fin le 27 janvier 2017

www.ccsa.ca • www.cclt.ca
Anna McKiernan  
Research and Policy Analyst  

Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse  
75 Albert Street, Suite 500  
Ottawa, ON K1P 5E7  
Canada  
Tel: 613-235-4048 ext. 224  
info@ccsa.ca  

@CCSAcanada • @CCLTcanada