



Canadian Centre  
**on Substance Abuse**  
Centre canadien **de lutte**  
**contre les toxicomanies**

Partnership. Knowledge. Change.  
Collaboration. Connaissance. Changement.

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# Addressing Substance Use Through Youth Sport Programs

2017 Sport for Life Canadian Summit: Nurturing Excellence

Anna McKiernan, M.A., Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse  
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# 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

# 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.

# National Priorities and Areas of Action



National Framework  
for Action (2005):  
*Collective action for  
collective impact*

# 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 of Canadian Data

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).



# Quantitative Analysis of Canadian Data (cont'd)

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.

# Environmental Scan of Sport Programs

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

## ISSUES of SUBSTANCE CONFERENCE 2017 CONGRÈS QUESTIONS de SUBSTANCE

*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**

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