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OVERVIEW

Media coverage and government debate pursuant to Bill C-45, *An Act respecting cannabis and to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the Criminal code and other acts*, have included references to data describing youth cannabis consumption rates in high-income countries described in UNICEF Report Card 11, *Child Well-Being in Rich Countries: A comparative overview* (published in 2013). The Report Card is published by UNICEF’s Office of Research-Innocenti.

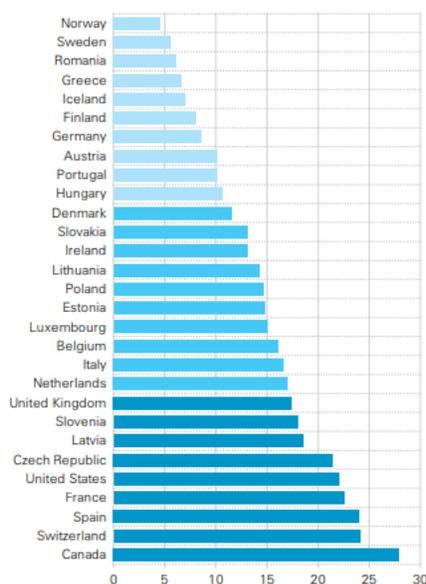
The Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade has requested a submission to describe the source of the data in UNICEF’s 2013 report.

DATA ABOUT YOUTH CANNABIS USE RATES

UNICEF Report Card 11, *Child Well-Being in Rich Countries: A comparative overview*, employs twenty-six indicators of various aspects of child and youth well-being in wealthy countries. The dimension “Behaviours and Risks” includes data comparing health risks: teenage fertility rates, smoking rates, alcohol use rates and cannabis use rates. The measure of cannabis use is the percentage of children aged 15 who report having used cannabis in the last 12 months.

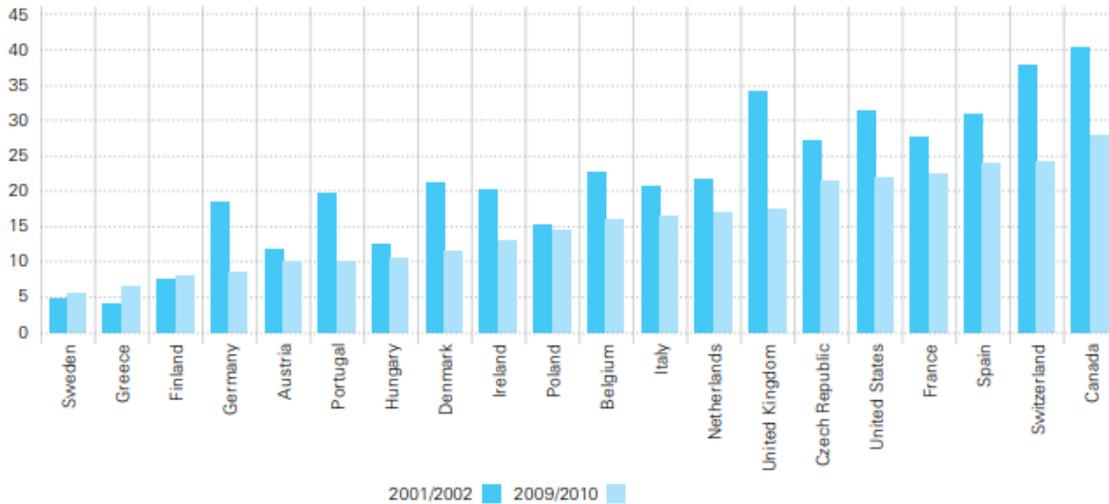
See figure 4.2d:

Figure 4.2d Cannabis
% of children aged 11, 13 and 15 who report having used cannabis in the last 12 months



See also figure 7.3c: Changes between 2001/2002 and 2009/2010 in the percentage of young people aged 15 who reported having used cannabis in the last 12 months:

Figure 7.3c Changes between 2001/2002 and 2009/2010 in the percentage of young people aged 11, 13 and 15 who reported having used cannabis in the last 12 months



Note: No data available for Norway in 2001/2002.

The data commonly cited in the 2013 UNICEF Report Card is from the 2009/2010 wave of the Health Behaviour in School-Aged Child Survey (HBSC), a robust survey lead globally by the WHO, including a large survey administered in Canada by Canadian researchers. The HBSC data was drawn from this source, cited in the Report Card:

- vi. Currie, C., C. Zanotti, A. Morgan, et al. (2012). 'Social determinants of Health and Well-being among Youth People'. *Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) Study: International report from 2009/2010 survey*. Copenhagen: World Health Organization.

Data about Canada's youth cannabis use rate is also available directly from the HBSC in public reports of repeated survey waves (<http://www.hbsc.org/publications/international/>). The most recent survey wave is 2013/2014.

The HBSC measures youth cannabis use rates with various measures of frequency (e.g., ever used, used in past twelve months...). Not all these measures are available in the public HBSC reports; for instance, the past 12 month use rate used in UNICEF's 2013 Report Card is not published in the public international HBSC reports for the past two survey waves. Additional data about youth cannabis use rates in Canada can be obtained from the Queen's University team leading the Canadian HBSC survey. The Public Health Agency of Canada also commissions reports from HBSC data.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Should there be any questions about this data, please do not hesitate to contact Lisa Wolff, Director of Policy and Research at lwolff@unicef.ca.