

SUBSTANCE USE IN RURAL YOUTH

L. Priest, L. Sinclair, C. Waid, S. Petrie, S. Steven, D. Carson, P. A. Peters (2019)



33%
of Australia's and
Canada's populations live
in rural areas



Australian and Canadian rural populations face similar challenges, such as poorer socioeconomic conditions, higher mortality rates, and higher substance abuse rates compared to urban areas

73% of Grade 9 students in rural areas tried smoking, compared to 48% in urban areas.



Understanding of health risks associated with substance abuse was lower in rural areas as compared to urban.



Alcohol use was consistently more prevalent in rural youth than urban youth in Australia and Canada.

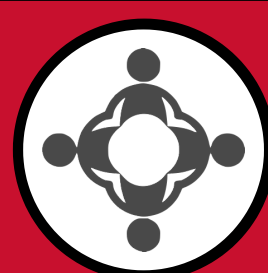


WHAT FACTORS INFLUENCE RURAL YOUTH SUBSTANCE ABUSE?



LACK OF OPPORTUNITY

- When youth in rural areas are bored, substance abuse becomes an activity.
- There are only limited opportunities for youth to alleviate this boredom.



SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

- Habits of role models and peers influence rural youth behaviour in close-knit communities.
- Rural youth may be more susceptible to peer pressure than urban youth.



SUBPOPULATIONS

- Influences may be exacerbated for youth in marginalized groups, such as those of Indigenous origin.
- Cultural factors existing within these subpopulations play additional role.



HEALTH BEHAVIOURS

- Youth forming a smoking habit was affected by peer acceptance, health campaigns, and overall health.
- Once youth begin drinking, the risk of serious injury greatly increases.

WHAT NEXT STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN?

1

Skill building and rewarding activities should be emphasized to address boredom in rural youth populations.

2

The social and cultural factors unique to rural youth must inform design of future interventions.

3

The unique characteristics of different rural communities should be considered to tailor effective interventions.

SD-L

SPATIAL DETERMINANTS
OF HEALTH LAB



<http://dx.doi.org/10.22215/sdhlab/kt/2019.7>