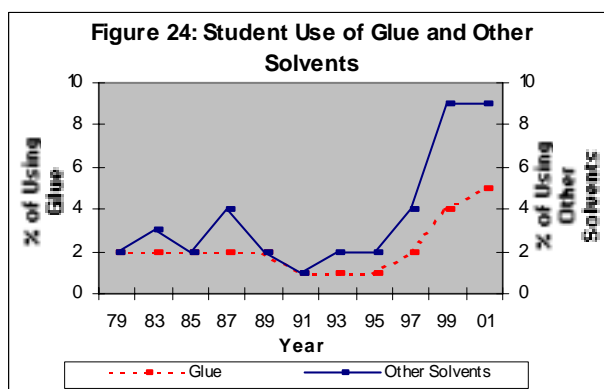


SOLVENTS

Use

The 2001 student survey indicates that about 5% of Toronto students inhaled glue during the past year. This estimate is up slightly from past surveys, which found about 1% to 2% reporting use (Figure 24, below). About 9% of students report inhaling other solvents, such as gasoline and nail polish remover. This rate is higher than those found over a decade ago (1%-2%) (Table 1, Page T1).



The 1999 SHOUT survey of street youth questioned respondents about their use of two solvents, gasoline and glue. Two percent of the respondents reported daily use of these substances, 1% reported use several times per week, 2% reported use once weekly 2% reported use once or twice per month, and 3% reported use less than once per month. A 1992 survey of Toronto street youth found that 26% had inhaled solvents in their lifetime, and 8% did so during the year before the study, similar to the SHOUT finding. It should also be noted that 39% of street youth who used inhalants at that time cited them as a major drug problem, second only to crack cocaine.

Treatment Data

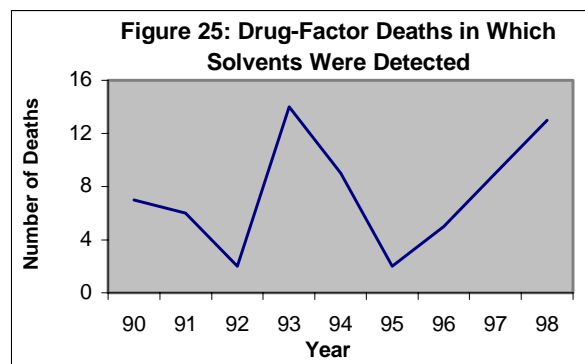
Requests for treatment of problems related to abuse of solvents (a.k.a. inhalants) are extremely low. In the past year, only 5 such requests (0.1% of all calls) were received by DART from Toronto, with only 2 such calls in the previous period. These results are consistent with earlier reporting periods. Results from the rest of Ontario are also low, with 0.5% of the total requests for both period 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 related to treatment of solvent use. Again, these results are largely unchanged from those of previous years. (Table 10, Page T14-T15).

Drug-Related Deaths

Solvents were detected in 13 of the 155 individuals dying from drug-related causes in 1998. This lies within the observed range of between 2 and 14 solvent-related deaths annually since 1990.

Lethality studies indicate the highly potent nature of solvents. In 10 of the 13 cases, or 77%, use of the solvent was the sole cause of death. In an additional 2 cases, (15%), the solvent contributed to a lethal combination, while in the remaining case the solvent was non-lethal.

Eleven of the thirteen deaths, or 85% in this category, occurred to males. Their ages ranged between 28 and 90 years.



“ The abuse of inhalants is widespread in the United States; however, it may be underreported because law enforcement officials and healthcare providers are often unfamiliar with the signs of inhalant abuse.

Abusers, primarily adolescents, inhale chemical vapours from a variety of substances, many of which are common household products. These young people abuse inhalants in order to obtain a euphoric effect and are often unaware of the potential risks, which include brain damage and death; some adults also abuse inhalants, particularly nitrites. Adult abusers often inhale substances in order to enhance their sexual experiences.”

U.S. Dept. of Justice, Intelligence Brief, Huffing, The Use of Inhalants, November, 2001.