

International Youth Development Study Research Update

2009

Hello to all past IYDS research participants...

When you were at school you completed surveys for the International Youth Development Study (IYDS). We greatly value the time and effort you gave to this research study.

This update is to tell you about what has been happening with the IYDS and to share some of our findings with you. We'll also highlight how your contribution has been making a difference.

Many thanks again for your participation in the IYDS and we look forward to you taking part again this year.

2009 update

We have a busy year coming up....
This year we will be trying to locate and contact all participants. That's you!
All of you will now have finished school and be aged 19 – 22 years of age.
The US team are also planning to contact participants for further follow-up.

Professor Richard Catalano
Chief Investigator



Professor John Toumbourou
Chief Investigator



How has your input made a difference?

Sharing the findings of the IYDS with the public through media coverage and public forums can lead to changes in community understanding and practice. This is a really important way to make sure that the things you have told us in the survey over the years are put to good use and make a difference to the lives of young people.

In 2007 and 2008 we held public forums for professionals who work with young people – these forums were about preventing violence in young people. Results from the IYDS research were shared with over 600 professionals across Australia and were also reported in the media.

Recently, our research on antisocial behaviour among young people and the effects of school suspensions on students has been covered on radio and in newspapers. This has led to discussion about behaviour management approaches.

Our principal investigator, John Toumbourou, has been in the news and current affairs talking about the issue of binge drinking and the negative impact on young people. Informing public debate is an important way in which our research has a practical impact.

Significant findings from the IYDS

School suspensions increase the likelihood of further problem behaviour

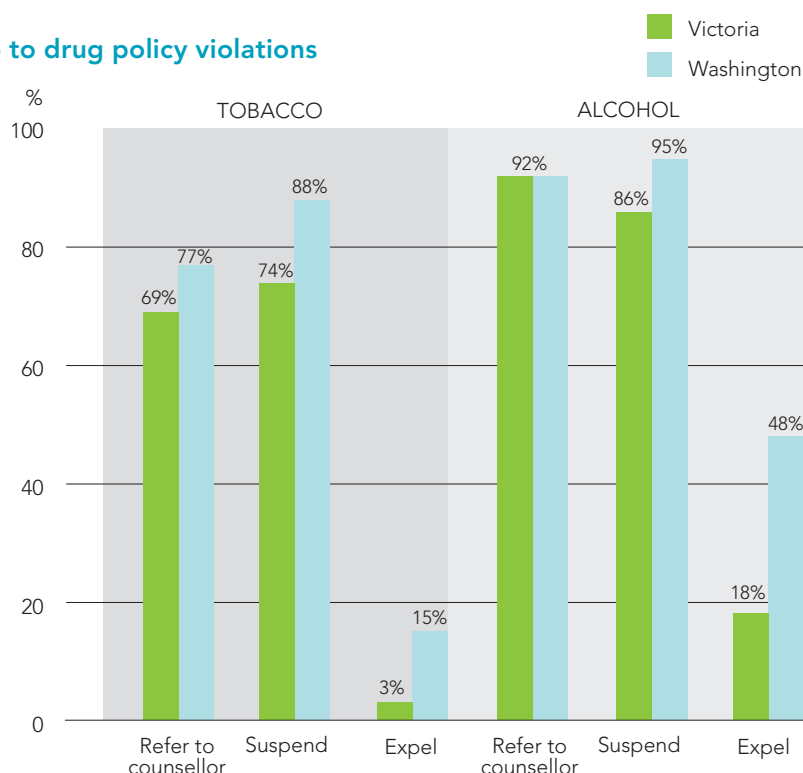
- >> The IYDS has found that rates of student problem behaviour such as theft, and physical violence are similar in Victoria & Washington; however, young people in Washington experience harsher consequences for this behaviour (eg. school suspensions and arrests).
- >> Data from the IYDS has shown that school suspensions increase the likelihood of future problem behaviour, even after taking into account a whole range of other important factors (for example: family environment, peer relationships, academic performance, etc).
- >> Further investigation: We need to think about ways suspensions are used and whether alternatives to suspension are needed for dealing with problematic behaviour. We are meeting with schools and education policy makers to discuss the findings and examine what other options may be practical and effective.

School drug policies school, parent and student perspectives

- >> One of the areas we are investigating in the IYDS is how schools handle incidents of drug and alcohol use and how they develop and communicate drug policies.
- >> We have found that Washington schools are much more likely than Victorian schools to use relatively harsh punishments such as expulsion and calling the police when dealing with drug related incidents.
- >> Further investigation: One area we will be looking at further is whether these harsher punishments lead to less drug use in and out of school and better student outcomes.

The graph below shows the percentage of schools reporting their response to drug policy violations in Victoria, Australia and Washington State, USA.

School response to drug policy violations



Puberty and alcohol & drug use

The consequences of young people using alcohol and drugs can be serious, for example there is evidence that early alcohol use is linked to later mental health and social problems.

Findings from the IYDS have shown that there are some links between pubertal development and substance use: it appears that young people who enter puberty early are more likely to have higher levels of alcohol and drugs use.

The study also found that friends' use of substances at the stage of mid-late puberty has the greatest influence on whether young people drink alcohol, smoke or use cannabis.

This finding underlines the importance of friends' influence on recreational substance use in the early teens.

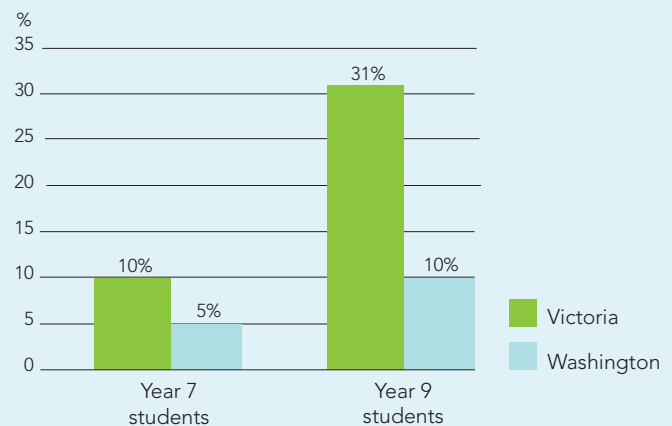
Binge drinking in Victoria and Washington

Findings from the IYDS show that students in Victoria have higher rates of binge alcohol use than those in Washington State. The rate of reported binge drinking is two times higher in year 7 and 3 times higher in year 9 for students in Victoria.

This finding is interesting given that alcohol policies in the US focus on abstinence whereas here in Australia the focus is on safe use.

Continued followup of the IYDS participants will enable us to look at the long term effects of differences in early alcohol use in the two states.

Percentage of students reporting having had '5 or more alcoholic drinks in a row' in the past 2 weeks (2002)



Meet the team...



Back row (left to right): Rachel Smith, Eileen Cini, Michelle Tollit, Ric Catalano
Front row: Tracy Evans-Whipp, John Toubmourou, Dave Broderick, Rachel Leung
Other members of our team not present on the day: Sheryl Hemphill, Aneta Kotevski, Tracey Spilsbury, Jesse Heerde, Kate Willcox, Melanie Tokley

International Youth Development Study

Where are you now?

99% of you completed the survey in 2003 and 97% completed it in 2004.

You are very important to the IYDS research and we want to keep in touch! If you have moved house or have a new phone number or email address since you were at school, please contact us so that we can update your details.

You can contact us toll-free on
1800 200 141

or e-mail us at

internationalyouth.developmentstudy@rch.org.au

To find out more about the IYDS...

including:

- >> latest news
- >> latest research
- >> recent articles and publications

GO TO OUR WEBSITE!

www.iyds.org

Things you should know...

How many years will the IYDS project continue?

The project has funding this year to locate and contact past participants who were in the middle and oldest groups. We will be asking you to complete a brief questionnaire. We will also be surveying those in the youngest group once they have finished school (in 2010). We will continue to analyse data and publicise findings and information from the project through the media, our website, scientific journals and public forums.

When will I be contacted ?

We will be sending out letters and a short questionnaire to the middle and oldest groups from May – July this year. We will also be contacting participants by phone.

How to contact us:

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