

# The 2020 CAMH MONITOR eREPORT

## Executive Summary

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health's *CAMH Monitor* is the longest ongoing population survey of adult substance use in Canada. The study, which spans **43 years**, is based on 34 cross-sectional probability surveys, conducted between 1977 and 2019. The 2020 cycle of the *CAMH Monitor* is based on quota sampling and a web panel survey with **3,033**

adults aged 18 and older across Ontario. This summary presents the estimates of substance use and related harms, as well as mental health and well-being indicators among Ontario adults in 2019 (pre-COVID-19) and 2020 (during COVID-19). For comparison purposes, adjusted estimates are presented within the table and throughout.

### Substance Use, Mental Health & Well-Being Indicators, 2019/2020 CAMH Monitor

Indicator	2019 (adjusted <sup>1</sup> )			2020 (adjusted <sup>1</sup> )		
	Tot %	M %	W %	Total %	M %	W %
<b>Alcohol</b>						
Percentage drinking alcohol - past 12 months	81.5	82.7	80.5	79.1	80.0	78.5
Percentage drinking daily - total sample	5.9	7.6	4.2	9.4 <sup>a</sup>	12.0 <sup>b</sup>	7.2 <sup>c</sup>
- among drinkers	7.4	9.4	5.5	11.7 <sup>a</sup>	14.5 <sup>b</sup>	9.2 <sup>c</sup>
Average number of drinks consumed weekly						
- among drinkers (mean)	4.5	5.9	3.3	6.6 <sup>a</sup>	8.6 <sup>b</sup>	4.8 <sup>c</sup>
Percentage consuming 5 or more drinks on a single occasion weekly (weekly binge drinking)						
- total sample	5.8	8.4	3.5	11.5 <sup>a</sup>	15.9 <sup>b</sup>	7.6 <sup>c</sup>
- among drinkers	7	10.1	4.3	14.6 <sup>a</sup>	20.0 <sup>b</sup>	9.5 <sup>c</sup>
Percentage reporting hazardous or harmful drinking (AUDIT 8+) - total sample	13	18	8.4	21.4 <sup>a</sup>	27.3 <sup>b</sup>	16.2 <sup>c</sup>
- among drinkers	15.6	21.5	10.1	27.5 <sup>a</sup>	35.1 <sup>b</sup>	20.5 <sup>c</sup>
Percentage reporting symptoms of alcohol dependence (based on the AUDIT) - total sample	7.1	9.1	5.3	14.2 <sup>a</sup>	17.3 <sup>b</sup>	11.2 <sup>c</sup>
<b>Tobacco</b>						
Percentage currently smoking cigarettes	15.2	18.6	12	18.6 <sup>a</sup>	20.6	16.4 <sup>c</sup>
Daily smoking	11	12.8	9.1	13.8 <sup>a</sup>	14.8	12.7 <sup>c</sup>
Average number of cigarettes smoked daily - among smokers (mean)	10.5	10.3	9.3	9.6	8.6	9.7
Percentage of daily smokers reporting high nicotine dependence - among daily smokers	12.9	15.6	5.9	8.4	5.1 <sup>b</sup>	10.1
Percentage reporting electronic cigarette use - past 12 months	12.3	13.5	11.2	15.5 <sup>a</sup>	17.7 <sup>b</sup>	13.4
<b>Cannabis</b>						
Percentage using cannabis in lifetime	54.3	58.5	50.4	52.1	53.0 <sup>b</sup>	51.2
Percentage using cannabis - past 12 months	25.5	30.8	20.5	31.9 <sup>a</sup>	34.0	29.7

Percentage reporting moderate to high risk of cannabis problems (ASSIST-CIS 4+)						
- total sample	<b>13</b>	17.6	8.6	<b>17.2<sup>a</sup></b>	19.6	14.5 <sup>c</sup>
- among users	<b>53.2</b>	57.3	46.4	<b>56.2</b>	60.7	50.3
Percentage using cannabis for medical purposes - past 12 months	<b>10.2</b>	12.3	8.2	<b>13.6<sup>a</sup></b>	12.9	13.9 <sup>c</sup>
<b>Cocaine</b>						
Percentage using cocaine in lifetime	<b>11</b>	14.5	7.8	<b>14.8<sup>a</sup></b>	17.4	12.4 <sup>c</sup>
Percentage using cocaine - past 12 months	<b>2</b>	2.6	1.4	<b>3.5<sup>a</sup></b>	4.3	2.7
<b>Prescription Opioid Pain Relievers</b>						
Percentage reporting any use (medical or nonmedical) of prescription opioid pain relievers - past 12 months	<b>23.5</b>	21.9	25.2	<b>33.5<sup>a</sup></b>	32.3 <sup>b</sup>	34.7 <sup>c</sup>
Percentage using prescription opioid pain relievers for nonmedical purposes - past 12 months	<b>5.3</b>	5	5.6	<b>17.9<sup>a</sup></b>	19.5 <sup>b</sup>	16.4 <sup>c</sup>
<b>Driving<sup>2</sup></b>						
Percentage of drivers who drove after drinking two or more drinks in the previous hour - past 12 months	<b>3.7</b>	5.2	2.4	<b>4.7</b>	7.1	2.1
Percentage of drivers who drove after using cannabis in the previous hour - past 12 months	<b>3.1</b>	4.4	1.7	<b>2.7</b>	3.4	1.9
Percentage of drivers who reported texting while driving - past 12 months	<b>28.7</b>	29	27.9	<b>25</b>	27.5	22.7 <sup>c</sup>
<b>Mental Health</b>						
Percentage reporting moderate to serious psychological distress during the past 30 days (K6/8+)	<b>16.9</b>	14.6	19.3	<b>34.9<sup>a</sup></b>	31.0 <sup>b</sup>	38.8 <sup>c</sup>
Percentage reporting serious psychological distress during the past 30 days (K6/13+)	<b>6.2</b>	4.3	8.2	<b>14.4<sup>a</sup></b>	12.0 <sup>b</sup>	16.7 <sup>c</sup>
Percentage using prescribed antianxiety medication - past 12 months	<b>13.7</b>	10.4	16.8	<b>19.5<sup>a</sup></b>	16.0 <sup>b</sup>	22.6 <sup>c</sup>
Percentage using prescribed antidepressant medication - past 12 months	<b>11.6</b>	8.3	14.4	<b>16.3<sup>a</sup></b>	12.2 <sup>b</sup>	20.1 <sup>c</sup>
Percentage reporting fair or poor mental health in general	<b>12.4</b>	10.6	13.9	<b>26.7<sup>a</sup></b>	21.4 <sup>b</sup>	31.5 <sup>c</sup>
Percentage reporting frequent mental distress days (14+) during the past 30 days	<b>12.8</b>	8.9	16.6	<b>17.3</b>	12.9	21.6
Percentage reporting suicidal ideation - past 12 months	<b>3.8</b>	2.5	5	<b>7.7<sup>a</sup></b>	7.8 <sup>b</sup>	7.6
<b>Physical Health</b>						
Percentage reporting fair or poor health in general	<b>12.4</b>	13.8	10.9	<b>17.6<sup>a</sup></b>	17.7 <sup>b</sup>	17.6 <sup>c</sup>
Percentage reporting frequent physically unhealthy days (14+) during the past 30 days	<b>11.7</b>	10.5	12.7	<b>12.9</b>	10.9	14.9

Notes: The 2019 CAMH Monitor was a telephone survey conducted January to December, 2019. The 2020 survey was conducted using a web panel between September 29 and December 18, 2020. <sup>1</sup>The 2019 and 2020 total estimates were adjusted for sex, age, education, region and immigration status. Sex-stratified estimates were adjusted for age, education, region and immigration status. <sup>a</sup> Significant difference between 2019 and 2020 among total sample; <sup>b</sup> Significant difference between 2019 and 2020 among men; <sup>c</sup> Significant difference between 2019 and 2020 among women at p<0.05; <sup>2</sup> estimates are based on licensed drivers.

## Overall changes between 2019 and 2020

Overall, the 2020 adjusted estimates were significantly higher than the 2019 adjusted estimates for most indicators including:

- daily drinking
- average number of drinks consumed weekly
- weekly binge drinking
- drinking hazardously or harmfully
- symptoms of alcohol dependence
- current cigarette smoking
- daily smoking
- e-cigarette use in the past year
- cannabis use in the past year
- cannabis use problems
- cannabis use for medical purposes in the past year
- cocaine use during lifetime
- cocaine use in the past year
- any use of prescription opioids in the past year
- nonmedical use of prescription opioids in the past year
- moderate to serious psychological distress
- serious psychological distress
- use of antianxiety medication in the past year
- use of antidepressants in the past year
- fair or poor mental health
- suicidal ideation, and
- fair or poor general health

## Subgroup Differences between 2019 and 2020

**Among both men and women**, 2020 estimates were significantly higher than 2019 estimates for the following:

- daily drinking
- average number of drinks consumed weekly
- weekly binge drinking
- drinking hazardously or harmfully
- symptoms of alcohol dependence
- any use of prescription opioids in the past year
- nonmedical use of prescription opioids in the past year
- moderate to serious psychological distress
- serious psychological distress
- use of antianxiety medication in the past year
- use of antidepressants in the past year
- fair or poor mental health
- fair or poor general health

There were also some significant differences between 2019 and 2020 among men that were not evident among women, and vice versa. Specifically,

- **Men** displayed **higher** percentage estimates in 2020 compared to 2019 for reporting electronic cigarette use, and suicidal ideation, and **lower** percentages for high nicotine dependence and lifetime use of cannabis.
- **Women** displayed **higher** estimates in 2020 compared to 2019 for currently smoking cigarettes, daily smoking, past year cannabis use, moderate to high risk of cannabis problems, medical use of cannabis in the past year, use of cocaine during lifetime, and **lower** percentages in reporting texting while driving in the past year.

**Age** group differences were observed between 2019 and 2020 for most substance use and mental health concerns. Among **18 to 29** year olds, a significant decline was observed for drinking alcohol in the past year, and significant increases for reporting symptoms of alcohol dependence, reporting moderate to serious psychological distress, serious psychological distress, reporting their mental health as fair or poor, and suicidal ideation.

**Among 30 years and older** respondents, the percentage reporting substance use or mental health concerns was significantly higher in 2020 compared to 2019 for the following:

- daily drinking (except 65+ year olds)
- average number of drinks consumed weekly
- weekly binge drinking,
- drinking hazardously or harmfully
- symptoms of alcohol dependence
- e-cigarette use in the past year (only among 40-49 and 50-64)
- cannabis use in the past year
- moderate to serious psychological distress
- serious psychological distress (except 30 to 39 year olds)
- past year use of antianxiety medication use (only among 50 to 64 year olds)
- past year use of antidepressants (only among 50 to 64, and 65+ year olds)
- fair or poor mental health
- suicidal ideation (only among 40 to 49 years old), and
- fair or poor general health (except 65+ year olds).