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AUTHOR Adams, Ronald D.; Gleaton, Thomas J.
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ABSTRACT

A national survey to obtain adolescent drug use patterns in Malta was conducted on November 29, 1991. A total of 20,815 students were surveyed in Malta and Gozo. Ages ranged from 11 to 17 years. Tabular reports were prepared for each participating school, regionally, and for the total or national sample. The overwhelming majority of students surveyed reported using alcoholic beverages, particularly birra/shandy and inbid. While one-fourth to one-third of the younger students (ages 11-13) reported drinking liquor, over half of the older students reported drinking this more concentrated form of alcohol. Male students were slightly more likely to drink alcoholic beverages than female students. Marijuana or haxixa was the most used illicit drug, and its use was reported mostly by older male students. A higher percentage of younger students reported using cigarettes and alcohol at an early than did the older students, but this finding may be explained by student dropout or other reasons. There seemed to be a progressive pattern of students reporting becoming intoxicated. Students reported cigarettes and alcoholic beverages were easily obtained. In summary findings from the Maltese survey suggest that use patterns and availability of alcohol poses a health problem among Maltese students and that education regarding harmful effects of alcohol by children and young adolescents needs to be made available to concerned adults as well as to students. (ABL)

1991 MALTESE SURVEY OF ADOLESCENT DRUG USE

Prepared by

Ronald D. Adams, Ed.D.

and

Thomas J. Gleaton, Ed.D.

PRIDE, Inc.

Submitted to

Mgr. Victor Grech, Director

and

Ms. Josette Farrugia

CARITAS Malta

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Introduction

I.A. Procedures

The utilization of reliable, accurate information about adolescent drug use patterns is central to planning, implementing, and monitoring effective prevention programs in Malta. A national survey to obtain this information was initiated by CARITAS in the fall of 1991, under the direction and guidance of Mrs. Josette Farrugia and Mgr. Victor Grech. PRIDE International, Inc. provided technical assistance to CARITAS in the planning, implementation, and completion of the survey.

Specifically, PRIDE research staff assisted in the 1) planning of the procedures for administering the survey forms; 2) modification of the items on the PRIDE Questionnaire to meet the needs of Malta; 3) translation of the PRIDE Questionnaire to provide questionnaire forms in the Maltese language; 4) custom printing and machine scoring of the Maltese Questionnaire forms; 5) computer analyses of the data collected from the Maltese National Survey; 6) provision of individual school reports to CARITAS for dissemination; 7) provision of tabular reports for sub-samples designated by survey directors; 8) a tabular report of the total Maltese data set; and 9) this custom report of selected findings from the Maltese National Survey.

Dr. Ronald D. Adams and Ms. Kay Bondurant of PRIDE International visited Malta during the week of September 23, 1991 to meet with key Maltese leaders and professionals regarding the

survey and to work with Mrs. Farrugia and Mgr. Grech in finalizing the procedures for the survey. The forms were completed and printed in October, 1991 and sent to Malta on November 15, 1991. The Maltese National Survey was conducted on November 29, 1991 with students in Malta and Gozo completing the questionnaire at 9:00 a.m. on this date. Forms were collected and prepared for shipment to PRIDE International in December. PRIDE received the forms on December 20, 1991.

Forms were processed utilizing an NCS OpScan 21 Model 100 in late December, and computer analyses of the survey data were completed in early January, 1992. Ninety-one individual school reports and 6 regional and national reports were shipped to Malta on January 15, 1992. Diskettes containing the raw data were prepared and sent to Malta in February, 1992 to allow for additional analyses of data by Maltese researchers. This report was prepared by PRIDE research staff as an interim, outside assessment to assist the directors of the Maltese National Survey in preparation of the final report.

Selected findings were included in this report that dealt with patterns of use and availability. Questions of prevalence of use, age of first use, intoxicating effects of use, and availability were chosen as these questions are most often used to assess the degree or magnitude of a nation's drug problem. Other questions such as location and time of use are important to assess the drug use patterns of adolescents, particularly at the local or regional levels. Often it is difficult to interpret massive quantities of

data obtained from a large comprehensive survey as was conducted in Malta. The experience of the authors in reporting on these types of data were utilized in this report as a service to the CARITAS survey directors. Finally, the 1991 Maltese data set will be archived by PRIDE for future utilization by CARITAS and/or Maltese officials as needed.

I.B. The Sample

A total of 20,815 students were surveyed in Malta and Gozo. Ages ranged from 11 years to 17 years. Table I.B.1. provides the sample size for the various age groups. There were only 284 students in the 11 year old sample, and may not provide a stable or representative sample of 11 year old students in Malta. This relatively small sample should be considered when interpreting the data for this age group.

Approximately 53.0 percent of the sample were males (Guvni) and 47.0 percent females (Tfajla). However, there were some students (about 7 percent) who did not respond to being male or female. Therefore, slightly more students were in the total sample than in the combined male and female samples. This report provides information about the patterns of use and availability of cigarettes, alcohol, and illicit drugs for the male, female, and total sample of students surveyed. It also provides these data for each age level and the total sample. It should be noted that the survey was a near census study with most of the schools in Malta and Gozo participating in the study.

Table I.B.1.
Number of Students Surveyed in the 1991 Maltese Survey

Age	Male	Female	Total*
11	132	128	284
12	1768	1847	3909
13	2321	2049	4661
14	2033	2016	4358
15	1799	1752	3813
16	1232	872	2259
17	1012	469	1531
Total	10297	9133	20815

* Total number of students includes those students who did not respond to being male or female. Thus, the total will not equal the sum of the male and female samples.

II. Annual Use and Early Use of Drugs
(Minn sena 'I Hawn kemm-il darba ...)
(Kemm-il sena kellek l-ewwel darba ---)

Section IV of the CARITAS Maltese Questionnaire contained a question on the frequency of drug use. Thus, it is possible to obtain information on the frequency that students use drugs, from once a year to daily use. For this report, the total annual use was selected as the indicator of drug use. That is, any use of the drug, whether once a year or daily, was considered in annual use. Analyses of the more specific use patterns, i.e., weekly or daily use, is encouraged, but will not be discussed in this section.

There are several ways to interpret data obtained from the questionnaire item "First use of drugs," and there are cautions to be taken when analyzing these data. This section of the interim report will look at the percent of students who report early use of cigarettes, alcohol or illicit drugs at 11 years or younger. These data can describe patterns of early use of these drugs and suggest the need for education/prevention strategies to impact students at an early age.

II.A. Cigarettes and Alcohol

The use of cigarettes and alcohol by Maltese youth was widespread and reported at early ages. The patterns of use indicated that the use rate of Maltese youth increased as they got older. About 14 percent of the 12 year old students reported smoking cigarettes and 42 percent of the 17 year old students reported smoking cigarettes. A greater percent of males (33.6%) reported

smoking cigarettes than females (28.3%).

There was a mixed pattern of early use of cigarettes. While a higher percentage of males reported earlier use than females, a finding consistent with annual use, the overall early use patterns were rather similar across age groups, suggesting little change in use of cigarettes as students mature.

The overwhelming majority of all students reported drinking alcoholic beverages, and more males than females reported drinking alcohol. Nearly 80 percent (79.8%) of the students surveyed reported using birra/shandy and over 90 percent of the males between 15 and 17 reported drinking these beverages. Nearly as many students reported drinking inbid with 74.6 percent of all students reporting using this alcoholic beverage within the past year.

Use of spirits or liquor (whisky, ecc) was reported by less than half of the students (43.7%). However, use of this more concentrated form of alcohol was reported by the majority of males 15 years and above and by about half of the females in this age group. See Table II.A.1. and Figure II.A.1. for these data.

Common patterns for cigarette and alcohol use were noted for these data: 1) older students reported the greater use of alcohol than younger students, but the percentage of use of alcohol at all age levels was high; and 2) the percentages of male and female students between ages of 11 and 13 who reported using beer, shandy, and inbid use was high.

For example, 78.4 percent of the 12 year old male students

reported use of beer/shandy as compared to 59.7 percent of the females, a difference of about 19 percentage points. For 16 year old students the percentages were 93.6 percent for males and 79.6 percent for females, a difference of 14.0 percentage points.

Patterns of "early use" of alcohol were different than that of "annual use" of alcohol. As discussed above, as students increased in age, the percent of students reporting annual use increased. Data on first use suggests, that as students increased in age, the percent of students reporting early use (11 years or younger) decreased with age. See Figure II.A.2. for percent of students reporting early use across age levels. Caution must be used in interpreting these data. While these findings suggest that there is an increase in early use rates among the younger students, ages 11 through 14, it must be kept in mind that some students drop out of school early and these students may acccunt for the lower early use rates reported by older students. Since the early use of alcohol by children and young adolescents can be a serious health problem, the dramatic differences in early use rates across age levels suggest the need for further study of this potential problem area.

II.B. Illicit Drugs

More students reported use of marijuana than other illicit drugs. However, the use of marijuana was most notable for male students 15 to 17 years old. Figure II.B.1. demonstrates this relationship between marijuana use and student age and sex. For

example, of the 17 year old students, males reported the highest percent use at 7.5 percent. While male use rate was considerably greater that female use, it should be noted that 17 year old female students use of marijuana (3.4%) was more than double the use of 16 year old students (1.4%). These findings may suggest a trend for more female use, particularly for older students. Less than 1 percent of the students ages 11 to 13 reported smoking marijuana within the past year.

Use of downers or kalmanti was second to marijuana as the most used illicit drug by Maltese students. Also, this category of drugs had a different pattern of use than most other illicit drugs. This was the only category of illicit drugs where female students had a greater use rate than male students. Figure II.B.2 shows this relationship. Beginning at age 14, female students reported slightly greater use than male students. For example, 4 percent of the female students reported using downers as compared to 3.2 percent of the male students. Although these differences were small, this pattern of drug use indicates a need for further study to determine the use of downers by female students. While use rates for this drug category were relatively small across age groups (the highest rate was 3.4 % for 16 year old students), these statistics suggest that a substantial number of students are involved with these drugs. For example, approximately 380 students responding to this survey reported use of downers or kalmanti.

Use of uppers or stimulanti were reported by a relatively small percentage of students with the largest percentage of use

reported by the older male students (ages 16 and 17 years). Use by females were mostly under 1 percent. This is an interesting finding since in some cultures, particularly the United States, stimulants are used for dieting purposes and have a relatively high use rate among females.

Very little use of heroine (Eroina) or Hallucinogens (LSD, Acid) was reported by Maltese students, generally less than .6 percent was reported for these drug categories. However, use of cocaine (Kokina) was generally reported by more than one percent of the students and was relatively consistent across all age categories. For example, 2.1 percent of the 12 year old students reported using cocaine within the past year, and a higher percentage of girls (2.6%) reported use than boys (1.4%). However, the pattern was not consistently higher for females across grade levels. Again, although these usage rates are fairly small, they do indicate that cocaine use is prevalent among Maltese youth and that it is prevalent among the younger as well as the older students.

Steroid use was found among a small percentage of males generally 15 to 17 years old, with very little to no use reported by females. The age category with the highest percentage of use were the 16 year old males with 2.4 percent. These findings do suggest the need for education about the harmful effects of steroid use targeted toward adolescent males in Malta. Early use of illicit drugs was reported by very few Maltese students. Only 1 percent or less of the Maltese students surveyed indicated using

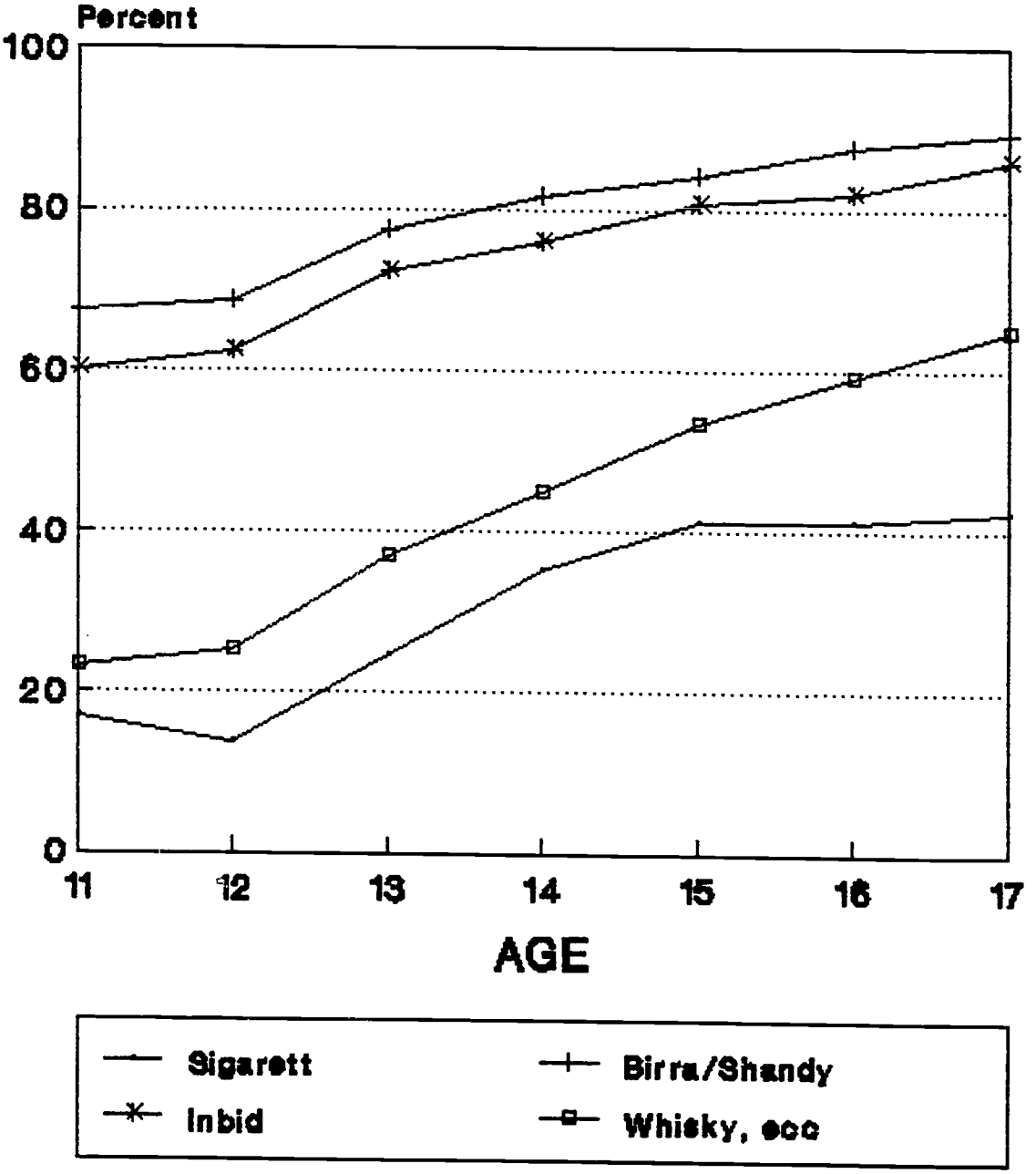
illicit drugs. However, it should be noted that 11, 12, and 13 year old students exceeded the 1 percent early use rate for cocaine, findings consistent with the annual use of cocaine by young students.

These findings suggest that while students begin drinking alcohol at early ages, they do not begin the use of illicit drugs until they are older. Also, it should be kept in mind that relatively few students report use of illicit drugs, and illicit drugs are not yet widespread among Maltese students. However, there is evidence that prevalence of illicit drug use exists. The danger of this use spreading is real and efforts to prevent the spread of drug use among the teenage population is critical.

Table II.A.1.
Percent of Reported Annual Use of Cigarettes and Alcohol

	Males (Guvni)	Females (Tfajla)	Total
Cigarettes (Sigarett)			
Age			
11	22.0	10.7	17.0
12	16.6	11.6	13.9
13	25.7	23.6	24.7
14	35.1	35.1	35.1
15	43.9	39.3	41.3
16	45.1	35.9	41.2
17	47.0	33.0	42.2
Total	33.6	28.3	30.9
Beer (Birra/Shandy)			
Age			
11	86.2	50.0	67.5
12	78.4	59.7	68.5
13	85.3	68.8	77.4
14	88.0	75.7	81.6
15	90.3	78.9	84.3
16	93.6	79.6	87.6
17	94.8	77.6	89.4
Total	87.5	71.6	79.8
Wine (Inbid)			
Age			
11	74.2	49.1	60.0
12	71.0	53.7	62.2
13	78.4	65.5	72.3
14	80.1	72.4	75.8
15	85.0	77.1	80.7
16	85.4	77.1	81.8
17	88.5	80.6	85.8
Total	80.4	68.6	74.6
Liquor (Whisky, ecc)			
Age			
11	29.5	18.1	23.3
12	31.4	20.4	25.2
13	40.8	33.1	37.0
14	48.2	43.0	44.8
15	59.3	48.3	53.4
16	64.0	51.5	59.0
17	71.5	50.3	64.8
Total	49.6	38.0	43.7

Fig.II.A.1. Annual Use of Cigarettes and Alcohol

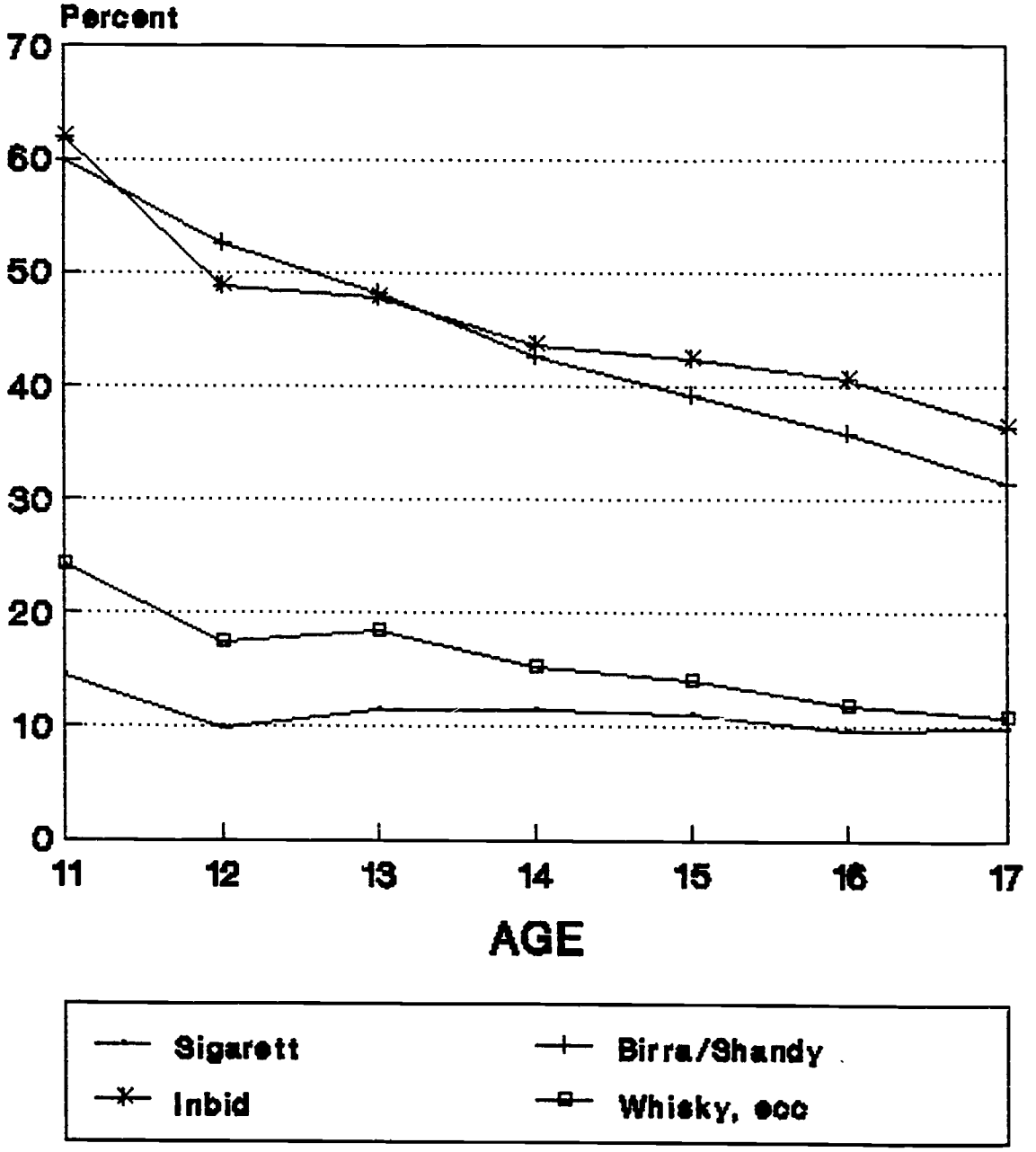


1991 Malta Survey

Table II.A.2.
Early Use Rates of Cigarettes and Alcohol

	Males (Guvni)	Females (Tfajla)	Total
Cigarettes (Sigarett)			
Age			
11	20.0	8.6	14.5
12	11.9	8.2	9.9
13	13.0	9.8	11.4
14	12.4	10.5	11.4
15	13.1	8.9	11.0
16	12.1	6.5	9.7
17	12.1	5.2	9.9
Total	12.6	8.9	10.7
Beer (Birra/Shandy)			
Age			
11	80.0	42.2	60.0
12	61.4	44.8	52.5
13	54.4	41.3	48.1
14	48.7	37.3	42.5
15	44.2	34.4	39.1
16	39.4	29.6	35.8
17	34.1	26.2	31.5
Total	49.2	37.9	43.7
Wine (Inbid)			
Age			
11	72.1	54.4	61.9
12	56.6	41.3	48.8
13	54.4	40.7	47.8
14	47.3	40.2	43.5
15	48.1	36.7	42.3
16	43.4	35.4	40.5
17	38.2	31.5	36.3
Total	49.6	39.1	44.6
Liquor (Whisky, ecc)			
Age			
11	32.0	18.3	24.2
12	21.7	13.9	17.5
13	21.3	15.2	18.4
14	17.3	13.9	15.3
15	16.7	11.2	14.0
16	12.5	10.2	11.9
17	12.2	7.4	10.8
Total	17.9	13.0	15.5

Fig.II.A.2. Early Use of Cigarettes and Alcohol



1991 Malta Survey

Table II.B.1.
Percent of Reported Annual Use of Illicit Drugs

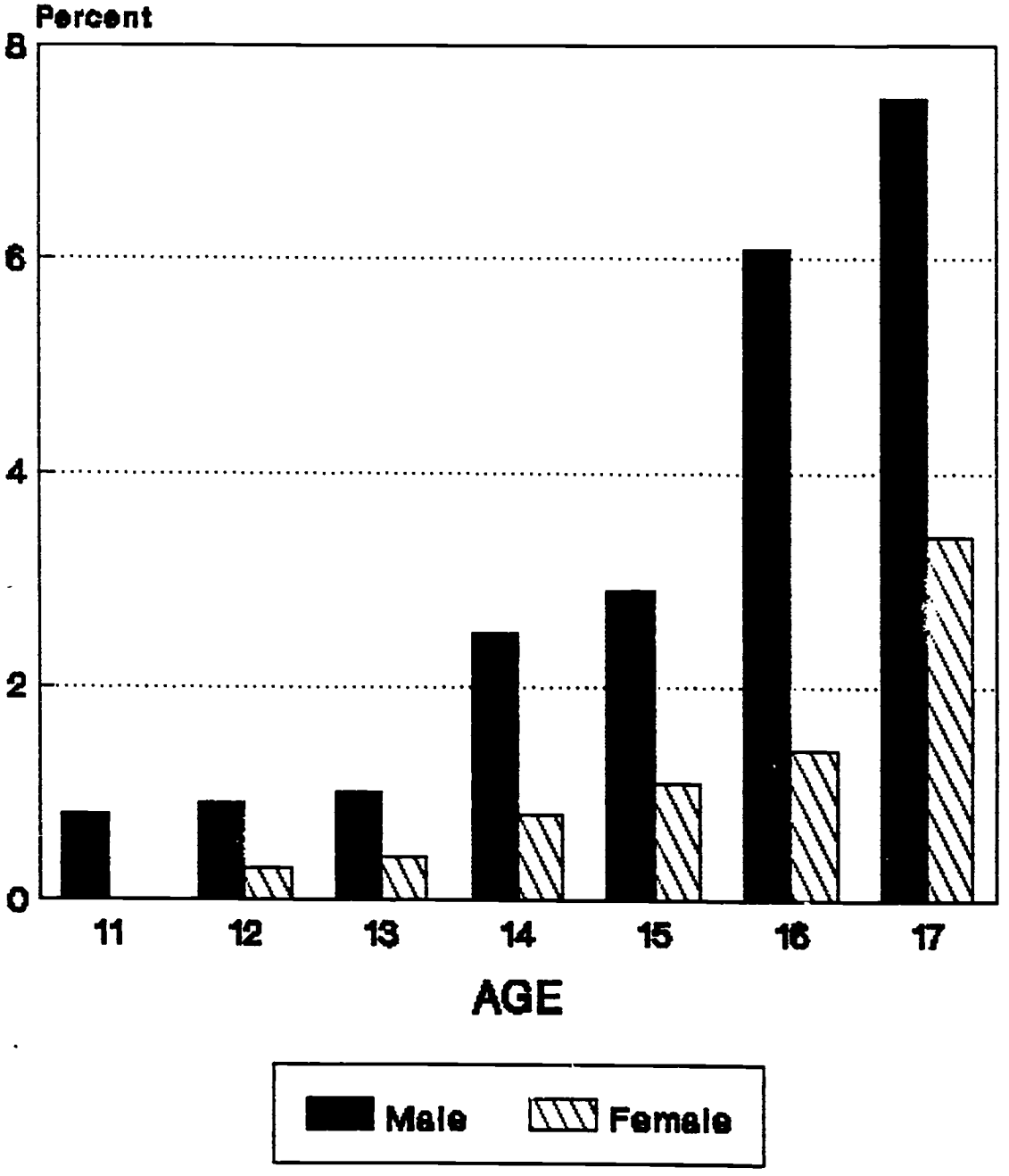
	Males (Guvni)	Females (Tfajla)	Total
Marijuana (Haxixa)			
Age			
11	0.8	0.0	0.8
12	0.9	0.3	0.5
13	1.0	0.4	0.7
14	2.5	0.8	1.6
15	2.9	1.1	2.1
16	6.1	1.4	4.1
17	7.5	3.4	6.2
Total	2.9	0.8	1.9
Downers (Kalmanti)			
Age			
11	0.0	0.9	0.4
12	1.3	1.1	1.2
13	1.7	1.0	1.3
14	1.6	2.0	1.8
15	1.8	2.5	2.2
16	3.2	4.0	3.4
17	3.0	3.4	3.1
Total	1.9	2.0	1.9
Uppers (Stimulanti)			
Age			
11	0.0	1.0	0.9
12	0.6	0.3	0.4
13	0.8	0.5	0.6
14	0.9	0.5	0.7
15	1.3	0.8	1.1
16	2.6	0.6	1.7
17	2.7	0.7	2.0
Total	1.3	0.5	0.9
Heroine (Eroina)			
Age			
11	0.0	0.0	0.4
12	0.3	0.2	0.3
13	0.3	0.2	0.3
14	0.6	0.3	0.5
15	0.7	0.1	0.4
16	1.0	0.0	0.6
17	0.5	0.2	0.4
Total	0.5	0.2	0.4

(cont.)

Table II.B.1. (Continued)
Percent of Reported Annual Use of Illicit Drugs

	Males (Guvni)	Females (Tfajla)	Total
Hallucinogens (LSD, Acid)			
Age			
11	0.0	0.0	0.0
12	0.7	0.1	0.4
13	0.4	0.2	0.3
14	0.7	0.1	0.4
15	0.6	0.1	0.3
16	0.9	0.0	0.5
17	1.2	0.2	0.9
Total	0.7	0.1	0.4
Steroids			
Age			
11	0.0	0.0	0.4
12	0.4	0.5	0.5
13	0.9	0.4	0.7
14	1.0	0.3	0.6
15	1.3	0.3	0.8
16	2.4	0.0	1.4
17	2.0	0.2	1.4
Total	1.2	0.3	0.8
Cocaine (Kokina)			
Age			
11	0.9	0.0	0.8
12	1.4	2.6	2.1
13	1.8	1.5	1.6
14	1.8	1.4	1.5
15	0.8	0.8	0.9
16	1.6	0.7	1.2
17	1.2	1.8	1.3
Total	1.5	1.5	1.5

Fig.II.B.1. Annual Use of Marijuana by Sex and Age



1991 Malta Survey

Table II.B.2.
Early Use Rates of Illicit Drugs

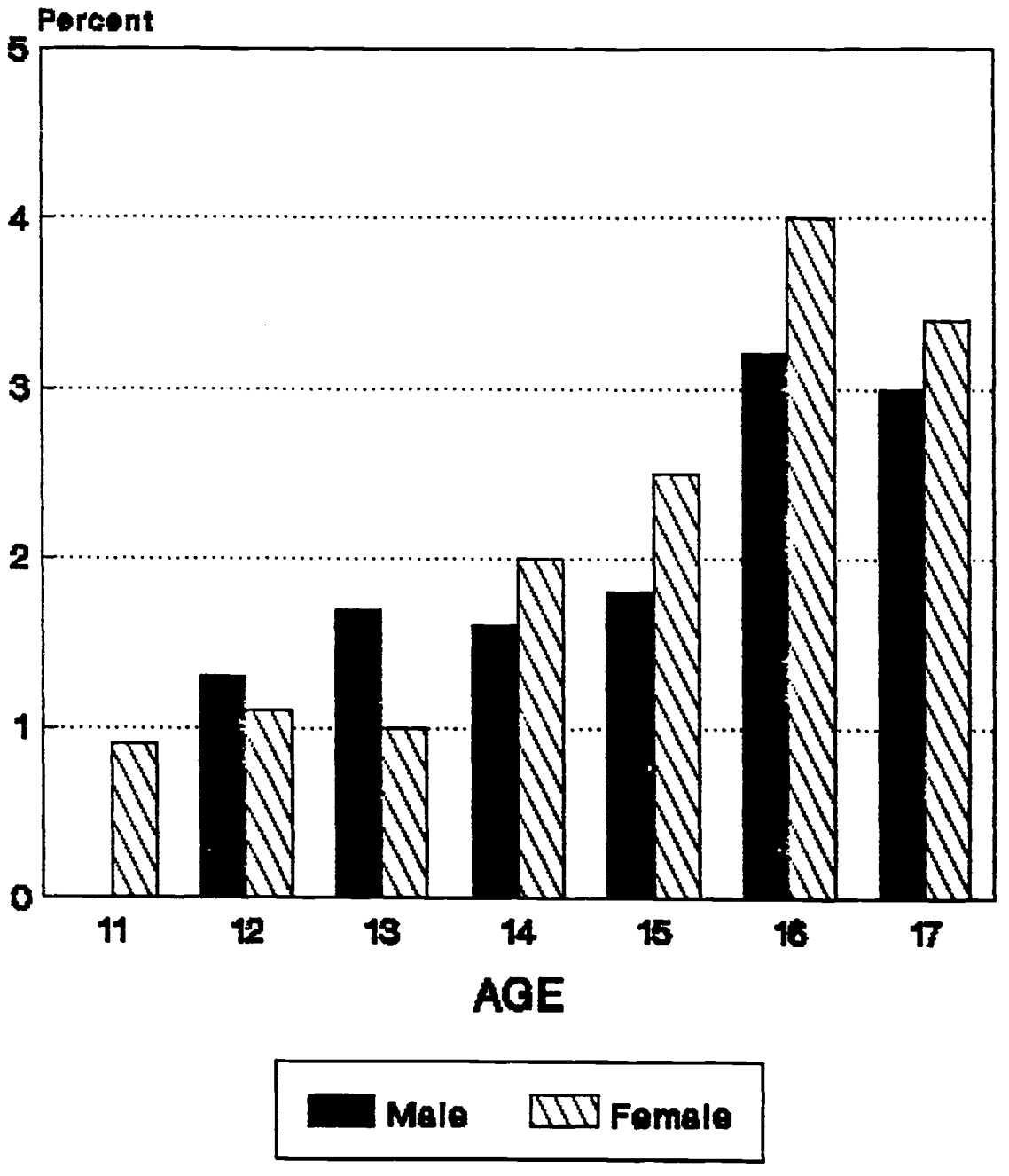
	Males (Guvni)	Females (Tfajla)	Total
Marijuana (Haxixa)			
11	1.6	0.0	0.8
12	0.4	0.1	0.2
13	0.4	0.3	0.3
14	0.5	0.1	0.3
15	0.4	0.0	0.2
16	0.2	0.0	0.0
17	0.4	0.0	0.3
Total	0.4	0.1	0.2
Downers (Kalmanti)			
11	0.8	0.9	0.8
12	1.5	1.0	1.3
13	0.9	0.5	0.7
14	1.0	0.7	0.8
15	0.7	0.6	0.6
16	0.7	0.6	0.6
17	0.7	0.6	0.7
Total	0.9	0.7	0.8
Uppers (Stimulanti)			
11	1.0	0.9	0.8
12	0.8	0.1	0.4
13	0.1	0.3	0.3
14	0.4	0.2	0.3
15	0.2	0.1	0.1
16	0.5	0.1	0.3
17	0.1	0.0	0.1
Total	0.4	0.1	0.3
Heroine (Eroina)			
11	0.8	0.0	0.8
12	0.1	0.2	0.1
13	0.1	0.1	0.1
14	0.2	0.2	0.2
15	0.2	0.0	0.1
16	0.1	0.0	0.0
17	0.2	0.0	0.2
Total	0.2	0.0	0.2

(cont.)

II.B.2. (Continued)
Early Use Rates of Illicit Drugs

	Males (Guvni)	Females (Tfajla)	Total
Hallucinogens (LSD, Acid)			
11	1.9	0.0	0.9
12	0.4	0.2	0.3
13	0.2	0.2	0.2
14	0.2	0.1	0.2
15	0.2	0.0	0.1
16	0.2	0.0	0.0
17	0.1	0.0	0.1
Total	0.2	0.0	0.2
Steroids			
11	2.0	0.0	0.8
12	0.5	0.4	0.3
13	0.7	0.3	0.6
14	0.3	0.2	0.2
15	0.1	0.0	0.1
16	0.1	0.0	0.0
17	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	0.3	0.2	0.3
Cocaine (Kokina)			
11	0.8	1.8	1.2
12	1.3	2.2	2.0
13	1.4	1.2	1.2
14	0.8	0.9	0.8
15	0.3	0.5	0.5
16	0.5	0.6	0.5
17	0.3	0.7	0.4
Total	0.8	1.1	1.0

Fig.II.B.2. Annual Use of Downers by Sex and Age



1991 Malta Survey

III. Intoxicating Effects of Drug Use

(X'effetti l-aktar li jfollok meta int ---)

Students were asked to respond to questions regarding the degree that they became intoxicated when using various drugs. There were four levels of intoxication that could be reported that ranged from no or little intoxication to moderate or high intoxication levels. This section reports on the percentage of students who reported getting moderately or highly intoxicated when they use the drugs. It should be noted that the percentages reported here are percentages of students who reported using the drug. These percentages were computed by using the percentages from the source tables of students responding to one of the intoxication categories. Those students responding that they did not use the drug were ignored. The formula used is as follows:

Numerator = Niehu 'Buzz' + Imdamdam/'stoned'

Denominator = Ma niehux + Minghajr/'Happy'+ Niehu 'Buzz' + Imdamdam/'stoned'

The resulting statistics provided an estimate of the percent of students who became moderately or highly intoxicated when a specific drug or alcoholic beverage was used.

For some age groups and drug categories, the n-sizes were so small that meaningful or interpretable percentages were not obtained. Thus, in some cases, a "NA" ("Non-applicable") was substituted for the bogus statistic. Also, certain illicit drug categories may not be included in this section of the report, but

can be accessed from the source tables. It should be kept in mind that most illicit drug categories had relatively few students who reported using drugs, therefore, estimates of intoxication levels reached are not as stable as estimates for other drug categories such as alcohol.

III.A. Alcohol

There was a slight tendency for male students to report reaching higher levels of intoxication when drinking beer (Birra/Shandy) than female students. However, the rate was consistent across the age levels. The intoxication rate was rather low for both groups, and the overall rate was 7.4 percent for all students. See Table III.A.1.

There are at least two explanations for the low percentage of students reporting moderate to high intoxication levels when drinking beer. These data suggest that students who drink beer have developed a tolerance level such that they can drink beer without out becoming intoxicated, or that they drink beer in quantities that do not produce moderate or high intoxication levels, or a combination of both. Since the majority of students reported drinking beer and it is such a common practice among the students in Malta, beer may not be viewed as a beverage to drink to become intoxicated. These views by the authors are speculative and presented here only to provide hypotheses for further study.

It appears that about twice as many students reported reaching high or moderate levels of intoxication when drinking wine (inbid)

than when drinking beer. Since inbid use is widespread, almost as popular as birra and shandy, drinking inbid may be a major health problem among Maltese youth. Wine is used by many families as part of the meal,however, wine use by Maltese adolescents appears to be for intoxicating purposes as well. Figure III.A.1. gives the rate of intoxication for the three categories of alcoholic beverages.

Drinking liquor or "whisky" produced the greatest intoxication rate among Maltese students. Overall, nearly 30 percent (29.3%) reported reaching high or moderate levels of intoxication when they drink whisky, over twice the rate for inbid and three times the rate for beer. Males were more likely to report reaching high intoxication levels than females, particularly among the younger age groups. However, this pattern of use became more similar for the older male and female students. See Figure III.A.1. and Table III.A.1. for intoxication levels reached when drinking alcohol.

III.B. Illicit Drugs

A higher percentage of students reported getting highly or moderately intoxicated when smoking marijuana than when drinking alcohol, including whisky. Over half (52.4%) of the students who smoked marijuana reported getting intoxicated when they used this drug. Male students were somewhat more likely to report getting intoxicated than female students (54.5% of males; 44.4% of females). In general, a higher percentage of the older students reported higher levels of intoxication than the younger students.

It should be noted that there were fluctuations among

percentages at the lower age groups, probably due to the small number of students reporting marijuana use. However, the data for students in the upper age categories appear to be more stable.

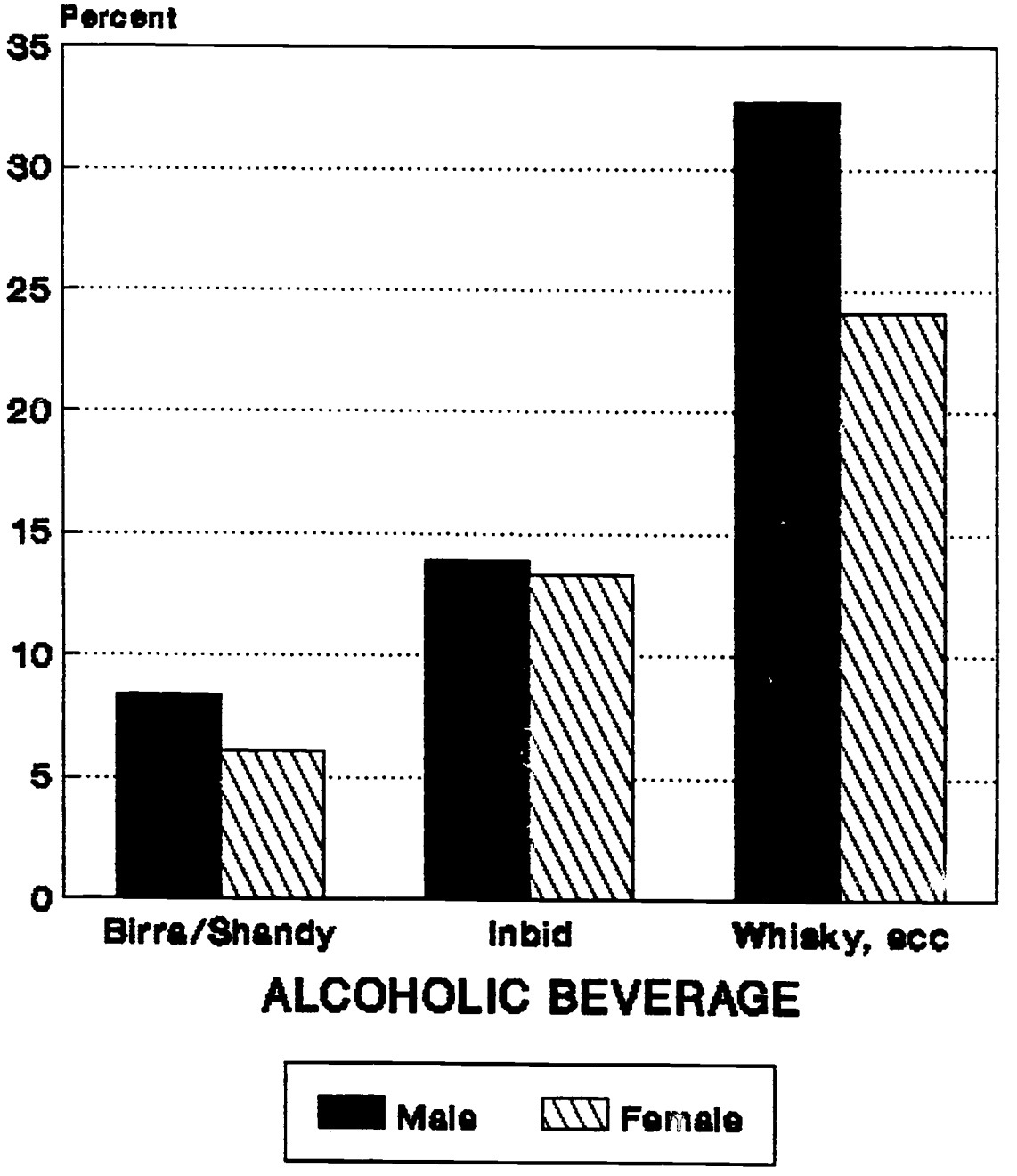
The percentage of students who reported illicit drug use was very small. Thus, the percentage of those students who reported reaching moderate or high intoxication levels when they use the drug, was somewhat unstable. Using the overall data, 45 percent of the students reported reaching high to moderate levels of intoxication when using downers or "Kalmanti." Half the students who used stimulants reported becoming intoxicated.

Other drug categories had such small responses rates that the data appeared unstable and will not be reported here. The reader may consult the source tables for these data.

Table III.A.1
Percent of Students Reporting Reaching High or Moderate Levels of Intoxication When Drinking an Alcoholic Beverage

	Males (Guvni)	Females (Tfajla)	Total
Beer (Birra/Shandy)			
11	7.8	4.5	7.2
12	6.4	4.4	5.7
13	8.0	6.0	7.2
14	9.1	5.6	7.4
15	10.0	7.8	9.0
16	8.5	6.2	7.5
17	7.4	5.0	6.6
Total	8.4	6.1	7.4
Wine (Inbid)			
11	12.6	14.5	13.2
12	11.9	10.4	11.2
13	12.7	12.1	12.1
14	13.9	12.4	13.2
15	15.3	16.9	15.9
16	16.3	14.3	15.8
17	14.4	13.7	14.2
Total	13.9	13.3	13.6
Liquor (Whisky, ecc)			
11	39.5	11.3	30.5
12	33.2	19.9	28.1
13	34.2	19.6	27.9
14	31.2	25.9	28.6
15	35.6	26.2	31.5
16	32.4	27.3	30.5
17	28.3	26.0	27.1
Total	32.7	24.1	29.3

Fig.III.A.1. % Students Becoming Intoxicated on Alcohol



1991 Malta Survey

Table III.A.2
Percent of Students Reporting Reaching High or Moderate Levels of Intoxication When Using Illicit Drugs

	Males (Guvni)	Females (Tfajla)	Total
Marijuana (Kaxixa)			
11	NA	NA	NA
12	28.6	50.0	37.5
13	41.7	20.0	37.5
14	51.8	45.4	52.6
15	46.9	45.4	50.0
16	63.9	60.0	63.4
17	62.3	40.0	59.4
Total	54.5	44.4	52.4
Downers (Kalmanti)			
11	NA	NA	NA
12	43.7	36.3	38.4
13	30.7	40.0	27.3
14	41.2	40.0	44.4
15	41.2	32.0	36.3
16	50.0	41.0	42.8
17	68.6	41.0	59.4
Total	45.0	36.8	45.0
Uppers (Stimulanti)			
11	NA	NA	NA
12	50.0	33.3	40.0
13	37.5	20.0	33.3
14	44.4	40.0	42.8
15	50.0	37.5	50.0
16	60.8	100.0	66.6
17	62.5	100.0	61.1
Total	58.3	50.0	50.0

IV. Availability of Drugs

(Kemm Hu Facli Ssib ---)

Students were asked to respond to how easily they could obtain cigarettes, alcohol and illicit drugs. The response categories were "Cannot Get" (Ma ssibx), "Fairly Difficult" (Difficli), "Fairly Easy" (Facli), "Very Easy" (Facli Hafna), and "Don't Know" (Ma Nafx). This section reports on the combined percentages from student responses to "Fairly Easy" (Facli) and "Very Easy" (Facli Hafna). The combination of these two categories represent the percentages of students who perceive drugs as readily available or easily accessible.

IV.A. Cigarettes and Alcohol

In general, older student reported cigarettes and alcoholic beverages as being more accessible than did the younger students. However, a majority of the younger students reported beer (birra/shandy) and inbid as readily available. For example, 62.0 percent of the 11 year old students reported beer as fairly easy or very easy to get. Cigarettes and alcoholic beverages were as available to female students as to male students. See Table IV.A.1. for presentation of these availability data.

Overall, over 75 to 80 percent of the students surveyed reported relatively easy access to beer and for students 15 or over, the percentage was 90 percent or greater. Access to whisky was only slightly less, with over 60 percent of the students reporting this beverage as readily available, and over 80 percent

of students 16 or older reporting easy accessibility to whisky. Thus, it appears that cigarettes and alcohol are readily available to Maltese students and that use of these drugs reflects this availability. Education/prevention of the early use of these drugs by young Maltese students appears warranted, and such efforts may need to be targeted to adults (parents, educators, etc.) as well as to the students. Figure IV.A.1. provides availability data for alcoholic beverages.

IV.B. Illicit Drugs

Relatively few younger students, ages 11 through 14, reported ready access to marijuana, but the percentages increased dramatically for 15 through 17 years. See Figure IV.B.1 for presentation of availability of marijuana data. Nearly one-fourth of the 17 year old students reported access to marijuana.

Access to downers (Kalmanti) was reported by a greater percentage of students than marijuana. Again, the older students reported more access to these drugs than the younger students, but a relatively large percent of students 11 through 14 reported access to downers. For example, 10.3 percent of the 12 year old students reported access to these drugs, that is, one out of every ten students had access to downers. About 30 percent of the 17 year old students reported access to downers.

Fewer students reported access to stimulants as compared to downers, but there were still a relatively large percent who indicated they could obtain these drugs fairly easily. As with

marijuana and downers, a higher percentage of the older students reported access to stimulants. Over 20 percent of the 17 year old students reported easy access to stimulants.

Relatively few students reported access to heroine (Eroina) or hallucinogens (LSD, acid). Under 10 percent of the older students reported access to heroine and under 7 percent reported access to hallucinogens. While relatively low percentages of students reported access to these drugs, they do exist in Malta and the availability of these dangerous drugs needs to be monitored.

A fairly large percentage of the older students reported access to steroids, particularly for male students. Over 13 percent of the 16 year old male students and nearly 19 percent of the 17 year old male students reported steroids as fairly easy or very easy to get. Use of these drugs by young males to enhance sports performance or for looks (body building) can be a significant health hazard. Education about the harmful side effects of these drugs need to be implemented at early ages.

Older students reported cocaine to be slightly more accessible than heroine or hallucinogens. About 9 percent of the 16 year old students and 10 percent of the 17 year old students reported cocaine as readily available, and the percentage of female students who reported easy access to cocaine was nearly equal to that for male students. Again, these data suggest that cocaine is available to some Maltese students, placing these students at risk of becoming involved with this dangerous drug. See Table IV.B.1 and Figure IV.B.2. for availability percentages of illicit drugs.

Table IV.A.1.
Percent of Students Reporting Cigarettes and Alcohol as Fairly or Very Easy to Get

	Males (Guvni)	Females (Tfajla)	Total
Cigarettes (Sigarett)			
11	42.5	37.0	39.9
12	44.3	48.0	46.1
13	52.6	56.6	54.4
14	60.4	69.7	64.9
15	76.2	78.5	76.9
16	83.8	83.6	83.6
17	89.6	87.7	88.8
Total	64.1	65.9	64.7
Beer (Birra/Shandy)			
11	71.6	52.4	62.0
12	67.6	64.1	65.6
13	76.6	72.4	74.4
14	82.6	80.7	81.7
15	90.7	89.4	89.7
16	95.0	93.2	94.2
17	97.2	94.5	96.3
Total	82.9	78.7	80.7
Wine (Inbid)			
11	62.7	61.6	62.0
12	64.4	61.5	62.8
13	70.8	69.3	69.9
14	78.3	76.8	77.6
15	85.3	85.6	85.2
16	91.7	88.6	90.5
17	95.3	92.5	94.3
Total	78.4	75.4	76.9
Liquor (Whisky, ecc)			
11	47.2	36.7	41.8
12	44.1	43.6	43.4
13	50.9	52.7	51.4
14	59.8	62.8	61.0
15	71.8	74.3	72.6
16	81.4	78.6	80.2
17	88.6	82.9	86.5
Total	62.4	61.0	61.4

Table IV.B.1.
Percent of Students Reporting Illicit Drugs as Fairly or Very Easy to Get

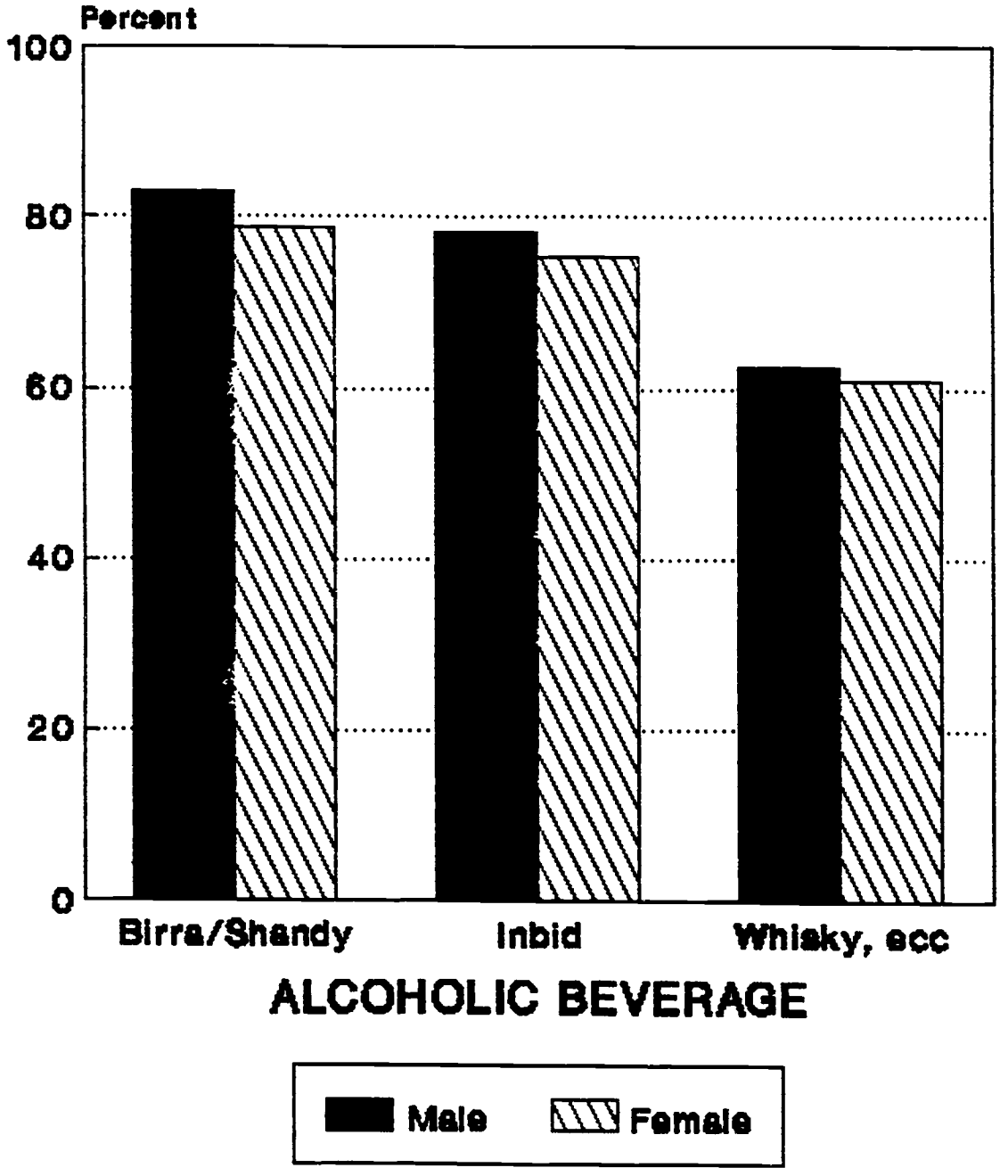
	Males (Guvni)	Females (Tfajla)	Total
Marijuana (Haxixa)			
11	0.9	4.1	3.1
12	3.8	6.2	5.2
13	5.2	7.2	5.9
14	7.0	7.2	7.2
15	11.7	11.1	11.5
16	18.7	17.3	18.2
17	27.3	19.8	24.6
Total	10.3	9.4	9.8
Downers (Kalmanti)			
11	12.9	5.2	9.1
12	8.7	11.5	10.3
13	10.2	12.9	11.5
14	12.7	15.9	14.1
15	17.9	21.5	19.9
16	25.0	27.2	25.8
17	31.7	30.3	30.9
Total	15.9	17.2	16.4
Uppers (Stimulanti)			
11	5.8	3.0	5.0
12	4.9	6.1	5.6
13	6.3	6.5	6.3
14	6.2	7.6	6.8
15	11.5	10.4	11.0
16	17.4	16.2	17.1
17	23.6	17.8	21.4
Total	10.2	8.9	9.5
Heroine (Eroina)			
11	2.7	4.0	4.1
12	3.0	5.7	4.4
13	4.2	5.2	4.5
14	4.3	4.5	4.4
15	7.0	5.9	6.5
16	9.2	7.7	8.6
17	9.3	8.6	8.9
Total	5.6	5.7	5.6

(cont.)

Table IV.B.1. (Continued)
Percent of Students Reporting Illicit Drugs as
Fairly or Very Easy to Get

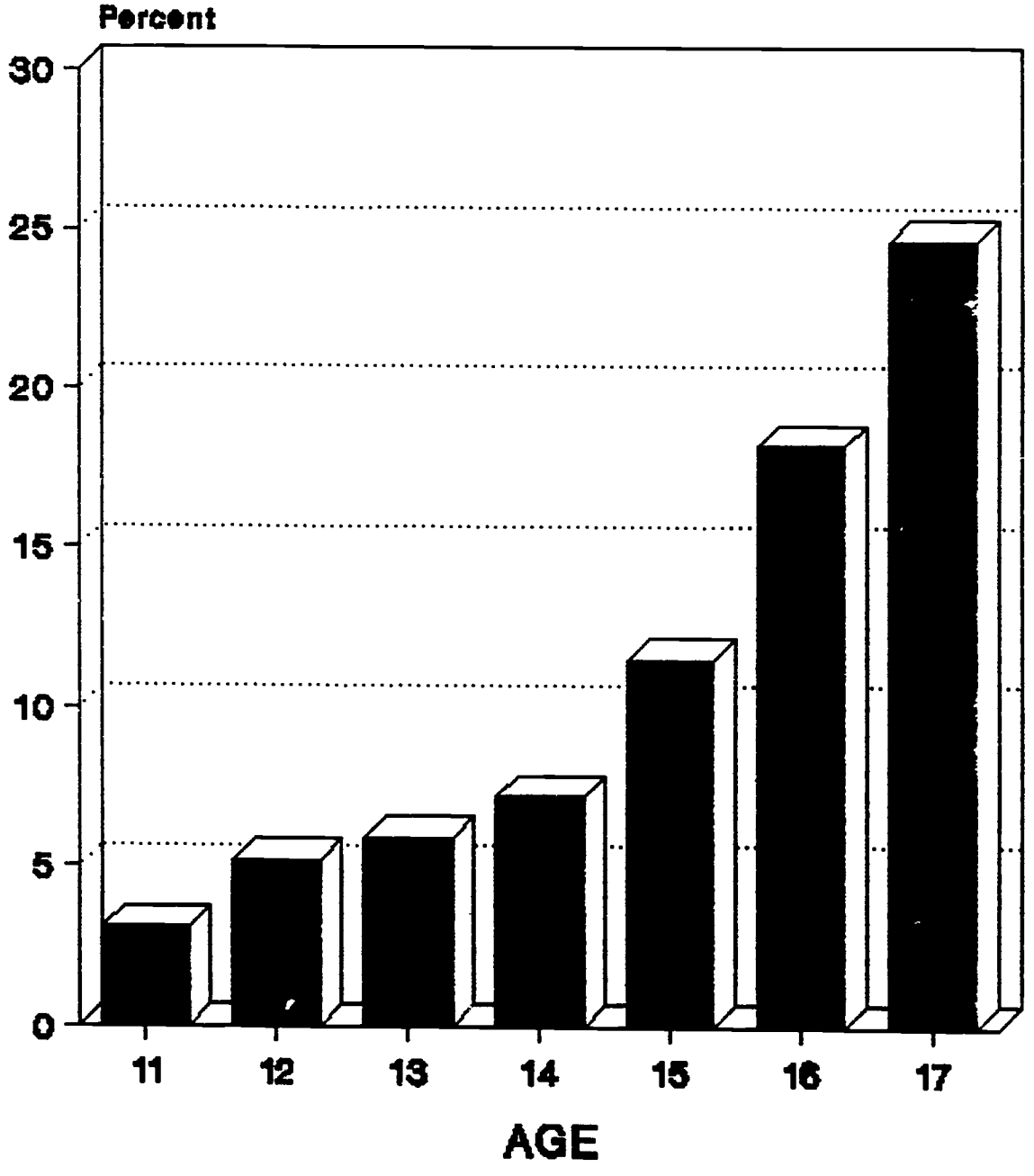
	Males (Guvni)	Females (Tfajla)	Total
Hallucinogens (LSD, Acid)			
11	3.0	5.6	4.0
12	3.2	4.2	3.8
13	3.8	3.8	3.8
14	3.5	3.3	3.4
15	5.3	4.2	4.9
16	7.5	4.4	6.1
17	6.7	5.6	6.3
Total	4.6	4.0	4.4
Steroids			
11	3.9	2.3	3.9
12	3.1	4.7	3.9
13	4.6	4.0	4.3
14	5.0	3.5	4.1
15	9.3	5.8	7.6
16	13.4	6.6	10.8
17	18.9	10.5	15.9
Total	7.9	4.9	6.5
Cocaine (Kokina)			
11	2.8	4.4	4.2
12	4.1	7.3	6.0
13	5.5	6.1	5.6
14	5.5	6.4	5.9
15	7.4	8.0	7.8
16	9.6	8.2	9.1
17	10.9	9.2	10.1
Total	6.6	7.1	6.9

Fig.IV.A.1. % Students Reporting Alcohol as Readily Available



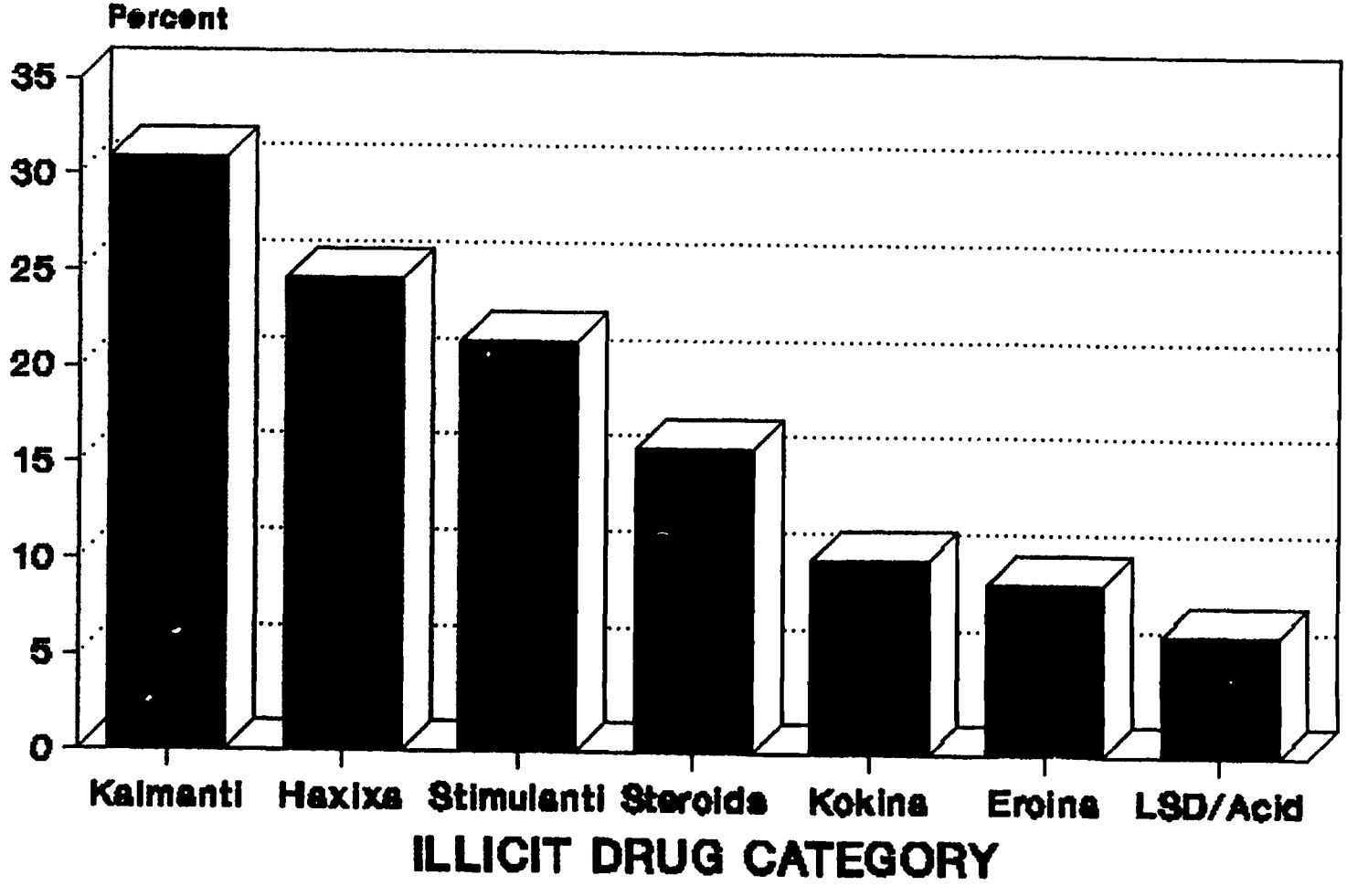
1991 Malta Survey

Fig.IV.B.1. % Students Reporting Marijuana as Readily Available by Age



1991 Malta Survey

Fig.IV.B.2. % 17 Yr. Old Students Reporting Drugs as Readily Available



1991 Malta Survey

V. Summary

A school-based survey of Maltese youth was conducted on November 29, 1991, with 20,815 students ages 11 through 17 surveyed in Malta and Gozo. Tabular reports were prepared for each participating school, regionally and for the total or national sample. It is anticipated that the data obtained at the local level will be used to assess the adolescent drug and alcohol use problems. It can serve as base line data for monitoring future drug use.

The overwhelming majority of students surveyed reported using alcoholic beverages, particularly birra/shandy and inbid. While a one-fourth to one-third of the younger students (ages 11 - 13) reported drinking liquor (whisky, ecc), over half of the older students report drinking this more concentrated form of alcohol. Male students were slightly more likely to drink alcoholic beverages than female students. Marijuana or haxixa was the most used illicit drug, and its use was reported mostly by older male students. For example, 7.5 percent of the 17 year old male students reported smoking haxixa within the past year. Use of downers or kalmanti was reported by more than 3 percent of the 16 and 17 year old students. Other illicit drug use was quite low, at under 2 percent.

A higher percentage of younger students reported using cigarettes and alcohol at an early (11 years or younger) than did the older students, but this finding may be explained by student

drop-out or other reasons than strictly an increase in earlier use by younger students. However, these data may indicate a problem of escalated early use of these drugs and needs to be monitored carefully over the next few years. First use of illicit drugs at 11 years or younger was reported by very few Maltese students, with use of these drugs occurring mostly among the older students (16 and 17 year old students).

There seemed to be a progressive pattern of students reporting becoming intoxicated ("Niehu 'Buzz'" or "Imdamdam/'Stoned'") on alcoholic beverages. A relatively small percent (7.4%) of the students reported becoming intoxicated when they drank birra/shandy. A higher percentage (13.6%) reported becoming intoxicated when they drank inbid. Nearly 30 percent (29.3%) of the students reported reaching moderate to high levels of intoxication when they drink liquor (whisky, ecc); over twice that for inbid and over three times that for birra/shandy.

For students who reported use of illicit drugs, about half reported getting intoxicated when they use haxixa and stimulanti and 45 percent for kalmanti. Other illicit drug categories produced less stable results due to the small number of students reporting using these drugs, particularly for the younger students and female students.

As might be expected, Maltese students reported cigarettes and alcoholic beverages as easily obtained. The pattern for availability of illicit drugs indicated that the older students had greater access to marijuana, kalmanti, and stimulanti than their

younger peers. Relatively few students at any age level reported access to eroina, LSD/Acid, or kokina. However, older male students reported access to steroids (approximately 19% for 17 year old students).

In summary findings from the Maltese survey suggest that use patterns and availability of alcohol poses a health problem among Maltese students and that education regarding the harmful effects of alcohol by children and young adolescents need to be made available to concerned adults as well as to students. Illicit drug use was not reported by a large percentage of Maltese youth. However, there was evidence that some Maltese youth are experimenting with illicit drugs, usually the older male students. There is also evidence that some illicit drugs (haxixa, kalmanti, and stimulanti) are available to about one-fifth of the students over age 15. The danger exists for drug use to escalate among Maltese youth given the high alcohol use rate and the reported availability of illicit drugs. It would appear that the findings from this survey strongly suggest that prevention efforts be strengthened and the illicit drug use patterns of Maltese students be carefully monitored for increased use.