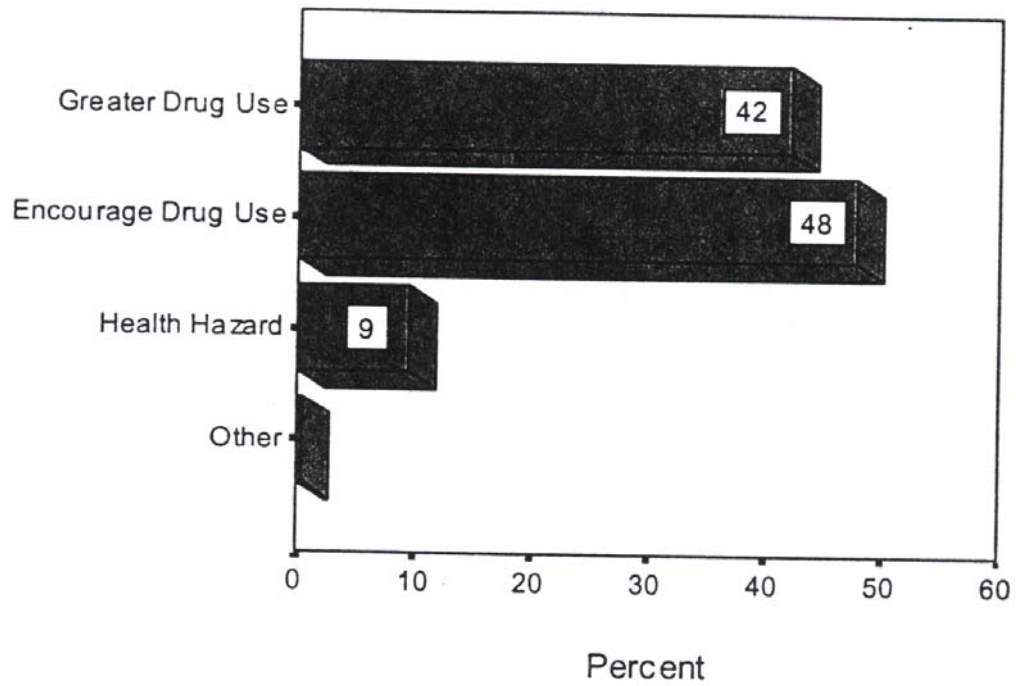


## Reasons cited by students against the decriminalisation of cannabis

Reasons against decriminalisation of cannabis

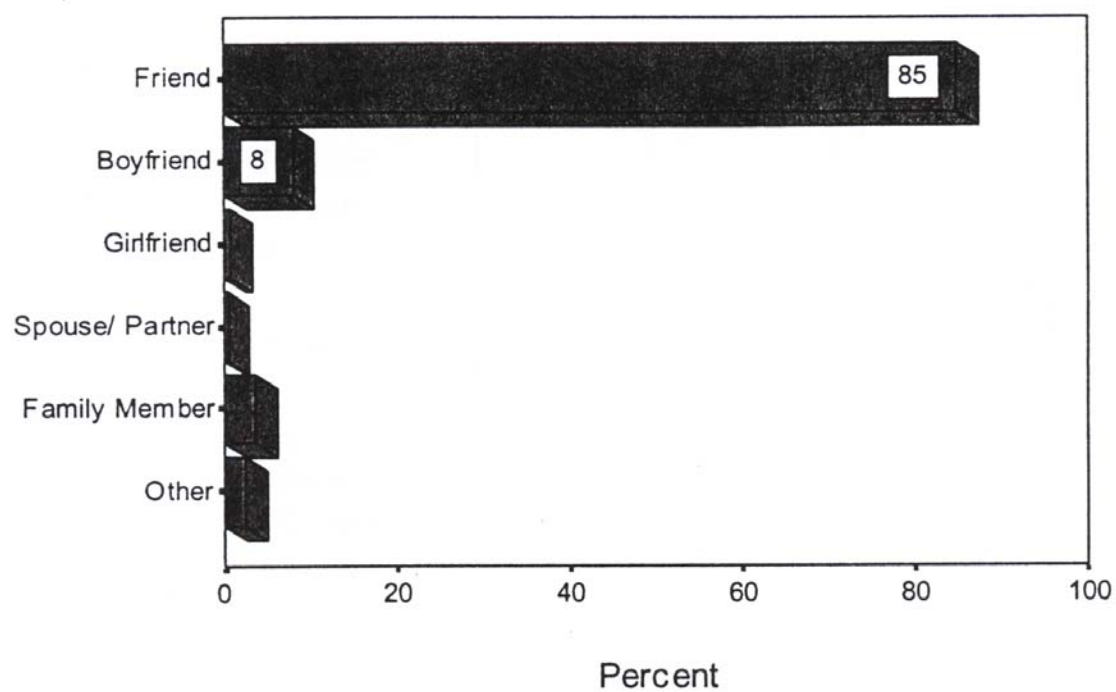


Reasons cited by students against the decriminalisation of  
Cannabis

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Would lead to a greater drugs problem	89	17.8	42.2
It would encourage drug use	101	20.2	47.9
Soft drugs are a health hazard	20	4.0	9.5
Other	1	.2	.5
Total	211	42.2	100.0
Missing Data	289	57.8	
Total	500	100.0	

**Table 15**

## Who Introduced You to Illegal Drug Taking?

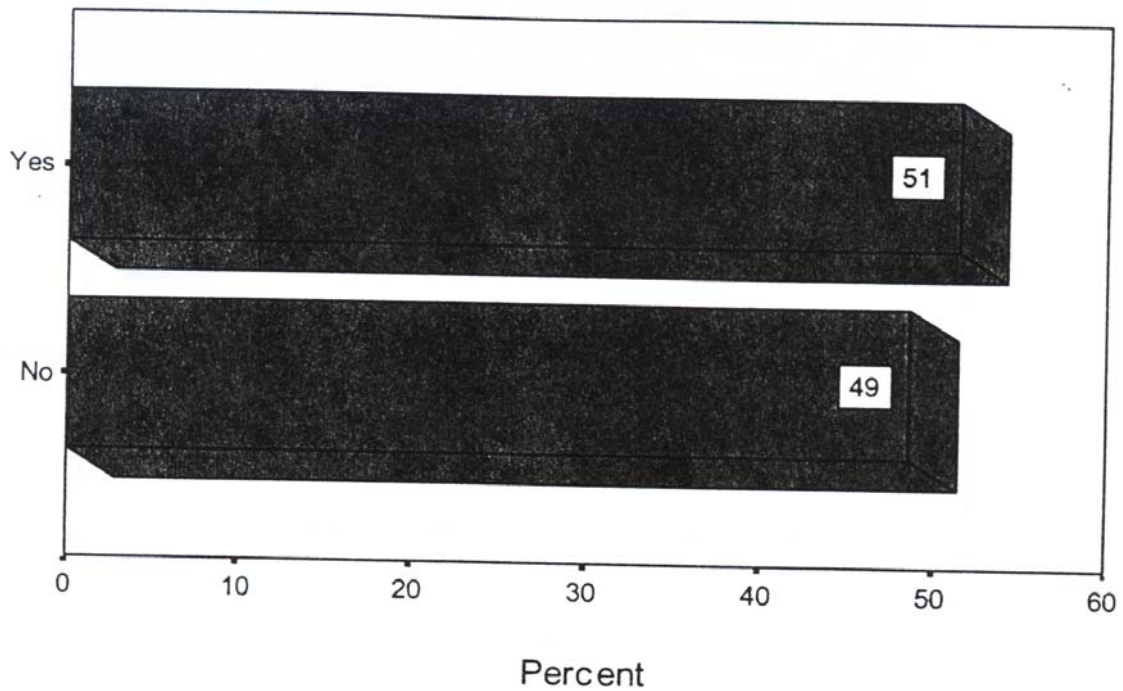


A Table showing the individuals responsible for introducing respondents' to illegal drug-taking.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Friend	211	42.2	84.7
Boyfriend	20	4.0	8.0
Girlfriend	2	.4	.8
Spouse/ Partner	1	.2	.4
Family Member	9	1.8	3.6
Other	6	1.2	2.4
Total	249	49.8	100.0
Those who have never taken an illegal drug	251	50.2	
Total	500	100.0	

**Table 16**

The proportion of students surveyed  
who currently take illegal drugs.

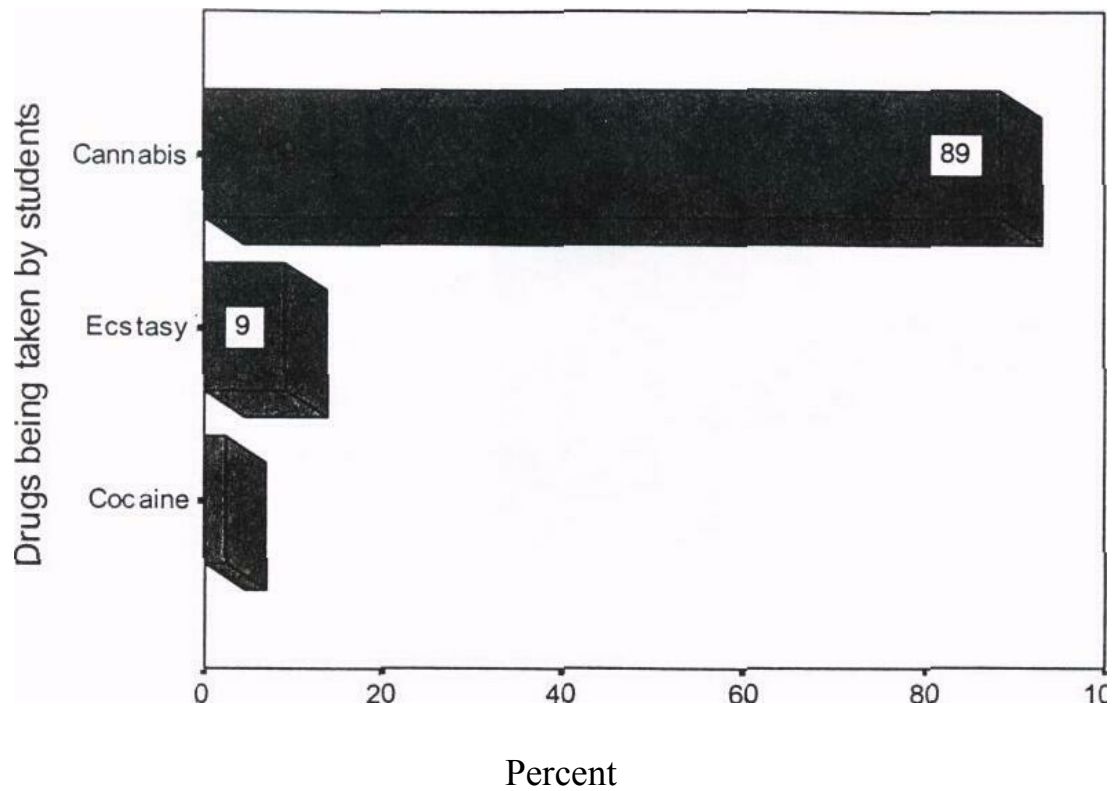


A Table showing the proportion of students surveyed who  
currently take illegal drugs.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	128	25.6	51.4
No	121	24.2	48.6
Total	249	49.8	100.0
Students who never took illegal drugs	251	50.2	
Total	500	100.0	

**Table 17**

# Drugs currently being used by students.

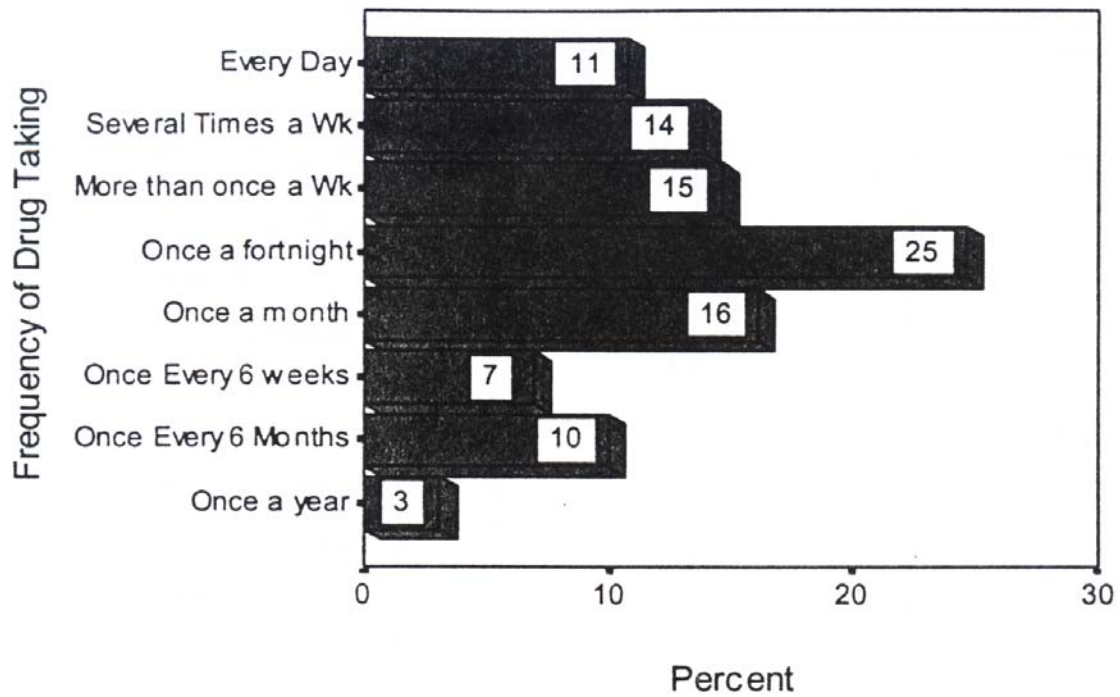


A Table showing the drugs currently being taken by students.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Cannabis	116	23.2	88.5
Ecstasy	12	2.4	9.2
Cocaine	3	.6	2.3
Total	131	26.2	100.0
Students who do not take drugs	369	73.8	
Total	500	100.0	

Table 18

How often do you take  
illegal drugs?



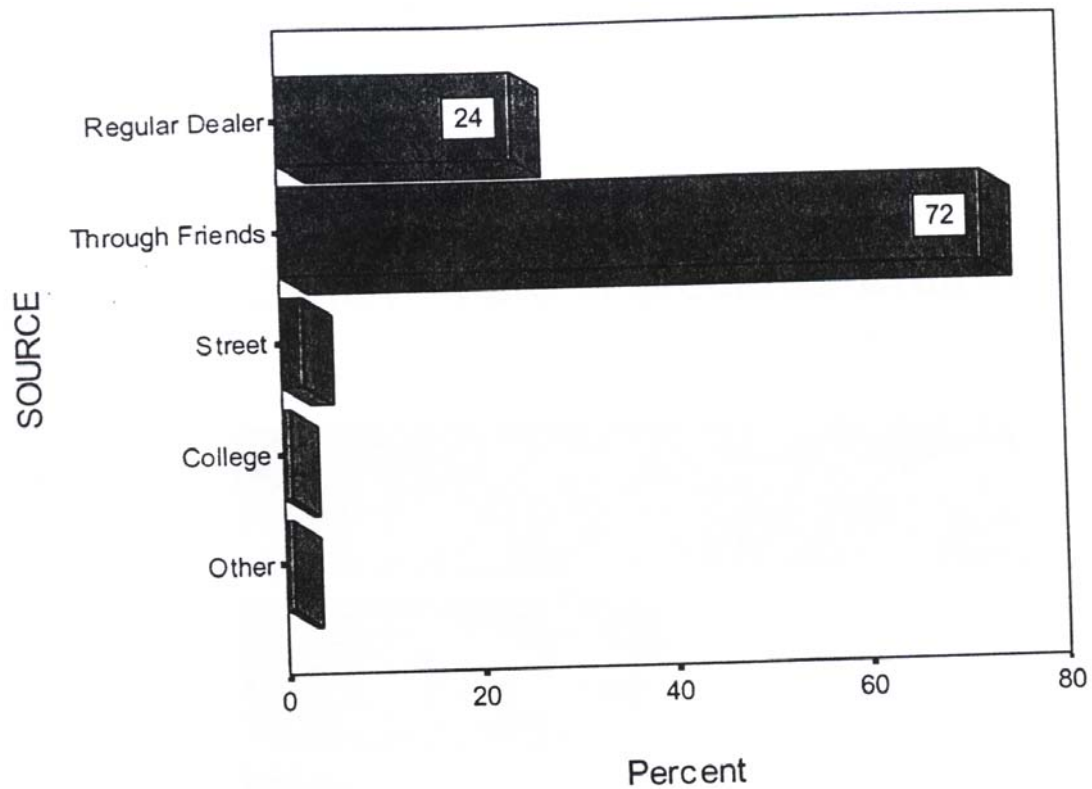
A Table showing how often students take illegal drugs.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Every Day	14	2.8	10.8
Several Times a week	18	3.6	13.8
More than once a week	19	3.8	14.6
Once a fortnight	32	6.4	24.6
Once a month	21	4.2	16.2
Once Every 6 weeks	9	1.8	6.9
Once Every 6 Months	13	2.6	10.0
Once a year	4	.8	3.1
Total	130	26.0	100.0
Non Drug Users	370	74.0	
Total	500	100.0	

**Table 19**



## Source of Drugs

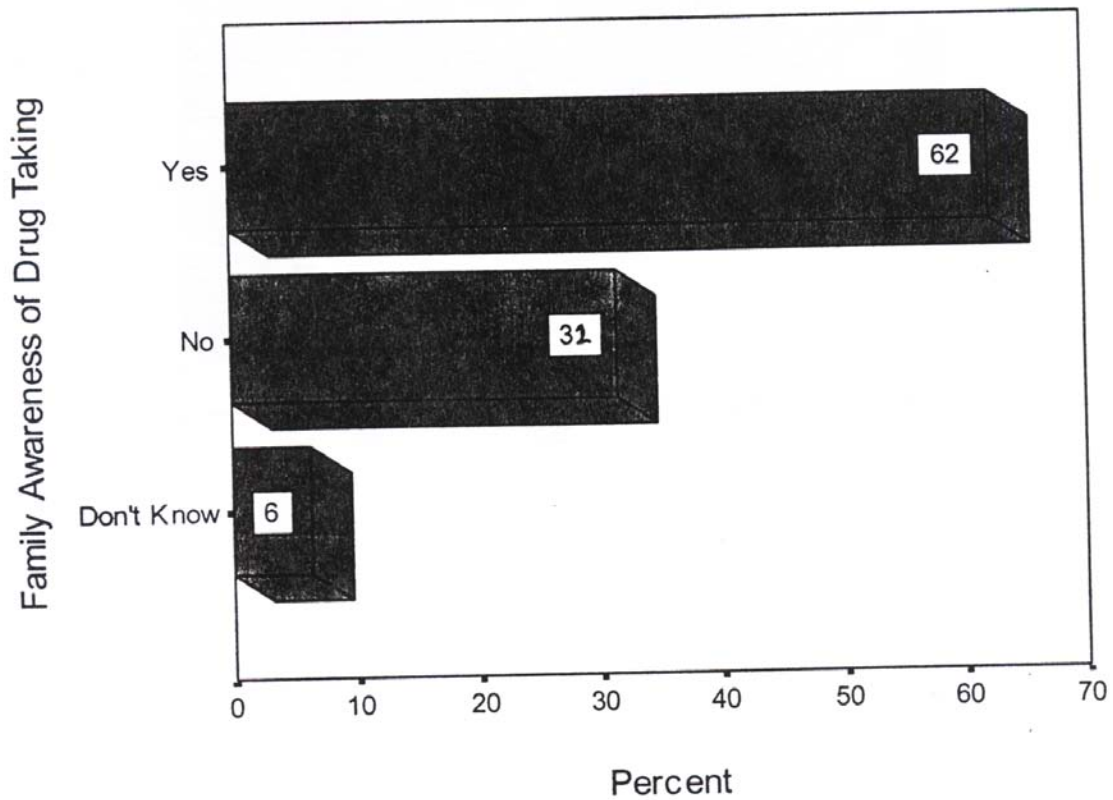


A Table showing where students source the illegal drugs  
that they take.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Regular Dealer	31	6.2	24.0
Through Friends	93	18.6	72.1
Street	3	.6	2.3
College	1	.2	.8
Other	1	.2	.8
Total	129	25.8	100.0
Non Drug Users	371	74.2	
Total	500	100.0	

**Table 20**

## Family Aware of Students' Drug Use

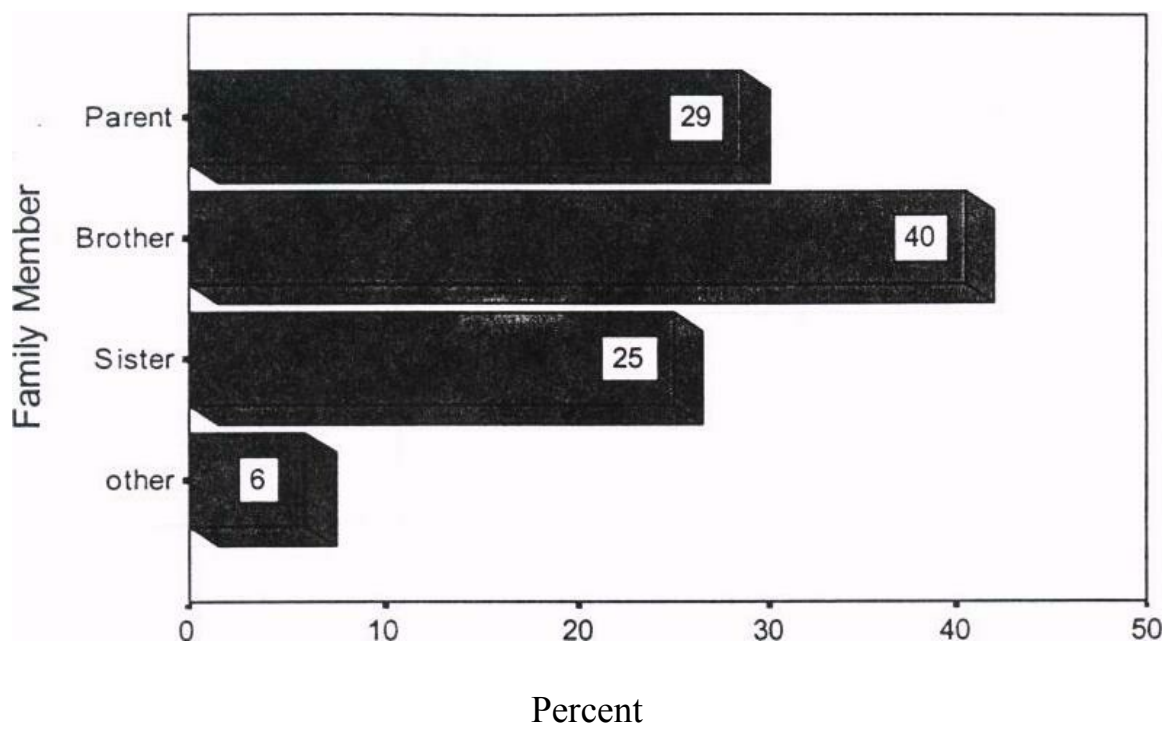


A Table showing the proportion of students who have a family member aware of their drug use.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	79	15.8	62.2
No	40	8.0	31.5
Don't Know	8	1.6	6.3
Total	127	25.4	100.0
Non-Drug Users	373	74.6	
Total	500	100.0	

**Table 21**

# Family Member Aware of Students' Drug Use

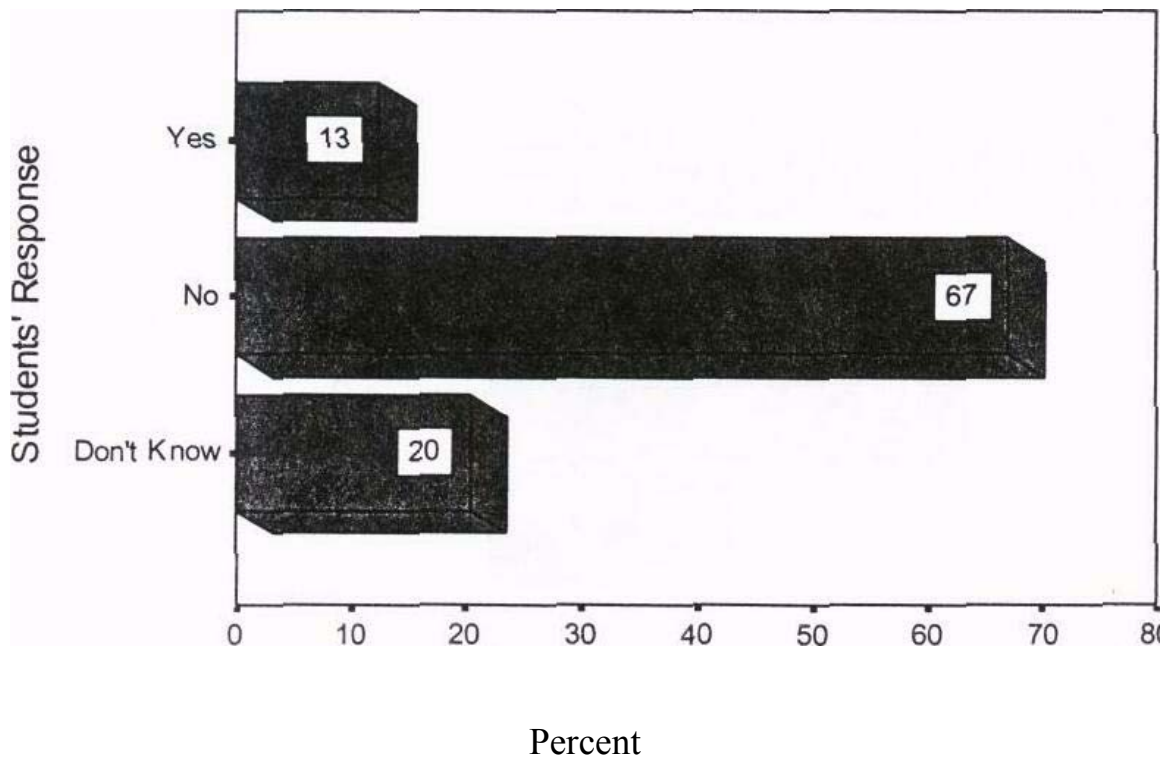


A Table displaying which family members are aware of student drug use.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Parent	24	4.8	28.6
Brother	34	6.8	40.5
Sister	21	4.2	25.0
other	5	1.0	6.0
Total	84	16.8	100.0
Non Drug Users	416	83.2	
Total	500	100.0	

**Table 22**

Do you wish to stop taking  
illegal drugs?

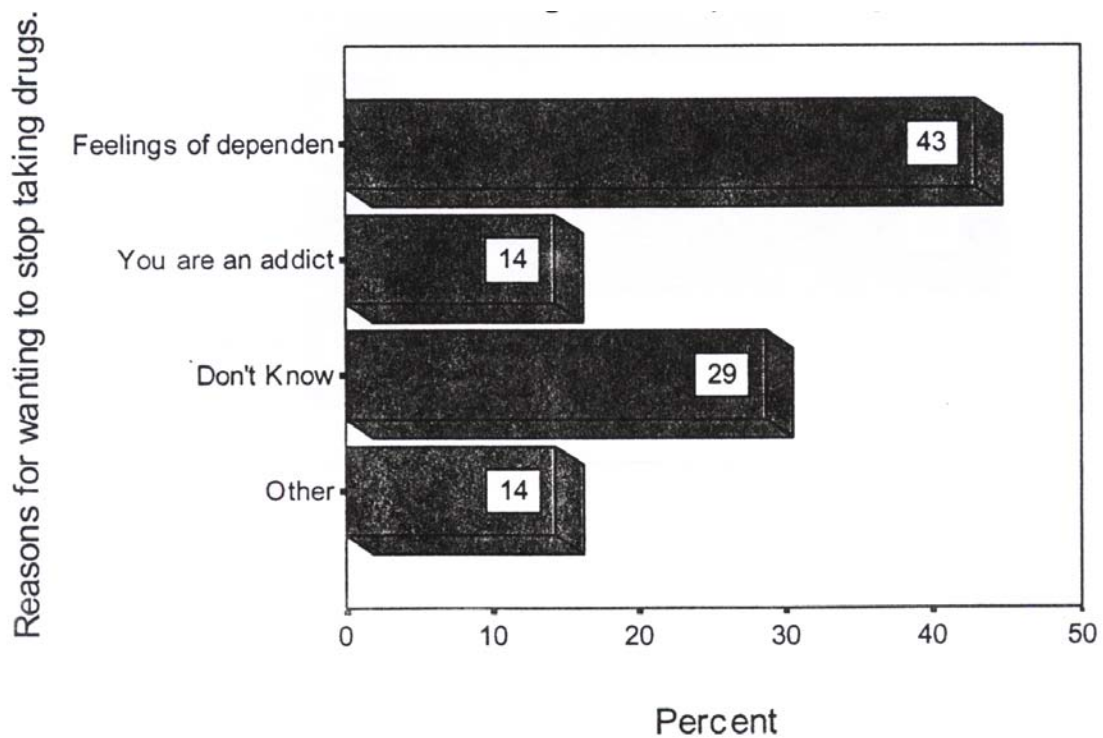


A Table Showing the proportion of students who wish to continue taking illegal drugs.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	16	3.2	12.6
No	85	17.0	66.9
Don't Know	26	5.2	20.5
Total	127	25.4	100.0
Non Drug Users	373	74.6	
Total	500	100.0	

Table 23

Reasons cited by students for wanting to stop taking drugs

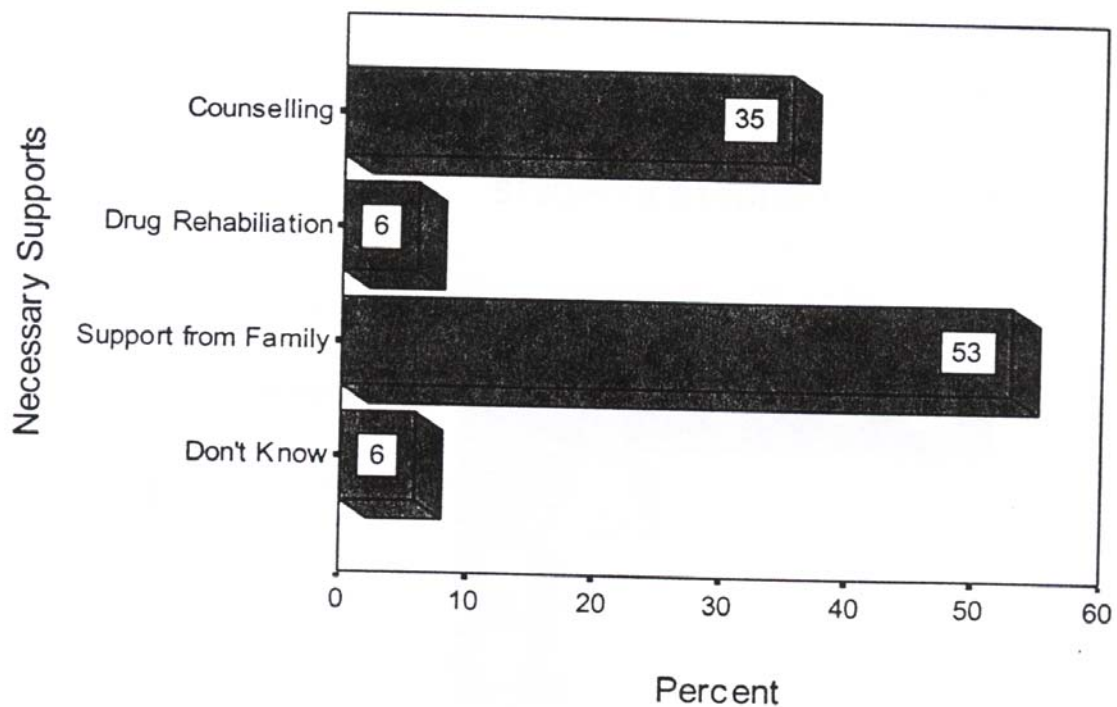


A Table showing the reasons students cited for wanting to stop taking illegal drugs.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Feelings of dependence on drugs to survive	6	1.2	42.9
You are an addict	2	.4	14.3
Don't Know	4	.8	28.6
Other	2	.4	14.3
Total	14	2.8	100.0
Non Drug Takers	486	97.2	
Total	500	100.0	

**Table 24**

Supports Required by students in order to stop taking drugs

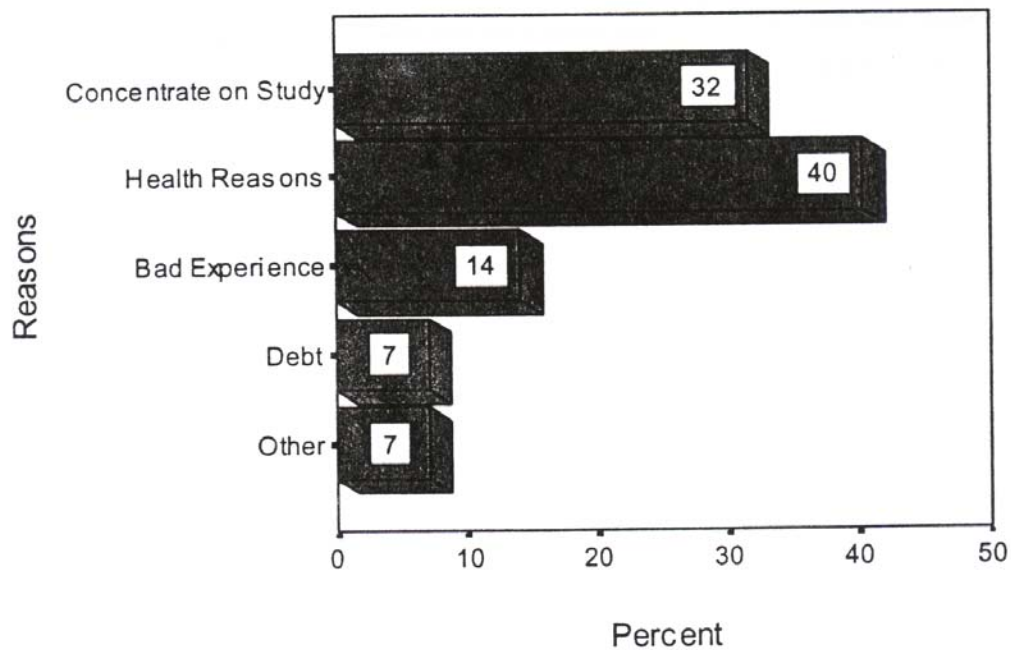


A Table showing the supports students considered as necessary in order to stop taking illegal drugs.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Counselling	6	1.2	35.3
Drug Rehabilitation	1	.2	5.9
Support from Family & Friends	9	1.8	52.9
Don't Know	1	.2	5.9
Total	17	3.4	100.0
Non Drug Takers	483	96.6	
Total	500	100.0	

**Table 25**

### Reasons why drug taking students stopped taking drugs



A Table showing the Reasons cited by former drug takers for stopping their drug taking.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
To concentrate on Academic Studies	18	3.6	31.6
Health Reasons			
A Bad Experience	23	4.6	40.4
Debt	8	1.6	14.0
Other	4	.8	7.0
Total	4	.8	7.0
Those who have never taken drugs or who still take drugs	57	11.4	100.0
Total	443	88.6	
	500	100.0	

**Table 26**



## Summary of Findings

### Key Research Findings

The research found that the majority of respondents had taken an illegal substance at some stage in the lives. 51% of students had taken an illegal drug. The remainder of the sample (49%) had never taken an illegal drug. Various reasons were cited by students for taking illegal drugs. The main reason cited for taking an illegal drug was curiosity. 51% of students who admitted to taking an illegal drug stated that they did so to satisfy their curiosity. 42% of students stated that they took drugs because they wanted to. Five percent of the sample took drugs because of peer pressure. Two percent of students who took an illegal drug stated that they were uncertain as to why they had taken drugs and one percent were motivated to try an illegal drug to remove inhibitions. The research also examined the reasons why students did not take illegal drugs and found that in the majority of cases (36%) students did not take illegal drugs because they simply had no interest in doing so. 32% of students refrained from taking an illegal drug for moral reasons, while 27% of students were concerned about the health risks associated with drug taking. Two percent stated that they didn't have the money to spend on drug taking and a further two percent stated that they didn't know why they had not tried illegal drugs.

The research examined the age and stage of education of students when they started taking drugs. The majority of students (66%) started their drug taking in secondary school. 33% of the students who took drugs started taking them at college. The ages when students first started taking drugs ranged from 12 - 26 years of age. The modal age for starting drug taking was 17 years of age. 23% of students started taking drugs at 17 years of age. 19% of the students surveyed started taking illegal drugs aged between 16 — 18 years of age.

The most common first time drug used was cannabis. 96% of first time users started their drug taking behaviour with cannabis. Two percent of the sample took LSD the first time they took drugs and the remaining three percent of the sample took ecstasy, speed, and 'magic mushrooms'.

In terms of information about drugs, 74% of students stated that they had information about the drug they took prior to taking it. The remaining 26% did not have access to such information. For students who did have access to information about drugs, 41% received the information from school, 28% obtained information from a friend, 15% read about drugs and six percent obtained information from the media. Four percent of students stated that they went out of their way to inform themselves about drugs, four percent obtained information from an older sibling, two percent obtained information from home/parent and one percent cited other sources. The majority of respondents (60%) felt there was sufficient information about drugs available in the public domain. In

relation to attitudes to the role the media played in glamourising drug use, 53% of the sample felt that far from glamourising drug use the media actually painted a very negative image.

#### ***Attitudes to the Decriminalisation of Soft Drugs such as Cannabis***

The majority of respondents (58%) believed that the use of cannabis should be decriminalised. The following reasons were cited in support of the decriminalisation of cannabis:

- 40% of students stated that the health hazards of cannabis were no greater than that of alcohol.
- 38% of students stated that the use of cannabis should be decriminalised for medicinal purposes.
- 21% of students argued that decriminalisation of cannabis would ensure safer drug use.
- 1% of students expressed other comments in favour of decriminalisation of cannabis; such as the right of the individual to the freedom to choose what way they live their life.

#### ***Argument in Opposition to the Decriminalisation of Soft Drugs such as Cannabis***

42% of students were opposed to the decriminalisation of cannabis. The following reasons were given to support their arguments against decriminalising cannabis:

- 48% of students felt that by decriminalising cannabis the Government would encourage drug use.
- 42% of students argued that it would lead to a greater drugs problem.
- 10% of students expressed the view that soft drugs were a health hazard
- 1% of students offered other arguments, one such argument was that cannabis was a gateway drug and led to the use of harder drugs.

#### ***Introduction to Drugs***

The research explored the issue of who introduced drug taking students to drugs and their relationship, if any, to the student. It found that 85% of students were introduced to drugs through friends. 48% of students stated that their boyfriends had introduced them to drugs. The remaining 6% of students who had experimented with illegal drugs were introduced to illegal substances through girlfriends, spouse/partner, or a family member.

#### ***The Proportion of Students who currently take illegal drugs.***

The majority of the students (51%) surveyed were current drug users. The remaining 49% of students either never took drugs or did so but discontinued their drug use. Of the proportion of students still using drugs, 89% use cannabis, nine percent use ecstasy and two percent use cocaine. In terms of the frequency of students' drug use, the study found that the majority of drug taking students (25%) use illegal drugs once a fortnight. 16% of students take drugs once a month, 15% of students take drugs more than once a week, 14% of the sample use drugs several times a week, while 11% use drugs every day. 10% of the sample of students who use drugs were found to use drugs once every six months, 7% use drugs once every six weeks, while the remaining 3% used drugs once a year.

### ***Source of Drugs***

The majority of students (72%) obtained their drugs through friends. 24% of drug taking students obtained their drugs through a regular dealer, while 2% of the sample obtained their drugs on the street. The remaining 2% of students who use drugs obtain their drugs through college or other unnamed sources.

### ***Family Awareness of Students' Drug Use***

The majority of students surveyed (62%) stated that at least one member of their family was aware of their drug use. 31% of students stated that no one in their family knew of their drug taking, while the remaining six percent of students weren't sure whether anyone in their family knew that they took drugs. Of the 62% of students whose family knew of their drug use, in 40% of cases their brother knew they took drugs. 29% of parents were aware their children were using drugs. In 25% of the cases the sister of the drug taker knew s/he took drugs, while six percent of the students cited another family member.

### ***Desire to stop Taking Drugs***

The research found that 67% of students who took drugs wished to continue their drug taking. 20% of students weren't sure whether they wanted to stop taking drugs or not, while 13% expressed the wish to stop taking drugs. Of those who expressed a desire to stop taking drugs, 43% stated it was because they felt dependent on drugs to survive, 29% were not sure why they wanted to stop, 14% felt they were addicted to the drugs they were taking and 14% gave other reasons of a personal and financial nature.

### ***Supports required by students in order to stop taking drugs.***

The majority of students (53%) wishing to give up drugs felt that support from family and friends was extremely important. 35% of students cited counselling as a necessary requirement. Six percent felt drug rehabilitation was required and a further six percent weren't sure what supports were needed.

### ***Reasons cited by students for ceasing their drug taking***

Health was the main reason cited for ceasing drug taking. 32% were motivated to stop taking drugs by the desire to concentrate on academic studies. 14% of students stopped due to a bad experience of taking narcotics, while a further 7% got into debt incurred by taking drugs and the expenses associated with purchasing them. The remaining 7% cited other reasons of a personal nature.

## **Key Statistics**

### ***The Proportion of students who have taken illegal drugs.***

- 51% of students have taken an illegal drug
- 49% of students have never taken an illegal drug

### ***Reasons why students have taken an illegal drug***

- 51% of students took an illegal drug because they were curious
- 42% of students stated that they took an illegal drug because they wanted to.
- 4% of students felt peer pressured into taking an illegal drug
- 2% of students stated that they didn't know why they took an illegal drug
- 1% cited shyness as a reason for taking an illegal drug - to remove inhibitions

### ***Reasons why students did not take an illegal drug***

- 36% of students stated they had no interest in illegal drug taking.
- 32% of students cited moral reasons for not taking an illegal drug.
- 27% of students cited health reasons as the main deterrent causing them to refrain from taking illegal drugs.
- 2% of students stated that they had never taken an illegal due to limited resources.
- 2% of students stated that they didn't know why they had refrained from taking an illegal drug.

### ***Stage of the education system when students took their first illegal drug***

- 66% of students took their first illegal drug in secondary school
- 33% of students took their first illegal drug in college

### ***Age when students took their first illegal drug***

- 23% of students were 17 years old when they took their first illegal drug
- 61% of students were between the ages of 16 - 18 years of age when they took their first drug.
- 1% of the students surveyed were 12 years of age when they took their first illegal drug.
- 23% of students were between 13-15 years of age when they took their first illegal drug.

### ***First Illegal Drug Taken***

- Cannabis was the most common first time drug for 96% of students surveyed.

- 1% of students took Ecstasy the first time they took drugs
- 1% of students took Speed the first time they took drugs
- 2% of students took Acid the first time they took drugs
- 1% of students took 'Magic Mushrooms' the first time they took drugs

#### ***Information about Drugs***

- 74% of students had information about the drug they took prior to taking it.
- 26% of students had no information about the drug they took prior to taking it.

#### ***Sources of Information about Illegal Drugs***

- 41% of students obtained information about illegal drugs from School
- 28% of students obtained information about illegal drugs from a friend
- 15% of students obtained information about illegal drugs from reading about it.
- 6% of students obtained information about illegal drugs from the media
- 4% of students went out of their way to inform themselves about illegal drugs
- 4% of students obtained information about illegal drugs from an older sibling
- 2% of students obtained information about illegal drugs from home/parent

#### ***Information about Drugs***

- 60% of students felt that there was sufficient information about illegal drugs available in the public domain
- 40% of students felt that information about illegal drugs in the public domain was not adequate.

#### ***Attitudes to the Decriminalisation of Cannabis***

- 58% of students thought cannabis should be decriminalised.
- 42% of students thought cannabis should not be decriminalised.

#### ***Reasons in favour of Decriminalisation of Cannabis***

- 40% of students felt cannabis should be decriminalised arguing that its health hazards were no more dangerous than that of alcohol.
- 38% of students felt cannabis should be decriminalised for medicinal purposes.
- 21% of students felt cannabis should be decriminalised because they felt this would ensure safer drug use.

#### ***Reasons for opposing the Decriminalisation of Cannabis***

- 48% of students were opposed to decriminalisation of cannabis because they felt that it would encourage drug use.
- 42% of students were opposed to decriminalisation of cannabis because they felt it would lead to a greater drugs problem.
- 10% of students were opposed to decriminalisation of cannabis because they felt soft drugs are a health hazard and ultimately their use leads to the use of harder drugs - they are 'gateway' drugs

#### ***Who introduced students to drug taking?***

- 85% of students stated that they were introduced to illegal drug taking by a friend.
- 8% of students stated that they were introduced to illegal drug taking by their boyfriend.
- 4% of students stated that they were introduced to illegal drug taking by a family member
- 2% of students stated that they were introduced to illegal drug taking by their spouse/partner or girlfriend.

#### ***The proportion of students who currently take illegal drugs***

- 51 % of students currently take illegal drugs.
- 49% of students do not take illegal drugs at the present time.

#### ***Drugs currently being used by students***

- 89% of students currently use cannabis.
- 9% of students currently take ecstasy.
- 2% of students reported using cocaine.

#### ***Frequency of drug use***

- 25% of students take illegal drugs once a fortnight.
- 16% of students take illegal drugs once a month.
- 15% of students take illegal drugs more than once a week.
- 14% of students take illegal drugs several times a week.
- 11% of students take illegal drugs every day.
- 10% of students take illegal drugs once every 6 months.
- 7% of students take illegal drugs once every 6 weeks.
- 3% of students take illegal drugs once a year.

#### ***Source of Drugs***

- 72% of students obtain the drugs through friends.
- 24% of students obtain their drugs through a regular drug dealer.
- 3% of students stated that they obtained their drugs on the street.
- 1 % of students obtained their drugs through college networks.
- 1% obtained their drugs through other sources, which were not stated.

#### ***Family Awareness of Students' drug taking***

- 62% of students stated that a member of their family was aware of the drug taking.
- 31% of students stated that no one in their family knew of their drug taking.
- 6% of students stated that they were unsure of whether or not anyone in their family was aware of their drug taking.

#### ***Family members who are aware of students' drug use.***

- In 40% of cases, the students' brother knew of his/her drug taking.

- 29% of students who took illegal drugs stated that their parents were aware that they took drugs.
- In 25% of cases the students' sister was aware of his/her drug taking.
- 6% of students stated that other family members knew they took drugs but did not specify their relationship to the person.

***Students who wish to stop taking illegal drugs.***

- 67% of students wish to continue their drug taking.
- 13% of students expressed the desire to stop taking drugs.
- 20% of respondents were unsure whether they wished to stop taking drugs or not.

***Reasons cited by students who want to stop taking illegal drugs.***

- 43% of students stated that they wished to stop taking drugs because they felt they were becoming dependent on drugs to survive.
- 29% of students wanted to stop taking drugs but were unsure why they wished to stop.
- 14% of students wanted to stop taking drugs because they felt that they were addicted to drugs.
- 14% of students cited other reasons for wishing to stop taking drugs.

***Supports required by students in order to stop taking drugs.***

- 53% of students stated that they felt support from family and friends was extremely important in the struggle to stop taking drugs.
- 35% of students regarded counselling as a necessary support in order to stop taking drugs.
- 6% of students cited drug rehabilitation as a necessary support.
- 6% of students stated that they were unsure what supports would be necessary in order to stop drug misuse.

***Reasons cited by students/or stopping illegal drug taking.***

- 40% of students stated that they stopped taking illegal drugs for health reasons.
- 32% of students stated that they stopped taking illegal drugs to concentrate on academic studies.
- 14% of students stated that they stopped taking illegal drugs because of a bad experience.
- 7% of students stated that they stopped taking illegal drugs because of debt they had incurred as a result of taking drugs.
- 7% of students expressed other personal reasons for stopping drug taking.