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ILLICIT DRUGS AND CRIME IN CANADA

by Sylvain Tremblay

HIGHLIGHTS

- Although the overall rate of police-reported drug offences has increased 12% since 1993, the long-term trend has generally remained stable over the past 15 years. It must be noted that trends in drug offences are directly influenced by levels of police enforcement.
- After a ten-year decline, the rate of cannabis offences has increased by 34% since 1991. Conversely, the rate of cocaine offences increased between 1981 and 1989, but has dropped by 36% since 1989. The rate of heroin offences also increased for a number of years, peaking in 1993, and then falling 25% over the last four years.
- Cannabis-supply offences (trafficking, importing and cultivation) increased for the fourth consecutive year in 1997, partially driven by an increase in cultivation offences. Cannabis-possession offences increased steadily from 1991 to 1996, but dropped slightly in 1997.
- Cannabis offences continue to account for the majority of all drug offences. More than 7 in 10 drug offences reported in 1997 involved cannabis. Two-thirds of cannabis offences were for simple possession.
- British Columbia continued to show the highest rate (426 offences per 100,000 population) of drug offences in 1997, almost twice the national average. However, when examining only the number of persons charged with drug offences, the rate for British Columbia was only 41% greater than the national average. Newfoundland reported the lowest rate (132) of drug offences for the second year in a row.
- While Newfoundland and Alberta have shown the largest decreases in drug offences in recent years, Nova Scotia (+44%), Saskatchewan (+26%) and Manitoba (+14%) have seen the largest increases in the rate of drug offences over the last 2 years.
- Younger people are less likely to be charged with serious drug offences. Of all persons charged with cocaine and heroin offences, only 36% were under 25 years of age. For cannabis offences, this proportion was 86%.
- The courts continue to treat trafficking offences more severely than possession offences. In 1996-97, data from seven provinces and one territory show that about two-thirds (64%) of persons convicted of trafficking were sentenced to imprisonment, compared to 13% for possession.
- Data from a one-day snapshot of inmates in correctional facilities in 1996 show that the most serious offence for which 9% of the adult inmate population in Canada were incarcerated was a drug offence.



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Introduction

In 1996, licit and illicit drugs (excluding alcohol) resulted in the deaths of 1,256 people by overdose¹. In addition, approximately one-half of the 3,000 to 5,000 estimated cases of HIV infection in Canada occurred among intravenous drug users (Health Canada, 1998). While it is not possible to distinguish the specific part attributable to drugs considered illegal according to the Canadian Criminal Code, these drugs represent a major health and public safety concern in many countries, including Canada.

The consequences inherent in the use of illegal drugs are serious. Apart from the loss of human life, illegal drugs generate direct costs to the health and criminal justice systems as well as indirect costs through lost work productivity, absenteeism and the loss of human potential. Economically, these costs amount to about \$1.4 billion annually (Single et al., 1996). In addition to these economic losses, drug abuse takes a social toll on drug users, children, family members and sometimes entire city neighbourhoods.

Illicit drug use is also an important element associated with crime; however, the link between the two is complex. It varies from simple possession of drugs to organized crime fighting for control of the drug trade, to serious addiction problems that may lead users to commit crimes for quick money. Hard drug users are found to be most likely to commit crimes to satisfy their drug needs.

To fight the drug problem, Canada has implemented a national strategy that aims to strike a balance between reducing the black market supply of illegal drugs and reducing demand.² The first component emphasizes the fight against drug crimes by the criminal justice system, while the second focuses on prevention and public awareness of the negative effects of drug use.

This issue of *Juristat* focuses principally on criminal drug offences reported by Canadian police services. It sketches a statistical profile of drug crimes and drug offenders, while examining the various types of offences and drugs involved. The report also examines national trends as well as provincial/territorial comparisons. Other information sources are used to describe the attitudes of Canadians toward the drug problem and the reaction of the courts to those appearing on drug charges.

Drugs and Crime: A complex relationship

Although illicit drugs are more widely used by people experiencing problems with the law than by the general population, it does not signify a causal relationship between the two (Brochu, 1994). Indeed, not all drug users are involved in criminal activity outside their illegal drug use. Conversely, not all offenders are drug users. Both types of behaviour are more likely to be the outcome of a deviant lifestyle. Experts in the field believe that the drug consumption profile of users is decisive in explaining the extent of their involvement in crime (Brochu, 1994; Gomme, 1993).

There are four main ways in which illegal drugs are linked to the commission of crimes. First, possessing, growing or buying illegal drugs are activities which in themselves constitute a violation of the law. Second, the use of intoxicants encourages some offenders to act out by distorting their inhibitions, perceptions and reason. For some users, drugs are a means to boost their courage, motivation or aggressiveness, or simply to get a thrill. Third, some drug addicts commit crimes for the purpose of obtaining the money they need to purchase more drugs. Fourth, a final aspect concerns the fact that the drug market is a major source of income for many offenders and for members of organized crime in general. The Canadian Government estimates a value of \$7 to \$10 billion annually for the underground, illegal drug market in Canada (Porteous, 1998). Conflicts between people involved

¹ Including overdoses related to substance abuse, accidental intoxication, suicide or poisoning by medication and legal or illegal drugs. Source: Health Statistics Division, Statistics Canada.

² Canada's Drug Strategy, Government of Canada, 1998.

in such a lucrative illegal trade are commonly settled by various forms of violence, including assault, arson or homicide (idem, 1998).

The New Drug Act and its Application

Before 1997, drugs came under the authority of two separate federal acts: *The Narcotics Control Act*, which governed illegal drugs such as cannabis, cocaine and heroin, and; the *Food and Drugs Act*, which governed controlled and restricted drugs such as amphetamines, LSD or anabolic steroids. A new act entitled the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (CDSA)* came into force in May 1997 to replace the two existing acts. The *CDSA* incorporates certain parts of the two previous acts, while modernizing and improving Canada's policy on drug control and abuse. The *CDSA* also aims to meet Canada's obligations under a number of international drug protocols.

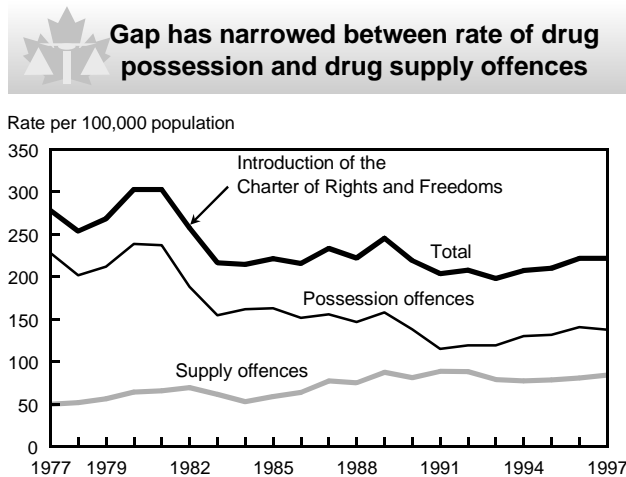
Canadian police forces report all *CDSA* drug offences to the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) survey. However, it should be noted that since drug offences usually involve consenting persons who are unlikely to report these events to the police, recorded drug crimes are very sensitive to levels of enforcement and detection. Accordingly, an increase in the number of arrests and seizures does not necessarily reflect an increase in the population's use of illegal drugs. However, it may be an indicator that the international and national circulation of drugs is rising or that there is a push on police enforcement.

Analysis of Police-Reported Data

The drug crime rate has climbed over the past 4 years

In 1997, police forces in Canada reported a total of 66,521 offences under the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*, representing a rate of 222 offences per 100,000 population. Although the drug crime rate has increased 12% over the last 4 years, it has generally remained stable since 1983. Between 1981 and 1983, however, drug offences plunged significantly (Figure 1). This drop may have been a direct result of the introduction of the *Charter of Rights and*

Figure 1



Source: Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, 1977-1997.

Freedoms in 1982 which limited police authority in search and seizure operations.³ This change seems to have affected mostly possession of drug offences.

The drug offences trend also reflects a change in the police strategy in the fight against drugs after the introduction of the *Charter*. Police data seem to indicate an increase in the effort of police departments to counter crimes involving the supply of drugs (including trafficking, importing, and cultivation) to the illegal drug market since 1984.

Enumerating Drug Crimes

Since 1962, the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics has been gathering data on drug offences through the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Survey. The survey counts only the most serious offence committed in each criminal incident, which consequently underestimates the total number of drug-related incidents. For example, if an incident includes both an act of violence and a drug offence, only the act of violence is counted. Similarly, if an incident involves both a drug importation and a possession offence, the possession offence is not recorded.

Also, the UCR Survey considers trafficking and importation to be "continuing" offences. As an example, a drug trafficker who is observed selling drugs for five days to multiple persons is counted as one incident.

Drug supply

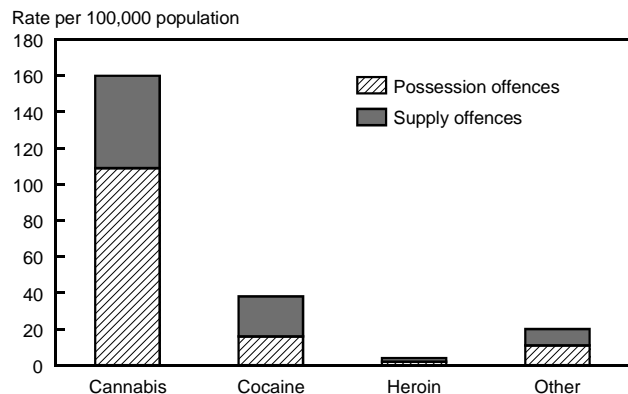
The expression "drug supply" as used in this report refers to an amalgamation of drug trafficking, drug importing, and cannabis cultivation.

Cannabis offences

Criminal offences involving cannabis (possession, trafficking, importation and cultivation) account for the vast majority of drug crimes. In 1997, more than 7 drug offences in 10 involved cannabis. Possession of cannabis offences represented a rate of 109 per 100,000 population, almost half of all drug offences (rate of 222) (Figure 2). In comparison, the overall rate for cocaine offences was 38, for heroin 4 and, "other drugs" 20.

Figure 2

About half of all drug incidents were for possession of cannabis in 1997



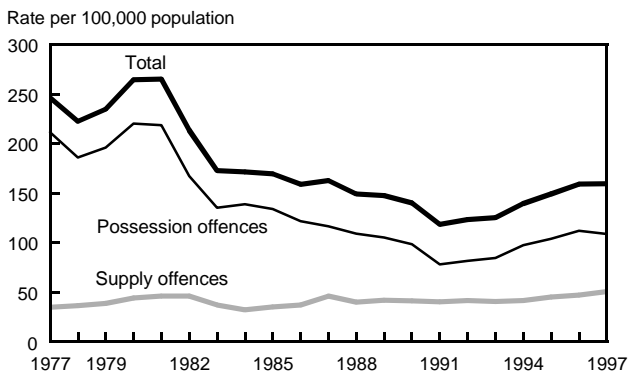
Source: Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, 1997.

³ Article 8 of the Charter specifically aims at protecting people from unreasonable searches and seizures.

The increasing number of cannabis possession offences between 1991 and 1996 has driven the overall trend in cannabis-related incidents (Figure 3). Cannabis supply offences increased for the fourth consecutive year in 1997, fuelled by a rise in cultivation offences, which climbed from a rate of 4 per 100,000 population in 1987 to 22 in 1997. Compared to 1996, the cultivation rate increased by 30% in 1997. Cultivation offences now account for 14% of all cannabis offences compared to slightly less than 3% ten years ago. More sophisticated growing techniques and new technology enable Canadian traffickers to produce high-quality cannabis in hydroponic greenhouses. As a result, Canadian-grown cannabis accounted for 50% of the total Canadian market supply in 1995 compared to 10% in 1985 (Porteous, 1998).

Figure 3

 **Rate of cannabis incidents increasing since 1991**



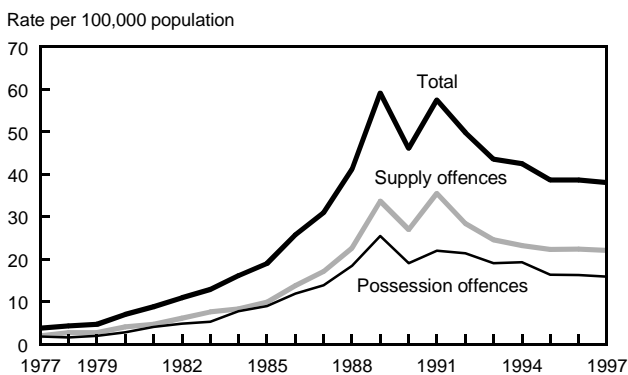
Source: Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, 1977-1997.

Cocaine offences

Amongst the hard drugs, cocaine is the most popular. The rate of cocaine offences increased substantially between 1979 and 1989. This increase seems to have been the result

Figure 4

 **Rate of cocaine incidents decreasing since 1991**



Source: Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, 1977-1997.

of a rising popularity of cocaine among drug users as well as a change in police drug strategies to focus enforcement on hard drugs. Conversely to the rate of cannabis offences that has increased in recent years, the rate of cocaine offences has declined since 1991. Compared to 1991, the 1997 rates showed a 28% decrease for possession offences and a 38% decrease for supply offences.

In 1997, offences related to the drug market supply of cocaine amounted to 58% of all cocaine offences, a percentage that has remained relatively stable over time.

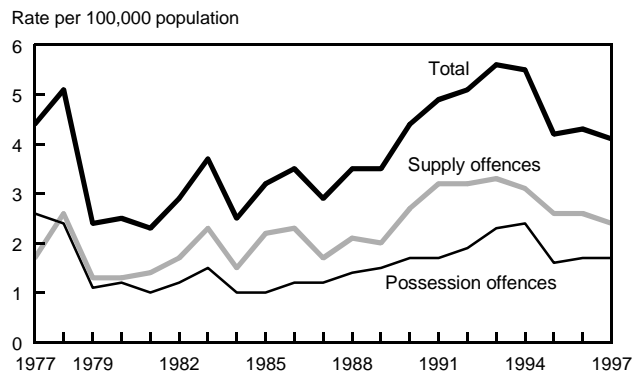
Heroin offences

Heroin is considered one of the most devastating drugs, as an increase in tolerance to heroin facilitates the process of addiction to the drug (Gomme, 1993). Heroin offences account for less than 2% of all drug crimes. The majority (61%) of heroin offences in 1997 occurred in British Columbia.

After reaching a peak in 1993, the rate of heroin offences dropped by 24% between 1994 and 1997. Similar to the case for cocaine, supply-related offences accounted for 58% of the 1,235 offences reported by police departments in 1997.

Figure 5

 **Rate of heroin incidents peaked in 1993**



Source: Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, 1977-1997.

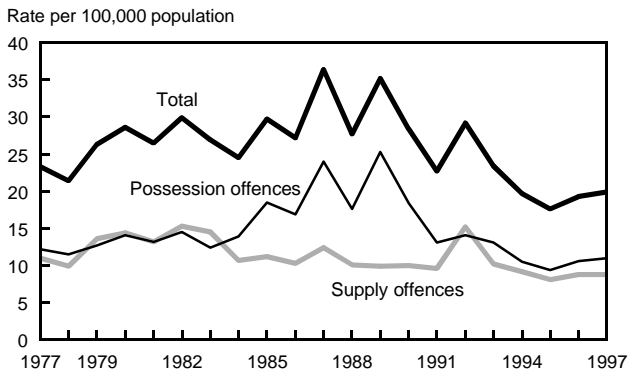
“Other drug” offences

Most “other drugs” can be divided into two categories: 1) illegal drugs other than cannabis, cocaine or heroin (e.g., PCP [phencyclidine], LSD or ecstasy), and 2) controlled drugs (e.g., amphetamines, barbiturates or anabolic steroids). The latter were covered under the former *Food and Drugs Act* and simple possession of them is not an indictable offence.

Between 1983 and 1991, the trend for all “other drugs” varied considerably from year to year, mainly due to variations among possession offences. Over the last two years, rates of possession and supply of “other drugs” offences have increased 15%. Possession of “other drugs” accounted for 56% of all “other drug” incidents in 1997.

Figure 6

Rate of "other drug" related incidents fluctuates annually



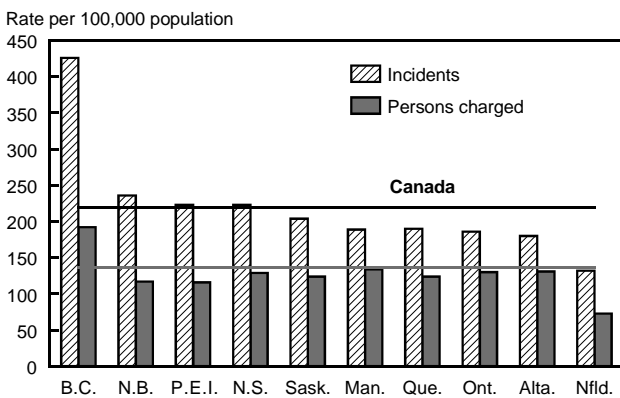
Source: Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, 1977-1997.

British Columbia has the highest rate of drug incidents among provinces

Among the provinces, British Columbia has consistently reported the highest rate of drug crime since 1982 (Table 1). The 1997 rate of 426 incidents per 100,000 population was almost double the national rate (Figure 7). Rates in both territories were higher than in British Columbia (Yukon: 438 and the Northwest Territories: 670). At the other extreme, Newfoundland (132) reported the lowest rate for the second consecutive year. The drug crime rates in the three other Atlantic provinces were slightly higher than those of the Prairie provinces, Quebec and Ontario.

Figure 7

British Columbia reported the highest rate of drug incidents in 1997



Source: Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, 1997.

While some provinces (Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Quebec, Saskatchewan and Manitoba) have shown an upward trend since the early 1990's, drug crime rates in British Columbia and Ontario have remained relatively stable. Between 1996 and 1997, the percentage change in drug crimes ranged from a decrease of 29% in Yukon to an increase of 14% in Manitoba.

The rate of persons charged with drug offences is declining

In all, 40,816 people (youths and adults) were charged by the police for a drug offence in 1997, accounting for a rate of 136 per 100,000 population. The vast majority were male (89%).

Official statistics on drug crimes are closely related to levels of drug enforcement by police. Investigations which lead to the seizure of illicit drugs frequently result in the arrest of suspects. As a result, this type of crime reveals an annual number of drug incidents which usually closely parallels the annual number of persons charged. However, since 1995, a new trend has emerged. Although the drug crime rate has increased by 6% over these two years, the rate of persons charged has fallen by 7%. The rate of incidents that were cleared otherwise by the police increased by 12% between 1995 and 1997.⁴ The increase was apparent in most provinces, and could partially be explained by the introduction of alternative measures for adults that came into effect in 1997. This program allows police forces to use discretion in referring adult suspects to a diversionary program who could otherwise have been charged. A similar program was already in force for youth.

Among provinces and territories, police departments in British Columbia reported the lowest charge rate (47%) for drug offences.⁵ Only 35% of cannabis incidents and 36% of "other drug" incidents resulted in charges, compared to 79% and 81% for all the other provinces combined. No significant differences among the provinces in charges for heroin or cocaine trafficking and importation offences were noted.

In Canada, of all youths aged 12 to 17 identified by police in 1997 as having committed a drug offence, 40% were not charged by police. This was true in only 13% of cocaine incidents and 7% of heroin incidents.

Younger people more involved in less serious drug offences

According to the revised UCR survey, the average age of someone charged in a drug incident was 26 years. Persons charged in cocaine and heroin incidents tended to be older (average age of 30) than persons charged in cannabis and "other drug" incidents (average age of 25). For comparative purposes, the average age of persons charged with property offences was 21 years of age compared to 29 years of age for violent offences.

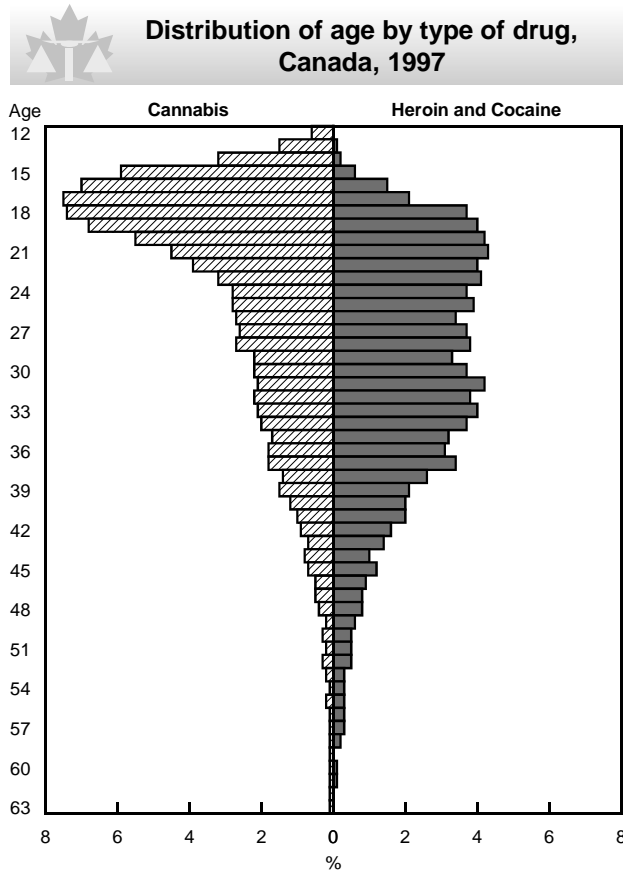
The ages of those charged in heroin and cocaine incidents are more evenly distributed than in cannabis incidents (Figure 8). Most people charged in cannabis incidents were young: 26% of all individuals charged were less than 18 years of age, and 60% were less than 25 years of age. Among those charged with heroin or cocaine offences, only 5% were under 18 years of age, while 33% were less than 25 years of age.

⁴ Crimes are cleared by charge when the police have laid an information or made a recommendation that the Crown lay official charges against the accused. Crimes are cleared "otherwise" when a suspect is identified and sufficient evidence exists to charge the suspect, but charges are not laid.

⁵ The charge rate represents the percentage of "accused" persons who are actually "charged" by police.

The older the offender, the most likely they were to be charged with cocaine or heroin offences, or with drug supply offences (Table 3). Among individuals under 16 years of age, 4% were charged for cocaine or heroin incidents, compared to 32% of 20 to 24 year-olds, 42% of 25 to 34 year-olds, and 45% of 35 to 44 year-olds. This results from drug habits that change with age. Younger people tend to be more involved with drugs for their personal use or use in small groups as they seek out new experiences and pleasure. The higher price range for hard drugs like cocaine or heroin may also explain a more prevalent use of cannabis (which is cheaper) among the younger population. Table 3 shows that those who pursue their drug activities seem more likely to graduate to harder drugs and participate more extensively in the drug trade.

Figure 8



Source: Revised Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, 1997.

High rate of alcohol and other drug involvement in homicides

In addition to the formal federal drug statute offences described above, there are also other forms of drug-related crimes such as the violence between organized crime groups over control of the drug trade, and the crimes committed by drug addicts to obtain quick cash.

Data from the Statistics Canada *Homicide Survey* show that, of the 581 homicides in Canada in 1997, one in three victims and one in two accused had been drinking alcohol and/or using drugs at the time of the crime. Male victims were one and a half times more likely to have consumed alcohol or used drugs than female victims. The police also reported that 12% of homicide incidents with a known motive were drug-related.

Decriminalizing Drugs

Although the public, police officers and politicians seem to unanimously support the idea of increasing efforts to fight the drug problem, some are beginning to question the hard-line approach involving the criminal justice system. Some members of the academic, legal, political and health communities have expressed their support for various means of decriminalizing drugs. These means range from legalizing the use of cannabis for therapeutic purposes, to legalizing possession, to completely decriminalizing all criminal drug offences.

The supporters of decriminalization claim that it would help eliminate the income generated by trafficking, reduce the attendant crime rates, lower costs to the health and criminal justice systems, and decrease the likelihood that users become involved in crime. Those who oppose relaxing the laws argue that such legislation would increase the number of users, not eliminate the black market, and raise, rather than reduce, the number of drug-related problems.

Illegal Drug Use By Canadians

Many Canadians admit to using illegal drugs. According to the *Canadian Alcohol and Other Drugs Survey (1994)*, almost one in four Canadians 15 years of age or over reported having used at least one illegal drug during his/her lifetime, primarily cannabis (Table 4). The findings show that the use of illicit drugs increased significantly across the country between 1993 and 1994. Cannabis use climbed from 4.2% to 7.4%, cocaine from 0.3% to 0.7%, and LSD, speed or heroin from 0.3% to 1.1% (McKenzie, D., Williams, B. & Single, E., 1997).

Table 4 shows that illegal drug use (cannabis, cocaine, LSD, speed or heroin) was twice as prevalent among men as women, and that users were primarily young people. About one-quarter (26%) of youths 15 to 17 years of age and a similar proportion of 18 to 19 year-olds (24%) reported having used at least one illegal drug in the previous year, compared to 20% among those aged 20 to 24 years. Adlaf, Ivis, Smart and Walsh (1997) reached very similar findings in the 1997 cycle of the *Ontario Student Drug Use Survey*. They found that the percentage of Ontario students who used cannabis (at least once during the previous year) was the same as in 1995, but that the number of hallucinogenic drug users had increased over the two-year period.

McKenzie et al. (1997) also found that illegal drug use varies from one province to another. British Columbia respondents reported using illegal drugs the most (12%) during the previous year, followed by Alberta, Manitoba and Quebec respondents (9%). At the other end of the spectrum, less than 4% of respondents from Newfoundland reported using illicit drugs.


The court reaction to persons accused of drug-related offences

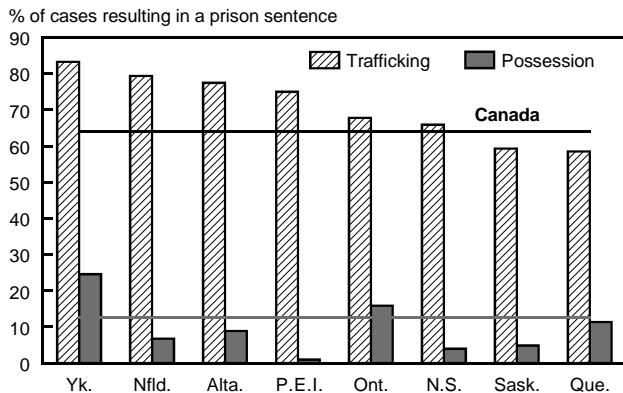
In 1996-97, the *Adult Criminal Court Survey* collected information from provincial/territorial courts in seven provinces and Yukon.⁶ In that year, these courts heard 18,515 drug-related offence cases, of which 29% were for drug trafficking. Unfortunately, the survey does not allow for a distinction between the types of drugs.

Almost two-thirds of persons charged with drug trafficking are sentenced to imprisonment

The *Criminal Code* provides a maximum of life imprisonment in the case of trafficking and importation of drugs. For all jurisdictions combined, about two-thirds (64%) of all persons convicted of drug trafficking were sentenced to imprisonment (Figure 9). The median sentence length in these cases was four months. Figure 9 shows provincial/territorial differences in imprisonment proportions for drug crime cases. Yukon, Newfoundland and Alberta imposed the highest proportions of prison sentences for drug trafficking, ranging from 78% to 83%. However, less than six in ten persons convicted of drug trafficking in Quebec and Saskatchewan were sentenced to prison. The longest sentences of imprisonment were imposed in Prince Edward Island and Alberta (medians of 12 months and 8 months respectively). In addition, probation was the most serious sentence imposed in 24% of drug trafficking cases, and fines in 9%.

Figure 9

 **About two-thirds of convicted drug traffickers were sentenced to prison in Canada in 1996-97**



Source: *Adult Criminal Court Survey, 1997-98.*

⁶ The survey covers the period from April 1, 1996 to March 31, 1997. The courts of New Brunswick, Manitoba, British Columbia and the Northwest Territories were not included in the survey. Data for 1997-98 were available, but with the introduction of the new drug legislation, some drug offences were coded to the "Other Federal Statutes" category. This inflates the OFS group and undercounts drug offences.

Fine is the most common sentence for drug possession

In cases of drug possession, a fine was the most common sentence imposed (in 63% of cases), with a median amount of \$200. The highest fines were imposed in Prince Edward Island (\$400 median), while the lowest were given in Quebec and Yukon (\$150 median). Nationally, a fine was imposed as the most serious sentence in 55% of cases, followed by probation in 22% of cases and imprisonment in 13%. In most provinces/territory, the median length of the sentence of imprisonment ranged from one to two months.

Drug Offenders in the Corrections System

The findings of *A One-Day Snapshot of Inmates in Canada's Adult Correctional Facilities Survey* conducted on October 5, 1996 showed that the most serious sentence for which 9% of the on-register Canadian adult inmate population (including remands) were in prison was a drug-related offence.

Alberta (17%) and Quebec (14%) held the highest percentage of drug offenders in provincial prisons (Table 5). In British Columbia, the province that had the highest number of persons charged with drug offences, only 8% of inmates were incarcerated for drug offences as the most serious offence. New Brunswick also reported a similar proportion. In federal penitentiaries, those incarcerated for drug offences also accounted for 8% of all inmates.

Drugs are also a major problem inside provincial and federal correctional institutions. The *One-Day Snapshot of Inmates Survey* found that prison administrators considered drug abuse as a security concern for 23% of the inmate population covered. In addition, a national inmate survey conducted by Robinson & Mirabelli (1996) found that 38% of inmates incarcerated in federal institutions said they had used illegal drugs at least once since their admission. The most frequently used drugs were cannabis (59%), heroin (19%), cocaine or crack (17%).

Methodology

1. Uniform Crime Reporting Survey (UCR)

a) Aggregate Component – 100% Coverage

The aggregate UCR survey tracks the number of criminal incidents reported to the police. It includes the number of reported incidents and the number of actual incidents, the number of incidents cleared by police and the number of persons charged by gender and by status as youths or adults. It does not include data on victim characteristics. Unless otherwise indicated, all of the analyses included in this report are based on aggregate survey counts.

b) Revised UCR Survey - (UCR II Research File - incident-based)

The revised micro-data survey gathers detailed information on the individual criminal offences reported to the police, including the characteristics of victims, of accused persons, and of incidents. In 1997, detailed data were gathered from 179 police departments in six provinces. These data account for 48% of the national volume of

actual crimes set out in the *Criminal Code*. Incidents entered in the Research File in 1997 were distributed as follows: 42% in Quebec, 32% in Ontario, 11% in Alberta, 8% in British Columbia, 5% in Saskatchewan and 1% in New Brunswick. Except in Quebec, most of the data were supplied by urban police departments. Readers are advised that these data are not representative at the national level.

2. Homicide Survey

The Homicide Survey has collected police-reported data on homicide incidents since 1961, including characteristics of victims and accused. Survey questionnaires are completed for each homicide known to the police by the investigating police department.

3. Adult Criminal Court Survey (ACCS)

Provincial criminal courts in seven provinces and two territories (representing approximately 80% of the national total) supplied the survey data. These data were distributed as follows: Ontario (51%); Quebec (21%); Alberta (14%); Saskatchewan (7%); Newfoundland (2%); the Northwest Territories (0.7%); Yukon (0.5%); and, Prince Edward Island (0.4%).

4. A One-Day Snapshot of Inmates in Canada's Adult Correctional Facilities

For the first time, the study took a census of inmates "registered" in Canadian adult correctional facilities as of midnight, October 5, 1996. The purpose of the census was to provide a detailed profile of the inmates in Canadian adult prisons. The data were gleaned from the administrative files kept by the various federal, provincial and territorial correctional services.

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Table 1

Number and Rate of Drug Offences by Province/Territory, Canada, 1988 to 1997

		1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	% change 1988-1997 ²
Newfoundland	number	761	798	822	666	818	785	852	1,027	904	730	
	rate ¹	132	138	142	115	141	135	148	181	161	132	
	% change in rate	...	5%	3%	-19%	23%	-4%	10%	22%	-11%	-18%	--
Prince Edward Island	number	189	187	209	136	209	204	246	262	330	305	
	rate ¹	146	144	160	104	160	154	184	194	242	223	
	% change in rate	...	-2%	11%	-35%	53%	-3%	19%	6%	25%	-8%	53%
Nova Scotia	number	1,924	2,087	2,252	1,877	1,969	1,923	2,055	1,833	1,910	2,086	
	rate ¹	214	231	248	205	214	208	222	198	205	223	
	% change in rate	...	8%	7%	-17%	4%	-3%	7%	-11%	4%	9%	4%
New Brunswick	number	1,295	1,783	1,364	1,199	1,096	1,204	1,237	1,546	1,672	1,776	
	rate ¹	177	243	184	161	146	161	165	206	222	236	
	% change in rate	...	37%	-24%	-13%	-9%	10%	3%	25%	8%	6%	33%
Quebec	number	8,670	9,303	8,645	9,088	10,639	11,185	11,847	12,391	14,218	13,902	
	rate ¹	127	134	123	129	150	156	164	171	195	190	
	% change in rate	...	6%	-8%	4%	16%	4%	5%	4%	14%	-3%	50%
Ontario	number	22,041	26,660	23,532	21,034	18,619	17,607	18,330	18,915	20,688	20,927	
	rate ¹	224	264	228	202	176	165	169	173	186	186	
	% change in rate	...	18%	-13%	-12%	-13%	-6%	3%	2%	8%	--	-17%
Manitoba	number	2,713	3,540	2,165	1,724	2,262	1,683	1,682	1,792	1,880	2,149	
	rate ¹	246	321	196	155	203	150	150	159	166	189	
	% change in rate	...	30%	-39%	-21%	31%	-26%	-1%	6%	4%	14%	-23%
Saskatchewan	number	1,967	1,949	2,051	1,155	1,791	1,745	1,651	1,770	2,054	2,087	
	rate ¹	191	191	204	115	178	173	164	175	201	204	
	% change in rate	...	--	7%	-43%	55%	-3%	-6%	7%	15%	1%	7%
Alberta	number	6,672	6,587	6,195	5,018	5,685	6,234	5,286	4,837	5,226	5,093	
	rate ¹	272	264	243	194	216	233	195	177	188	180	
	% change in rate	...	-3%	-8%	-20%	11%	8%	-16%	-10%	6%	-4%	-34%
British Columbia	number	12,737	13,539	12,833	14,616	15,279	13,728	16,409	16,651	16,174	16,868	
	rate ¹	409	423	390	433	440	384	446	440	417	426	
	% change in rate	...	4%	-8%	11%	2%	-13%	16%	-1%	-5%	2%	4%
Yukon	number	167	219	191	212	172	147	182	188	196	141	
	rate ¹	627	808	688	733	569	480	606	609	614	438	
	% change in rate	...	29%	-15%	7%	-22%	-16%	26%	--	1%	-29%	-30%
Northwest Territories	number	246	278	365	343	342	372	376	401	477	457	
	rate ¹	442	488	620	563	548	585	577	602	706	670	
	% change in rate	...	10%	27%	-9%	-3%	7%	-1%	4%	17%	-5%	52%
Canada	number	59,382	66,930	60,624	57,068	58,881	56,817	60,153	61,613	65,729	66,521	
	rate ¹	222	245	219	204	207	198	207	210	222	222	
	% change in rate	...	11%	-11%	-7%	2%	-5%	5%	1%	6%	--	--

¹ Rates are calculated on the basis of 100,000 persons. Population estimates come from the Demography Division, Census and Demographic Statistics Branch, Statistics Canada. Population to July 1: revised intercensal estimates for 1988 to 1995; updated post-census estimates for 1996 and 1997.

² % changes are based on non-rounded rates.

... figures not appropriate.

-- numbers too small to be expressed.

Source: Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, CCJS.

Table 2

Drug Incidents by Type of Offence, by Province/Territory, 1997

	Cannabis				Cocaine				Heroin				Other Controlled Drugs & Substance Act				Total Incidents	
	Pos-session	Traf-ficking	Impor-tation	Culti-vation	Total	Pos-session	Traf-ficking	Impor-tation	Total	Pos-session	Traf-ficking	Impor-tation	Total	Pos-session	Traf-ficking	Impor-tation		Total
Newfoundland	447	136	5	13	601	6	4	2	12	-	-	-	-	52	59	6	117	730
Prince Edward Island	153	72	-	25	250	6	9	1	16	-	-	-	-	11	21	7	39	305
Nova Scotia	908	468	8	271	1,655	77	174	8	259	1	-	1	2	76	76	18	170	2,086
New Brunswick	727	315	5	266	1,313	74	99	2	175	1	1	-	2	194	80	12	286	1,776
Quebec	4,840	2,100	75	1,915	8,930	1,134	1,709	58	2,901	25	64	10	99	1,186	747	39	1,972	13,902
Ontario	11,647	1,954	523	1,536	15,660	1,643	1,605	154	3,402	128	152	27	307	956	465	137	1,558	20,927
Manitoba	1,147	341	8	198	1,694	125	137	2	264	3	1	1	5	104	74	8	186	2,149
Saskatchewan	1,164	336	-	84	1,584	17	85	1	103	3	5	-	8	140	245	7	392	2,087
Alberta	2,566	786	14	230	3,596	235	705	6	946	11	41	5	57	232	242	20	494	5,093
British Columbia	8,760	1,223	56	2,088	12,127	1,446	1,748	64	3,258	340	388	24	752	356	312	63	731	16,868
Yukon	86	24	1	3	114	5	17	-	22	2	-	-	2	1	2	-	3	141
Northwest Territories	237	143	1	3	384	17	44	-	61	-	1	-	1	4	7	-	11	457
Canada	32,682	7,898	696	6,632	47,908	4,785	6,336	298	11,419	514	653	68	1,235	3,312	2,330	317	5,959	66,521

- nil or zero.

Source: Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, CCJS.

Table 3

Type of Drug and Offence by Age of Accused, Canada¹, 1997

	≤15	16-17	18-19	20 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55+	Total
	%								
Type of Drug									
Cannabis	81.2	74.9	69.2	57.6	49.2	47.5	45.2	44.9	58.3
Heroin	0.5	1.8	2.4	3.3	3.6	4.8	4.7	3.3	3.2
Cocaine	3.7	8.3	17.7	28.3	38.4	39.8	43.1	39.3	28.2
Other Drugs	14.6	15.0	10.7	10.7	8.8	7.8	7.0	12.6	10.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Type of Offence									
Possession	70.6	67.4	63.6	59.2	50.4	46.3	32.7	25.7	55.6
Trafficking	28.6	31.6	33.4	38.1	46.3	48.2	58.1	61.7	41.0
Importation	-	-	-	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.9	0.1
Production	0.8	1.0	3.0	2.7	3.3	5.4	8.8	11.7	3.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

¹ Revised UCR survey comprised of a non-representative sample of 179 police forces accounting for 48% of the volume of all crimes and 32% of the volume of drug crime.

- nil or zero.

Source: Revised Uniform Crime Reporting Survey

Table 4

Percent of Respondents Using Illicit Drugs in the Previous Year Among those 15 or Older, Canada, 1994

	Cannabis	Cocaine	LSD, Speed, Heroin	Use of any of 5 illegal Drugs
	%			
Total 15+	7.4	0.7	1.1	7.7
Sex				
Male	10.0	0.8	1.5	10.1
Female	4.9	0.5	0.7	5.1
Age Group				
15-17	25.4	1.3	8.3	25.7
18-19	23.0	1.9	5.6	24.1
20-24	19.3	1.4	2.8	19.8
25-34	9.6	1.0	0.6	9.9
35-44	5.8	0.8	0.2	5.9
45-54	1.4	0.1	--	1.5
55-64	0.7	0.1	--	0.8
65-74	0.2	--	--	0.2
75+	--	--	--	--
Province				
Newfoundland	3.8	0.1	0.3	3.8
Prince Edward Island	5.6	0.5	--	6.1
Nova Scotia	8.0	0.0	0.7	8.1
New Brunswick	6.2	--	1.8	6.2
Quebec	8.6	1.2	1.6	9.0
Ontario	5.1	0.1	0.5	5.1
Manitoba	9.1	0.3	0.9	9.1
Saskatchewan	6.6	0.6	1.0	6.9
Alberta	8.4	1.3	1.3	8.8
British Columbia	11.6	1.2	1.6	11.8

-- numbers too small to be expressed.

Source: Canadian Profile: Alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, 1997.

Table 5

Proportion of On-Register Inmates Incarcerated for Drug Offences¹, by Jurisdiction, October 5, 1996

	Total Inmates	Inmates Incarcerated for Drug-Related Offences	
		Number	Percentage
		#	%
Newfoundland	321	19	6
Prince Edward Island	63	3	5
Nova Scotia	458	46	10
New Brunswick	457	37	8
Quebec	5,147	721	14
Ontario	7,760	388	5
Manitoba	1,018	51	5
Saskatchewan	1,129	56	5
Alberta	2,804	477	17
British Columbia	2,495	200	8
Northwest Territories	293	6	2
Yukon	73	4	5
Total Provincial Inmates	22,018	2,007	9
Correctional Service Canada	13,829	1,106	8
Total Canada Adult Inmate Population	35,847	3,113	9

¹ Drug offences were the most serious sentence. Includes both sentenced and remand inmates.

Source: A One-Day Snapshot of Inmates in Canada's Adult Correctional Facilities Survey, CCJS, 1996.

Table 6

Number and Rate of Drug Offences by Type of Drug, Canada, 1977-1997

		1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
Cannabis	number	58,481	53,378	56,834	64,866	65,763	53,658	43,799	43,917	43,803	41,514	43,072
	rate ¹	246	223	235	265	265	214	173	172	169	159	163
	% change in rate ²	...	-10%	5%	13%	--	-19%	-19%	-1%	-1%	-6%	2%
Heroin	number	1,037	1,221	575	623	583	734	942	634	827	914	765
	rate ¹	4.4	5.1	2.4	2.5	2.3	2.9	3.7	2.5	3.2	3.5	2.9
	% change in rate ²	...	17%	-53%	7%	-8%	24%	27%	-33%	29%	9%	-17%
Cocaine	number	897	1,030	1,142	1,704	2,189	2,738	3,275	4,119	4,900	6,729	8,202
	rate ¹	3.8	4.3	4.7	7.0	8.8	11	13	16	19	26	31
	% change in rate ²	...	14%	10%	47%	27%	24%	18%	25%	18%	36%	20%
Other Drugs	number	5,523	5,118	6,372	7,003	6,569	7,506	6,831	6,280	7,675	7,094	9,619
	rate ¹	23	21	26	29	26	30	27	25	30	27	36
	% change in rate ²	...	-8%	23%	8%	-7%	13%	-10%	-9%	21%	-8%	34%
Total	number	65,938	60,747	64,923	74,196	75,104	64,636	54,847	54,950	57,205	56,251	61,658
	rate¹	278	253	268	303	303	257	216	215	221	216	233
	% change in rate²	...	-9%	6%	13%	--	-15%	-16%	-1%	3%	-3%	8%
			1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Cannabis	number		40,030	40,243	38,810	33,267	34,993	35,995	40,496	43,845	47,234	47,908
	rate ¹		149	147	140	119	123	125	139	149	159	160
	% change in rate ²		-8%	-1%	-5%	-15%	4%	2%	11%	7%	7%	--
Heroin	number		937	954	1,206	1,362	1,449	1,595	1,607	1,236	1,287	1,235
	rate ¹		3.5	3.5	4.4	4.9	5.1	5.6	5.5	4.2	4.3	4.1
	% change in rate ²		21%	--	25%	12%	5%	9%	--	-24%	3%	-5%
Cocaine	number		11,036	16,158	12,765	16,114	14,139	12,523	12,339	11,369	11,478	11,419
	rate ¹		41	59	46	57	50	44	42	39	39	38
	% change in rate ²		33%	44%	-22%	25%	-13%	-12%	-3%	-9%	--	-2%
Other Drugs	number		7,427	9,606	7,864	6,350	8,300	6,704	5,711	5,163	5,730	5,959
	rate ¹		28	35	28	23	29	23	20	18	19	20
	% change in rate ²		-24%	27%	-19%	-20%	29%	-20%	-16%	-11%	10%	3%
Total	number		59,430	66,961	60,645	57,093	58,881	56,817	60,153	61,613	65,729	66,521
	rate¹		222	245	219	204	207	198	207	210	222	222
	% change in rate²		-5%	11%	-11%	-7%	2%	-5%	5%	1%	6%	--

¹ Rates are calculated on the basis of 100,000 persons. Population estimates come from the Demography Division, Census and Demographic Statistics Branch, Statistics Canada. Population to July 1: revised intercensal estimates for 1977 to 1995; updated post-census estimates for 1996 and 1997.

² % changes are based on non-rounded rates.

... figures not appropriate.

-- numbers too small to be expressed.

Source: Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, CCJS.

Table 7

Number and Rate of Drug Offences by Type of Offence, Canada, 1977-1997

		1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
Possession	number	54,130	48,325	51,279	58,459	58,838	47,190	39,230	41,386	42,039	39,596	41,182
	rate ¹	228	202	212	238	237	188	155	162	163	152	156
	% change in rate ²	...	-12%	5%	13%	-1%	-21%	-18%	5%	1%	-7%	3%
Trafficking	number	10,816	11,088	12,522	14,566	15,183	15,912	13,792	11,979	13,639	14,941	18,411
	rate ¹	46	46	52	59	61	63	54	47	53	57	70
	% change in rate ²	...	1%	12%	15%	3%	4%	-14%	-14%	13%	8%	22%
Importation	number	397	531	507	503	487	768	950	875	886	1,038	1,023
	rate ¹	1.7	2.2	2.1	2.1	2.0	3.1	3.7	3.4	3.4	4.0	3.9
	% change in rate ²	...	32%	-5%	-2%	-4%	56%	22%	-9%	--	16%	-3%
Cultivation	number	595	803	615	668	596	766	875	710	641	676	1,042
	rate ¹	2.5	3.4	2.5	2.7	2.4	3.0	3.4	2.8	2.5	2.6	3.9
	% change in rate ²	...	34%	-24%	7%	-12%	27%	13%	-20%	-11%	4%	52%
Total	number	65,938	60,747	64,923	74,196	75,104	64,636	54,847	54,950	57,205	56,251	61,658
	rate¹	278	253	268	303	303	257	216	215	221	216	233
	% change in rate²	...	-9%	6%	13%	--	-15%	-16%	-1%	3%	-3%	8%
			1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Possession	number		39,322	43,053	38,187	32,221	33,786	34,170	37,704	38,560	41,726	41,293
	rate ¹		147	158	138	115	119	119	130	131	141	138
	% change in rate ²		-6%	8%	-13%	-17%	4%	--	9%	1%	7%	-2%
Trafficking	number		18,118	21,590	20,268	21,818	20,708	18,672	17,874	17,394	17,913	17,217
	rate ¹		68	79	73	78	73	65	62	59	60	57
	% change in rate ²		-3%	17%	-8%	6%	-6%	-11%	-5%	-4%	2%	-5%
Importation	number		875	943	856	1,052	1,449	1,180	1,141	1,202	1,056	1,379
	rate ¹		3.3	3.5	3.1	3.8	5.1	4.1	3.9	4.1	3.6	4.6
	% change in rate ²		-16%	6%	-11%	21%	36%	-19%	-4%	4%	-13%	29%
Cultivation	number		1,115	1,375	1,334	2,002	2,938	2,795	3,434	4,457	5,034	6,632
	rate ¹		4.2	5.0	4.8	7.1	10	10	12	15	17	22
	% change in rate ²		6%	21%	-4%	48%	45%	-6%	21%	28%	12%	30%
Total	number		59,430	66,961	60,645	57,093	58,881	56,817	60,153	61,613	65,729	66,521
	rate¹		222	245	219	204	207	198	207	210	222	222
	% change in rate²		-5%	11%	-11%	-7%	2%	-5%	5%	1%	6%	--

¹ Rates are calculated on the basis of 100,000 persons. Population estimates come from the Demography Division, Census and Demographic Statistics Branch, Statistics Canada. Population to July 1: revised intercensal estimates for 1977 to 1995; updated post-census estimates for 1996 and 1997.

² % changes are based on non-rounded rates.

... figures not appropriate.

-- numbers too small to be expressed.

Source: Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, CCJS.

Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics

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