

Contraband cigarettes main source of supply for Ontario youth

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October 25, 2010 – (Toronto) –A new study from The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) found that contraband tobacco accounts for 43% of all cigarettes consumed by Ontario high school daily smokers in grades 9 to 12.

The study, published in the current edition of [Tobacco Control](#), looked at the smoking habits of Ontario students and found that of high school daily smokers, 50% smoked at least one contraband cigarette per day over the last year. Contraband cigarettes are manufactured on and smuggled from US and Canadian native reserves and sold in high quantities at lower prices outside of the regulated environment which prohibits the sale to minors.

"This form of tobacco consumption is particularly worrisome," said Dr. Russell Callaghan, CAMH scientist and lead investigator on the study.

"Because of lower prices and lack of restrictions on purchase, youth are able to afford and access them more readily than regulated tobacco products."

While the percentage of adult Ontarians who consume tobacco has declined since 2003 to 18.7%, youth smoking rates have remained relatively high at 11%. The province has made progress with tobacco control strategies such as taxation and preventing the sale of tobacco products to minors, but widespread access to contraband tobacco may undermine these gains.

"It is important to implement strict policies to regulate the cigarette manufacturing supplies going into native reserves, as well as prevent smuggling of contraband tobacco from the US," he added. This new research complements the recommendations cited in the [Tobacco Control](#) Strategy released last week by Ontario government, acknowledging that the growing pervasiveness of contraband tobacco products in Ontario needs to be addressed and combated through increased public awareness and enforcement.

Data for this study came from the 2009 Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey (OSDUHS), a provincially representative, school-based survey of youth attending public elementary and secondary schools in the province of Ontario.

Provided by Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

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