

Students trading sex for drugs or alcohol happens also in rural B.C.: research

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Just over two percent of teens in rural schools who have ever tried alcohol, marijuana or other drugs report they have also traded sex for these substances, according to University of British Columbia research published today in the *Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality*.

This is the first study to track this issue among rural students.

Using 2009 [survey data](#) from 2,360 students in Grades 7-12 from 28 schools in B.C.'s East Kootenays, the researchers found equal numbers of boys and girls traded sex, and that up to 98 per cent of them were living at home with family.

Conducted every two years by the East Kootenay Addiction Services Society (EKASS) in Cranbrook, B.C., the survey monitors trends in [substance use](#) patterns, related harms and attitudes among students.

"This isn't just happening in the East Kootenays," notes co-author Dean Nicholson, executive director of EKASS. "Other research has documented this among students in Quebec, in the U.S., and in Oslo, Norway, at similar rates. So it's probably an issue in other schools across B.C., but school surveys aren't asking about this."

The research team found that trading sex was associated with using illicit drugs other than alcohol or marijuana, and those who traded sex had higher rates of weekly [binge drinking](#) than other students.

"Several [health issues](#) can be linked to trading sex for alcohol or drugs," says senior author Elizabeth Saewyc, a professor of nursing and [adolescent medicine](#) at UBC. "We need to talk frankly with young people about this issue, both at home and in school."

Provided by University of British Columbia

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