



Canada 20/20 Online Panel

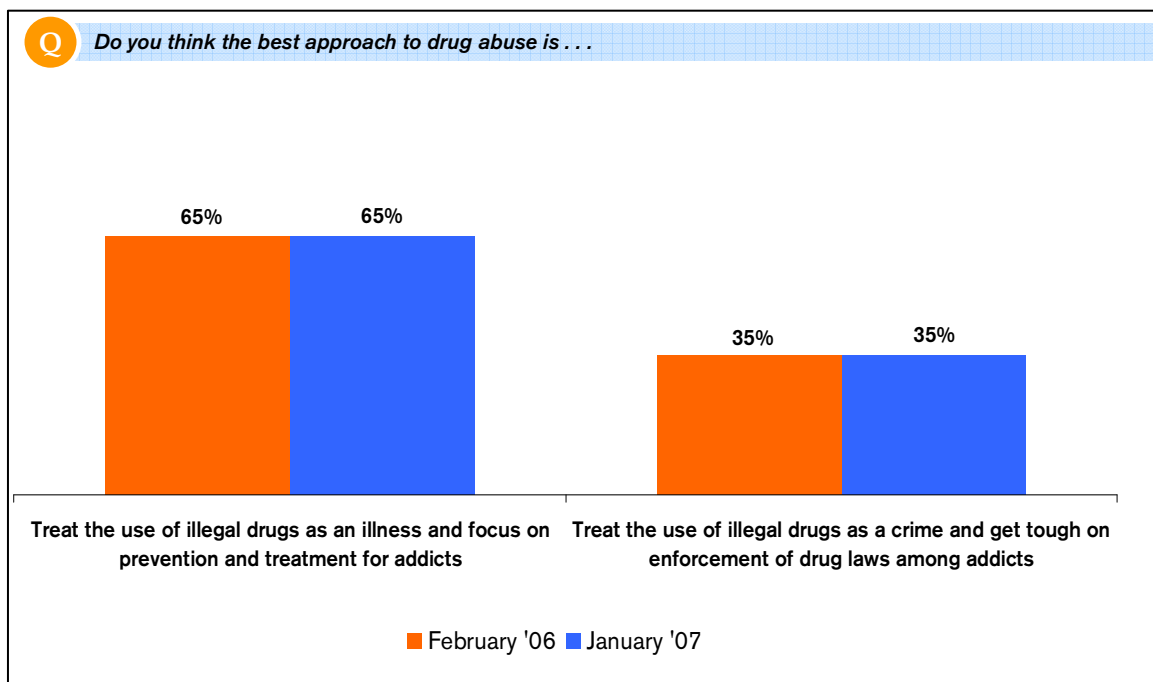
Drug Approach Question - January 2007

January 15, 2007

Two-Thirds Say Best Approach to Drug Abuse Is To Treat as Illness and Not a Crime

A new poll conducted by Innovative Research Group (INNOVATIVE) and released exclusively to CanWest News finds that two-thirds (65%) of Canadians believe the best approach to drug abuse is to treat the use of illegal drugs as an illness and focus on prevention and treatment for addicts.

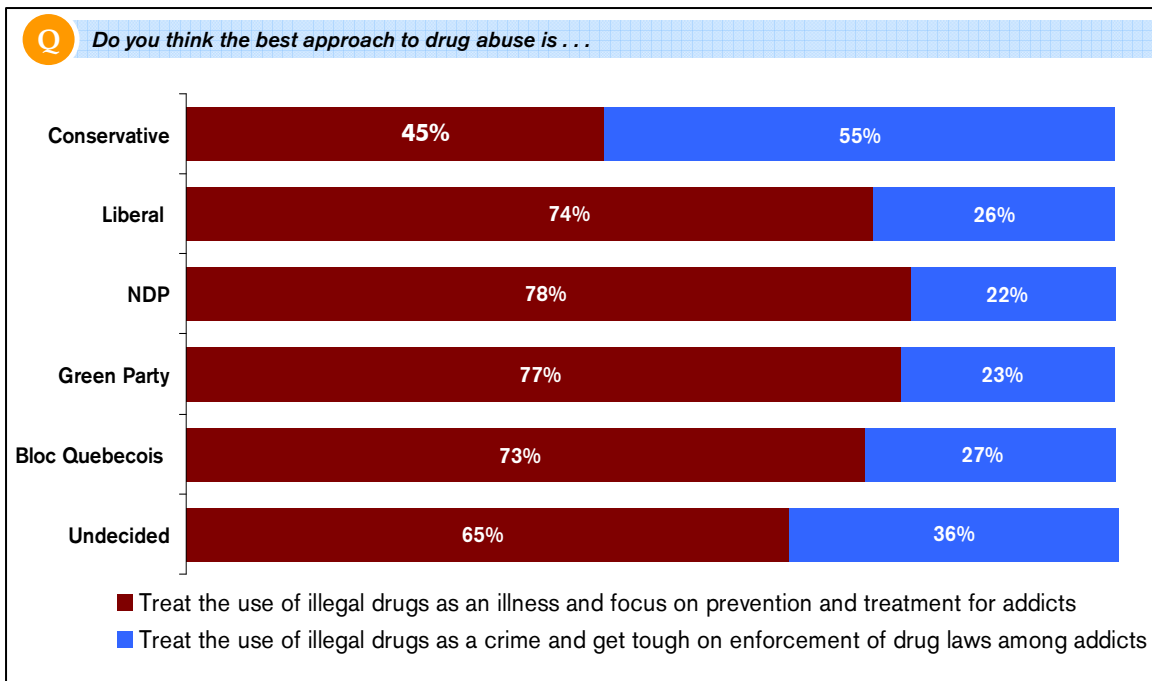
The remaining one-third (35%) hold an opposing view, that the best approach is to treat the use of illegal drugs as a crime and to get tough on enforcement of drug laws among addicts. These views appear to be deep seated and consistent, as they are identical to those found when asked almost one year ago in February 2006.



- Regionally, the view that the use of illegal drugs should be treated as an illness and to focus on prevention and treatment for addicts, is strongest among Ontarians (67%), British Columbians (66%) and Quebeckers (65%), followed by those in Manitoba/Saskatchewan (63%) and Alberta (61%). Residents of Atlantic Canada (56%) are the least likely to share this belief, and are the most likely to believe that illegal drug use should be treated as a crime (44%).
- Women (67%) are more likely than men (62%) to say the best approach to drug abuse is to focus on prevention and treatment as an illness. Men (38%) are more likely than women (33%) to believe the best approach would be to treat illegal drug use as a crime and to get tough on enforcement of drug laws.
- Canadians between 35 and 44 (60%) are the least likely to believe drug abuse is best treated as an illness. In comparison, approximately two-thirds in each other age group share this belief (18-34: 67%; 45-64: 66%; 65+: 65%). Four-in-ten (40%) of those

between 35 and 44 say the best approach is to enforce drug laws among addicts, the highest level among all age groups.

- Current supporters of the federal Conservatives (45%) are the least likely to believe that the best approach to dealing with drug abuse is to treat it as an illness. In fact, a majority (55%) of current Tory supporters feel the best approach is to treat the use of illegal drugs as a crime and to get tough on enforcement of drug laws among addicts. In comparison, approximately three-quarters of supporters of each of the other parties hold the view that treatment and prevention is the better approach (NDP 78%; Green 77%; Liberal 74%; Bloc 73%). Among those undecided in their federal vote support, two-thirds (65%) prefer prevention and treatment, while one-third (36%) say the use of illegal drugs should be treated as a crime.



- Those who list the Conservatives as their second choice in vote support appear to have a different view on the topic than do those who indicate their initial support for the party, with a majority (57%) who believe the best approach is to treat the use of illegal drugs as an illness and that focus should be on prevention and treatment. In comparison, 44 per cent say that the best approach is to get tough and treat the use of illegal drugs as a crime. Canadians who select the Liberals as their second choice are not as strongly on the same page regarding this issue as those who initially indicate support for the Grits, with just two-thirds (65%) opting for prevention and treatment, compared to approximately three-quarters of initial supporters as noted above. Canadians who list the other parties as their second choice are as likely as initial supporters to share their views on this topic.

About This Survey

Innovative Research Group, Inc. (www.innovativeresearch.ca), a research and strategy firm with offices in Toronto and Vancouver, surveyed 2,938 Canadians from its online Canada 20/20 panel. The survey was conducted between Monday January 8th and Monday January 15th, 2007 and has a margin of error of $\pm 1.8\%$, 19 times out of 20. The data was weighted in accordance to the 2001 census. The statistical significance of the national sample and the regional subsamples are described below:

	Canada	British Columbia	Alberta	Prairies	Ontario	Quebec	Atlantic Canada
Unweighted Sample	2,938	382	259	214	1,099	761	229
Margin of Error	± 1.8	± 5.0	± 6.1	± 6.7	± 3.0	± 3.6	± 6.5

Anyone interested in participating in these surveys can join the Canada 20/20 panel by going to Canada2020.com

Attribution

In the first instance of mentioning the poll results, the survey should be identified as “an Innovative Research poll released exclusively to CanWest”. All subsequent mentions can use the convention “the INNOVATIVE poll”.

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Question Asked:

DG31 Do you think the best approach to drug abuse is ... **[ROTATE OPTIONS]**

Treat the use of illegal drugs as a crime and get tough on enforcement of drug laws among addicts

1

Treat the use of illegal drugs as an illness and focus on prevention and treatment for addicts.

2