

For information on
7 February 2012

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
PANEL ON SECURITY**

**Report of the Evaluation Research on Trial Scheme on
School Drug Testing in Tai Po District (School Year 2010/11)**

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the findings and recommendations of the Report of the Evaluation Research ("the Research") on the Trial Scheme on School Drug Testing in Tai Po District ("the Scheme") in the 2010/11 school year.

Background

2. In November 2010, Members were briefed by the researchers on the findings, observations and recommendations of the Scheme in the 2009/10 school year and the proposed way forward, which included further developing school drug testing, extending the Scheme in Tai Po to the 2010/11 school year and a corresponding extension of the Research. The Scheme was found to be effective as a preventive measure in enhancing students' resolve to stay away from drugs and in establishing a drug-free campus. The Research also recommended that drug testing should be continued in Tai Po and the Government should support schools in all districts to develop a comprehensive anti-drug policy in a school-based approach.

3. The 2010/11 Scheme was successfully implemented with the participation by over 10,200 students. The corresponding extension of the Research reconfirmed the conclusion of that in the 2009/10 school year. In this connection, the Administration has already rolled out the Healthy School Programme with a drug testing component (HSP(DT)), which serves as a preventive programme to strengthen students' resilience and resolve to stay away from drugs, fostering a drug-free culture in school. Details on the HSP(DT) are further elaborated at paragraphs 16 and 17 below.

The Research

4. The Research for 2010/11 addressed the limitations of the 2009/10 Research by adopting a pre-post research design and using a matched-sample analysis (i.e. comparing the response from the same person in a pre-post research design). The researchers had done the following –

- (a) conducting a comprehensive assessment of the Scheme, focusing on both the process and outcome; and
- (b) putting forward, based on the findings from (a), refinements of and revisions to the Scheme and mapping out a practicable course of action for further developing school drug testing in Hong Kong.

5. The Research is based on findings obtained from two surveys conducted at all 23 secondary schools in Tai Po and a random sample of secondary schools outside Tai Po. The two surveys were a pre-test survey conducted between October and November 2010 (October 2010 pre-survey), before the commencement of the 2010/11 Scheme, and a post-test survey conducted between May and June 2011 (June 2011 post-survey), after the completion of the scheme. In-depth interviews were also conducted with stakeholders of the Scheme including principals, teachers and social workers. The Executive Summary¹ of the Research is attached. Key findings and recommendations are summarised below.

Major Findings

Effectiveness of the Scheme

6. The Research reconfirmed that the Scheme was effective as a preventive measure to enhance students' resolve to stay away from drugs. Most of the participating students believed that the Scheme was effective in establishing a drug-free campus. For those students who had not participated in both the 2009/10 and 2010/11 school years, 69% of them considered that the Scheme was effective in building an anti-drug culture at school.

¹ The full report can be downloaded from the website of the Narcotics Division at www.nd.gov.hk.

7. The Research also reconfirmed that the Scheme had no adverse implications on parent-child relationship, teacher-student relationship and students' trust in their school.

8. More school principals, teachers, students and parents had shown a positive view of drug testing than in 2009/10. In 2010/11, most Tai Po school principals considered that, with the experience of the Scheme in 2009/10, the running of drug testing was able to integrate with the schools' daily operation, resulting in minimal disruption to school work and unease among students.

9. The research also observed that a higher proportion of students in Tai Po were aware of the adverse impact of drugs after the completion of the Scheme, compared with that before commencement of the Scheme in October 2010. In addition, a great majority of students outside Tai Po also demonstrated knowledge of drugs, awareness of the adverse impact of drugs and attitude towards drug abuse.

Drug-Taking Behaviour

10. The October 2010 pre-survey revealed that the percentage of Tai Po students who had taken drugs was 1.9% before the launch of the Scheme. This had slightly increased to 2.5% in the June 2011 post-survey. Students outside Tai Po who had taken drugs had increased from 1.6% in October 2010 to 4.0% in June 2011. This reflected the overall drug abuse situation in Hong Kong and showed that efforts to tackle student drug abuse should be sustained. Relatively speaking, however, the situation for students in Tai Po is slightly better than those outside the district.

11. In addition, based on students' self-reports on their drug taking behaviour during the six months before the survey period, and by matching the respondents in the pre- and post-surveys, it was observed that 1.0% of Tai Po students had started taking drugs in the first half of 2011. However, the corresponding figure for students outside Tai Po was 2.4%.

Limitations of the Scheme

12. The participation rate of students in the Scheme had dropped from 61% in 2009/10 to 55% in 2010/11. This could have been due to less

extensive promotional work and media coverage, and teachers not seeking to discuss with students about the Scheme proactively.

13. The majority of the stakeholders considered that the deterrent effect of school drug testing could be enhanced by modifying the current drug testing arrangement. For example, students who claimed to have taken medicines could be asked to provide specimen for laboratory testing². Furthermore, other schools may consider other drug testing methods, such as hair testing, taking into account their own circumstances.

14. The researchers also observed that other activities, such as physical fitness tests and mental health screening, could act as tools to facilitate early identification of students who had taken drugs and those at risks, provide timely intervention and assistance, as well as enhance the anti-drug culture at school. The research also encouraged closer cooperation between the student drug testing teams and school social workers in conducting these activities and providing counselling, especially for students at risk, so as to further enhance the effectiveness of school drug testing.

Recommendations

15. The Research recommends, *inter alia*, that –

- (a) school drug testing should be continued in Tai Po, and the Government should support similar initiatives for schools outside Tai Po to help students to stay away from drugs;
- (b) more resources should be provided for anti-drug education and support services to parents and teachers to enable them to play a more important role in preventive anti-drug education, provide guidance to students and encourage the students to join the Scheme; and
- (c) schools should implement school drug testing by developing a comprehensive anti-drug policy at school in consultation with

² To minimise the occurrence of false-positive testing, students who claimed to have taken medicines were assessed as not suitable for drug testing under the Scheme in both school years. This accounted for 18.4% of the 2009/10 Scheme and 23.3% of the 2010/11 Scheme.

teachers and social workers, who work closely with students, and providing advice and counselling service.

HSP(DT)

16. The Administration welcomes the recommendations of the Research, which have reaffirmed the importance of developing school drug testing as part of a healthy school policy as a key measure to prevent students falling victims of drug abuse. The Government supports the cause by sustaining the voluntary, school-based and student-oriented approach with community participation. The Administration has engaged stakeholders including school sponsoring bodies and managements, parent bodies, students and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to enhance their understanding of the school drug testing initiative. The Administration is also inviting applications from interested schools and NGOs for funding support from the Beat Drugs Fund (BDF) to launch the HSP(DT) from the 2011/12 school year onwards.

17. The objective of HSP(DT) is to help students develop healthy habits and a positive outlook on life, thereby enhancing their resilience to adversity and their resolve to stay away from drugs. As part of the HSP(DT) being implemented in over 40 secondary schools in 2011/12 school year, funding support has been allocated for programmes targeting both students in general and those at risks, as well as supporting programmes to enhance the involvement of parents and teachers in building a drug-free culture at schools. These are in line with the recommendations of the Research that school drug testing schemes have to be implemented through a holistic approach of both diversified and preventive anti-drug programmes and drug testing.

18. Recognising schools are at the frontline of the battle against youth drug abuse, the Administration has introduced various initiatives over the past few years to provide better support to schools for the promotion of the anti-drug message. To these ends, we have arranged NGOs to provide professional trainings to school management, teachers and parents. Dedicated seminars / talks / workshops have been organised for students starting from primary three. Through the telephone inquiry service set up by the Narcotics Division, 186 186, social workers have been arranged to answer phones calls to provide support to teachers and parents. Starting from the 2011-12 financial year, school social work services in all secondary

schools have already been stepped up by a 20% increase in manpower, focusing on anti-drug work at school. These will continue to supplement HSP(DT) in creating a drug-free campus for our young people to grow healthily.

Presentation

19. This paper is presented for Members' information.

Security Bureau (Narcotics Division)
Education Bureau
31 January 2012

**Trial Scheme on School Drug Testing
in Tai Po District
(School Year 2010/11)**

**Evaluation Research
Executive Summary**

December 2011

Executive Summary

Introduction

In July 2009, the Chief Executive set out directions to tackle the youth drug abuse problem. One of the key strategies is drug testing to be spearheaded by the carrying out of the Trial Scheme on School Drug Testing in Tai Po District in school year 2009/10 (“Scheme”). The 2009/10 Scheme was completed smoothly in June 2010.

2. In view of the positive feedback of stakeholders, the absence of possible adverse implications, the apparent success of creating awareness to help arrest the trend of youth drug abuse, the Scheme was extended in Tai Po to the school year 2010/11 (“2010/11 Scheme”). Same as the 2009/10 Scheme, the development of the 2010/11 Scheme is guided by the following principles:

- a) Helping students in their best interest;
- b) Voluntary participation;
- c) Keeping personal information strictly confidential; and
- d) Professional testing and support services for students.

3. The purposes and imperatives of the 2010/11 Scheme, same as those of the 2009/10 Scheme, are as follows:

- a) For prevention – it will enhance the resolve of those students who have not taken any drugs to continue to stay away from drugs. They will be in a better position to say “no” to their peers when they are tempted to try drugs and this will help prevent the spread of drugs in schools; and
- b) For rendering assistance to students – the Scheme will trigger the motivation of those students abusing drugs to quit drugs and seek help, especially those who are trying drugs at an early stage. The Scheme will also provide appropriate support services to those students who wish to pull themselves out of the drug trap. The Scheme could also shed light on the effectiveness of cross-sector and multi-disciplinary downstream support service to student drug abusers.

4. The objectives of the 2010/11 Research, which is a continuation of the 2009/10 Research, conducted in the school year 2010/11, are as follows:

- a) Building on the results of the 2009/10 Research to conduct comprehensive assessment of the Scheme in school year 2010/11 to evaluate its effectiveness, focusing on both the process and outcomes;
- b) Based on the findings in (a) above, to make suitable recommendations that may revise or supplement those made in the Final Report of the 2009/10 Research for further developing school drug testing in Hong Kong.

Research Methodology

5. Similar to the methodology adopted in the 2009/10 Research, both quantitative and qualitative information was collected in the 2010/11 Research. To assess the impact of the Scheme, quantitative information on students' awareness of drugs, attitude towards fighting drugs, drug taking behaviour and perceived effectiveness of the Scheme was collected. Analysis was performed on a matched sample of students, in the pre-post design, such that information in respect of the same students enumerated in the October 2009 pre-survey and the June 2011 post-survey could be compared and analyzed. In addition, quantitative data were collected on the views of principals, teachers and parents on the Scheme.

6. The October 2010 pre-survey covered 17,825 students in 23 secondary schools in Tai Po and 13,363 students in 37 secondary schools outside Tai Po. In the June 2011 post-survey, 20 school principals, 933 teachers, 14,271 students and 3,014 parents of students in secondary schools in Tai Po, as well 78 school principals, 3,074 teachers, 11,275 students and 8,526 parents of students in secondary schools outside Tai Po were enumerated.

7. Qualitative information required for the research was gathered from stakeholders involved in the implementation of the Scheme, including school principals, teachers, students and school social workers in the 23 secondary schools in Tai Po, through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. In addition, a number of in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with principals of secondary schools outside Tai Po, representatives of educational organizations, School Sponsoring Bodies (SSBs) and parent-teacher associations, members of the School Drug Testing (SDT) team, social workers, medical practitioners as well as representatives from government agencies (e.g. SWD).

Trial Scheme on School Drug Testing in Tai Po District

Coverage

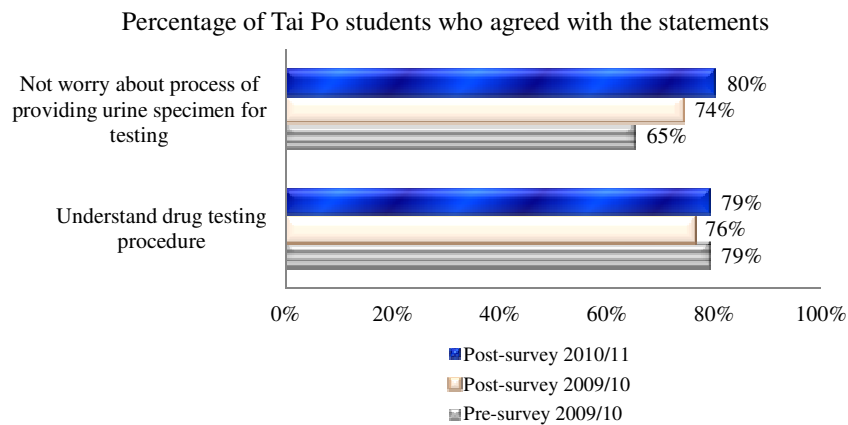
8. More than 10,200 students had participated in the Scheme. The June 2011 post-survey showed that about 57% of students indicated that they had participated in the Scheme, 39% had not participated in the Scheme and the balance of 4% refused to answer the question.

9. For those who had participated in the 2010/11 Scheme, their main reasons for doing so were that "I am willing to establish a drug free campus together with my school" (accounting for 59% of students concerned), "I agree with the purpose of the Scheme" (38%), "my parents want me to participate" (28%) and "I believe the Scheme is effective" (22%). For those who had not participated in the 2010/11 Scheme, their main reasons for doing so were that "I believe the Scheme is ineffective" (60%), "I don't agree with the purpose of the Scheme" (31%) and "the class schedule will be affected as we have to leave the classroom for the drug testing" (35%).

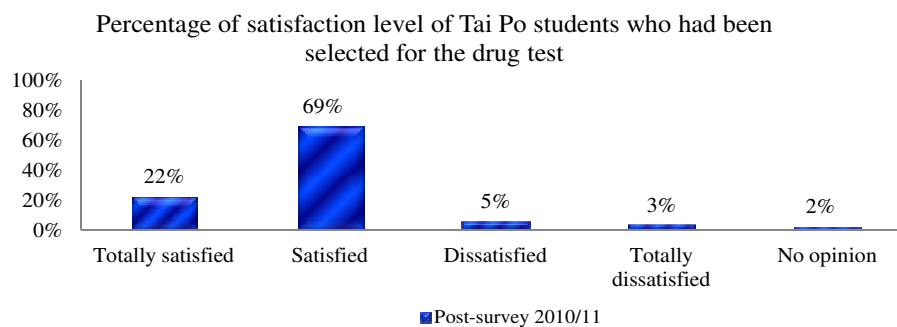
10. It was noted that on the basis of discussions with school principals, teachers, social workers, students and their parents, students participate or not in the Scheme for a variety of reasons. A lower participation rate does not necessarily mean that more students have abused drugs and hence do not participate in the Scheme. The participation rate may not be a good predictor of the effectiveness of the Scheme.

The process

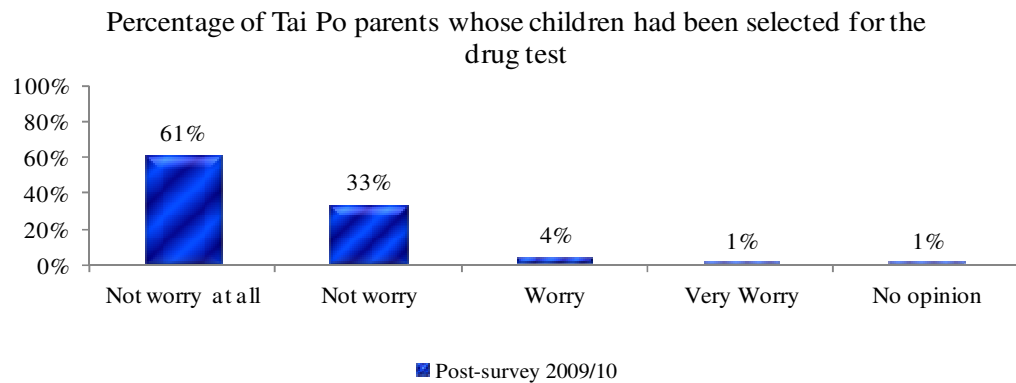
11. The study findings showed that drug testing had been implemented professionally, with utmost care and caution. Teachers, students and parents were briefed on the purposes and arrangement for drug testing. Most students indicated that they understood the drug testing procedure (79%) and they were not worried about the process of providing urine specimen for testing (80%). It is worth noting that the percentage was higher when compared to the results collected from the 2009/10 Research.



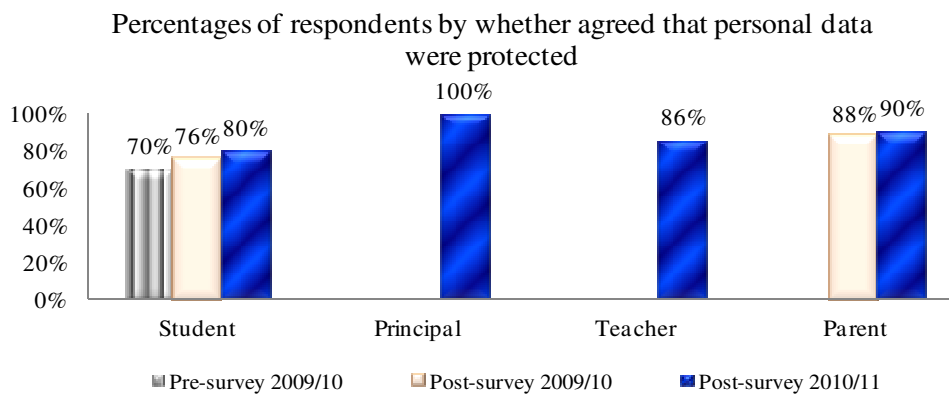
12. The June 2011 post-survey findings also showed that among the 23% of students who had been randomly sampled for and had taken the drug tests, the great majority (91%) were satisfied or very satisfied with the drug testing arrangement.



13. In addition, feedback from parents was also highly positive. According to the June 2011 post-survey, among parents whose children had been sampled to take the drug tests, the great majority (94%) of them were totally not worried or not worried that drug testing would have negative impact on their children.



14. The June 2011 post-survey also showed that all school principals and the majority of teachers (86%), students (80%) and their parents (90%) believed that the personal data of students were protected. In particular, the percentage of students and their parents who believed that the personal data of students were protected were higher in June 2011, as compared with the corresponding percentage in June 2010 and for students in December 2009. In other words, both students and their parents had more confidence in the drug testing arrangement as regards protection of personal data, as the Scheme was continued for another year in 2010/11.

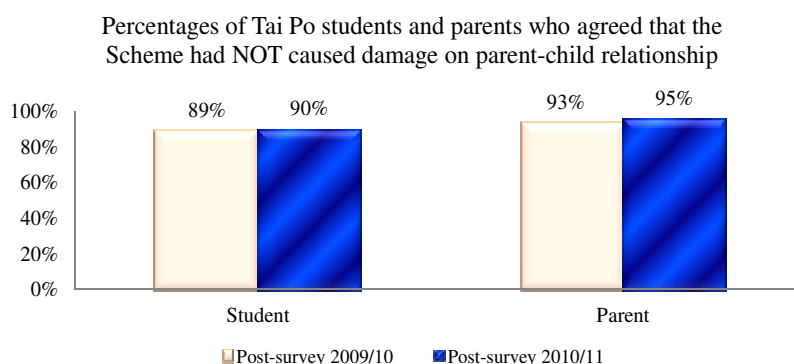


15. In short, based on views of students, parents, school principals, teachers and social workers, the project team is of the view that the Scheme has been implemented very smoothly, with utmost care and professionalism. As a result, students and their parents are not worried. Indeed most of them have accepted drug testing being part of their normal school activities.

Outcomes

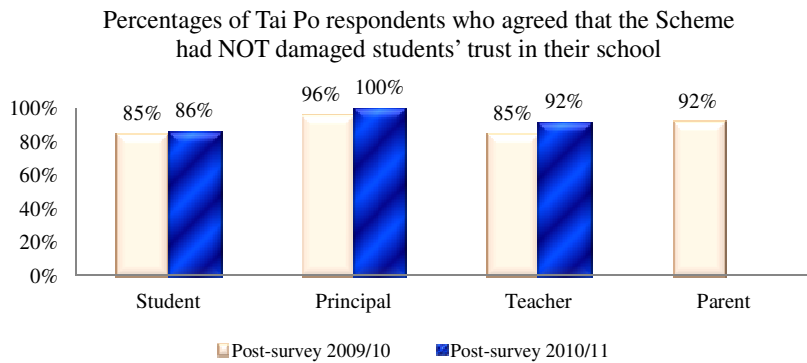
Impact on families

16. In the course of discussions with students and parents, the project team was given to understand that nearly all students and parents did not think that the Scheme had affected relationship between the students and their families. All parents interviewed also considered that the Scheme had not adversely affected parents' trust in schools. Findings of the June 2011 post-survey showed that the great majority of students (90%) and their parents (95%) considered that the Scheme had not damaged parent-child relationship. The percentage was slightly higher than the corresponding percentages in June 2010, at 89% and 93% respectively. The findings indicated that both students and parents had more confidence that the Scheme would not have any adverse impact on their families in June 2011 in respect of the 2010/11 Scheme, as compared with June 2010 in respect of the 2009/10 Scheme.

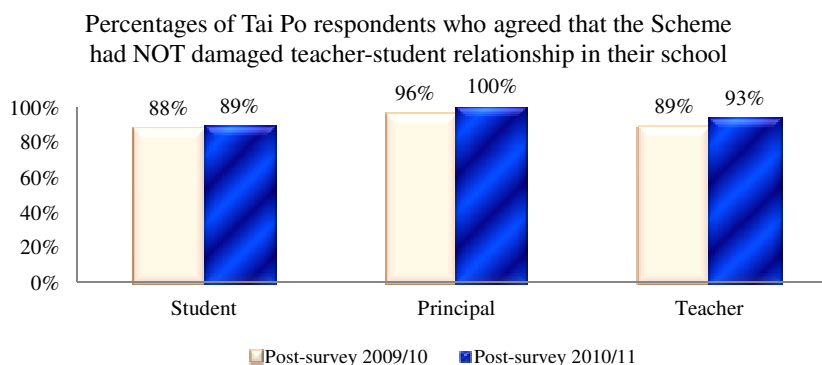


Impact on schools

17. During discussions with school principals, teachers, students and parents in the course of conducting the research, none of them indicated that the Scheme had affected the mutual trust between schools and students. Findings of the June 2011 post-survey also showed that all school principals (100%) and the great majority of Tai Po teachers (92%) and students (86%) considered that the Scheme had not adversely affected students' trust in their schools. The percentage of school principals, teachers and students holding such a view was higher than the corresponding percentages in June 2010, at 96%, 85% and 85% respectively, indicating that school drug testing is becoming increasingly acceptable by teachers and students. Furthermore, the great majority of Tai Po parents (93% in June 2010 and 94% in June 2011) considered that the Scheme had not ruined teacher-parent relationship.



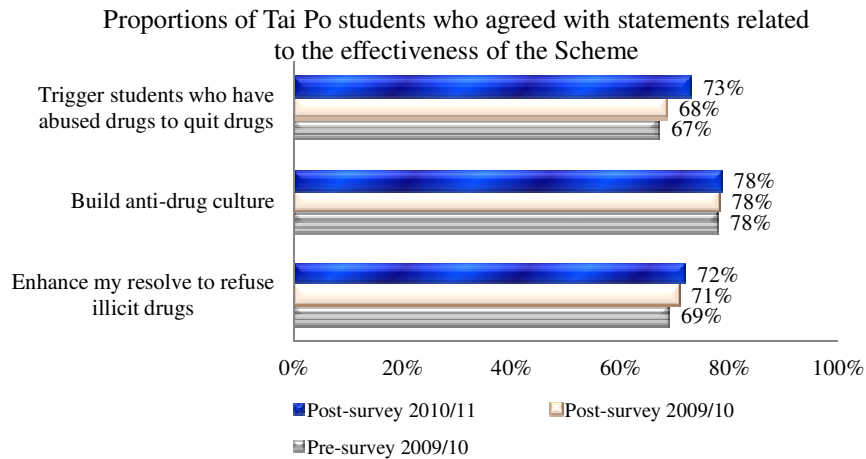
18. In addition, all school principals and the great majority of Tai Po teachers (93%) and students (89%) considered that the Scheme had not adversely affected student-teacher relationship in their schools. The percentage of school principals, teachers and students holding such a view was higher than the corresponding percentages in June 2010, at 96%, 89% and 88% respectively, indicating again that school drug testing is becoming increasingly acceptable by teachers and students.



Perceived Effectiveness of the Scheme

Views of students

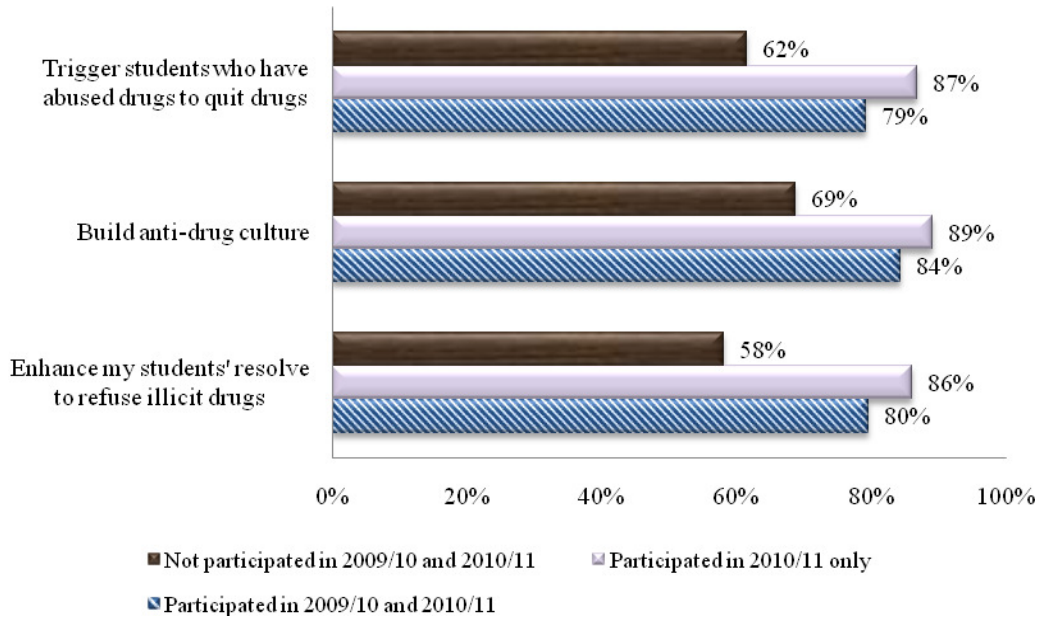
19. In the quantitative surveys of students conducted in December 2009, June 2010 and June 2011, views of students were sought on their perceived effectiveness of the Scheme. As shown in the chart below, in June 2011, the majority of students considered that the Scheme had enhanced their resolve to refuse illicit drugs (72%), helped build an anti-drug culture (78%) and triggered motivation of those students who had abused drugs to quit drugs (73%).



20. It is worth noting that the proportion of students who considered that the Scheme had enhanced their resolve to refuse illicit drugs and triggered motivation of those students who had abused drugs to quit drugs was higher in June 2011, after the launch of the 2010/11 Scheme, as compared with December 2009, before the launch of the 2009/10 Scheme and June 2010, before the launch of the 2010/11 Scheme. In other words, more students are becoming convinced that the Scheme is effective, as the Scheme is continued to be conducted for another year in 2010/11.

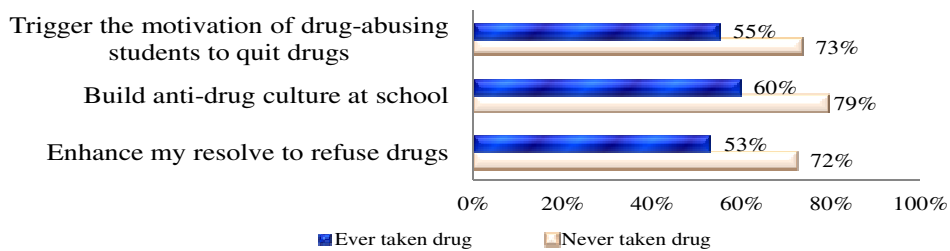
21. In particular, for students who had participated in both the 2009/10 and 2010/11 Schemes, about 80% of them agreed that the Scheme had enhanced their resolve to refuse illicit drugs (80%), helped build an anti-drug culture (84%) and triggered motivation of those students who had abused drugs to quit drugs (79%). Even for those students who had not participated in both the 2009/10 and 2010/11 Schemes, more than half of them considered that the Scheme was effective in enhancing their resolve to refuse illicit drugs (58%), helped build an anti-drug culture (69%) and triggered motivation of those students who had abused drugs to quit drugs (62%). In other words, students in general, regardless of whether they had participated or not in the Scheme, considered the Scheme effective.

Proportions of Tai Po students in post-survey 2010/11 who agreed with statements related to the effectiveness of the Scheme



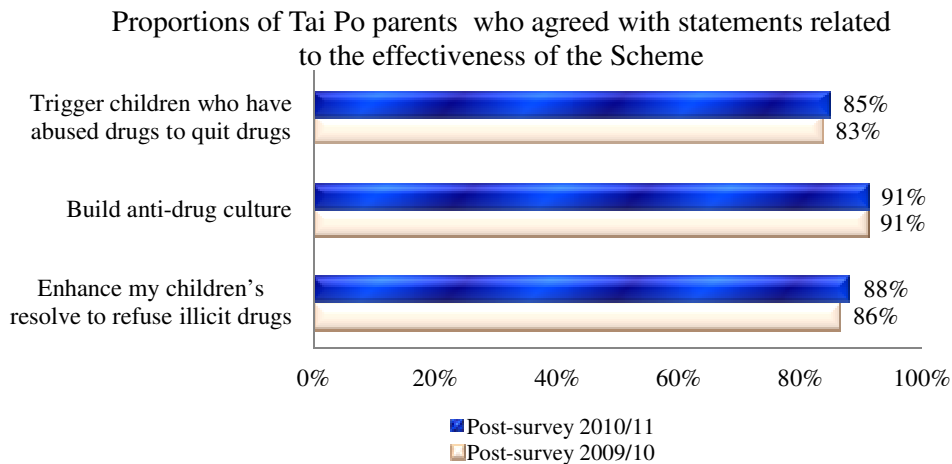
22. It may also be worth noting that for those students who admitted to have ever abused drugs, more than half of them agreed that the Scheme had enhanced their resolve to refuse illicit drugs (53%), helped build an anti-drug culture (60%) and triggered motivation of those students who had abused drugs to quit drugs (55%).

Percentage of Tai Po students in post-survey 2010/11 by perceived effectiveness of the Scheme by whether have ever abused drugs



Views of parents

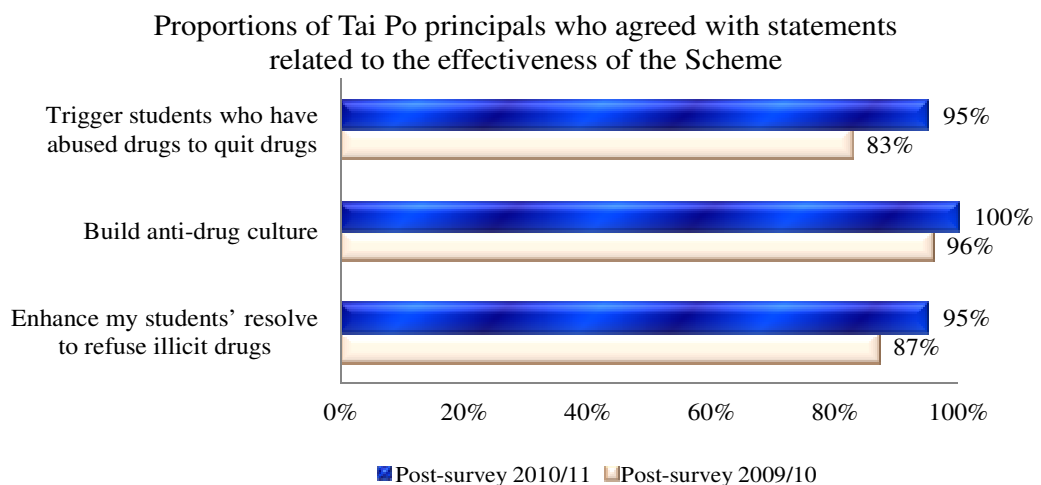
23. As shown in the chart below, in June 2011, the great majority of parents considered that the Scheme had enhanced students' resolve to refuse illicit drugs (83%), helped build an anti-drug culture (91%) and triggered motivation of those students who had abused drugs to quit drugs (86%).



24. It is worth noting that the proportion of parents who considered that the Scheme had enhanced students' resolve to refuse illicit drugs and triggered motivation of those students who had abused drugs to quit drugs was higher in June 2011, as compared with June 2010. The percentage was higher than the corresponding percentage for students. In other words, more parents are becoming convinced that the Scheme is effective, as the Scheme is continued to be conducted for another year in 2010/11. The parents are also more supportive of the Scheme than students.

Views of principals

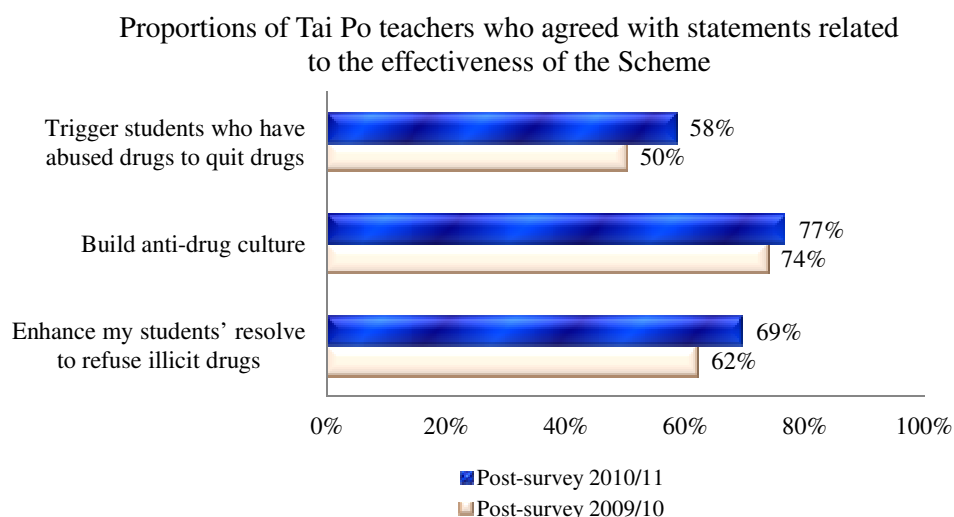
25. The great majority of school principals also considered that the Scheme had enhanced students' resolve to refuse illicit drugs (95%), helped build an anti-drug culture (100%) and triggered motivation of those students who had abused drugs to quit drugs (95%).



26. It is worth noting that the proportion of school principals who considered that the Scheme had enhanced students' resolve to refuse illicit drugs, helped build an anti-drug culture and triggered motivation of those students who had abused drugs to quit drugs was much higher in June 2011, as compared with June 2010. The percentage was much higher than the corresponding percentage for students. In other words, school principals are becoming very much convinced that the Scheme is effective, as the Scheme is continued to be conducted for another year in 2010/11. They are also more supportive of the Scheme than students.

Views of teachers

27. Views of teachers were also very positive. More than half of teachers considered that the Scheme had enhanced students' resolve to refuse illicit drugs (68%), helped build an anti-drug culture (77%) and triggered motivation of those students who had abused drugs to quit drugs (58%).

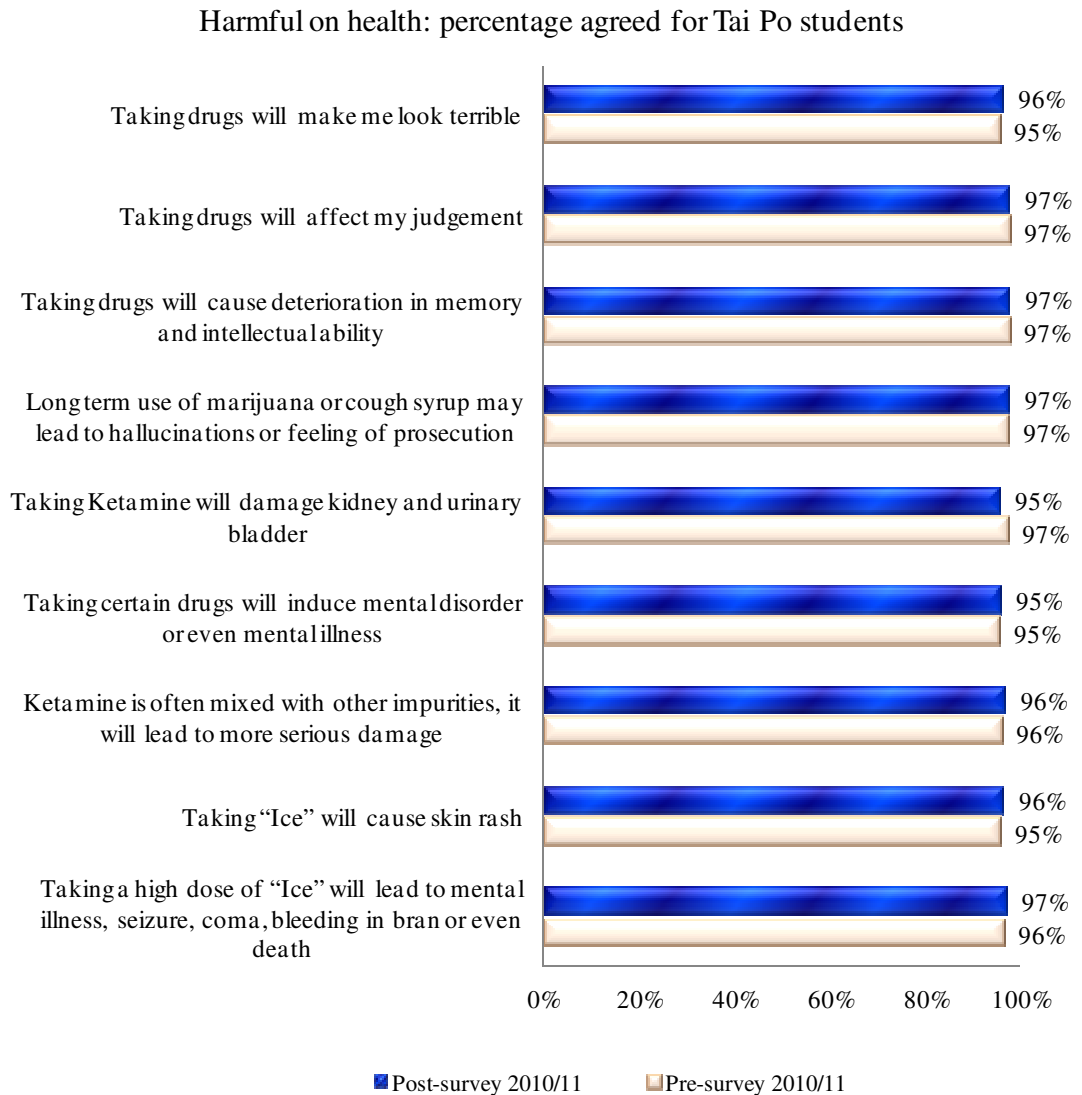


28. It is also worth noting that the proportion of teachers who considered that the Scheme had enhanced students' resolve to refuse illicit drugs, helped build an anti-drug culture and triggered motivation of those students who had abused drugs to quit drugs was much higher in June 2011, as compared June 2010. In other words, more teachers are becoming convinced that the Scheme is effective, as the Scheme is continued to be conducted for another year in 2010/11.

Knowledge of drugs

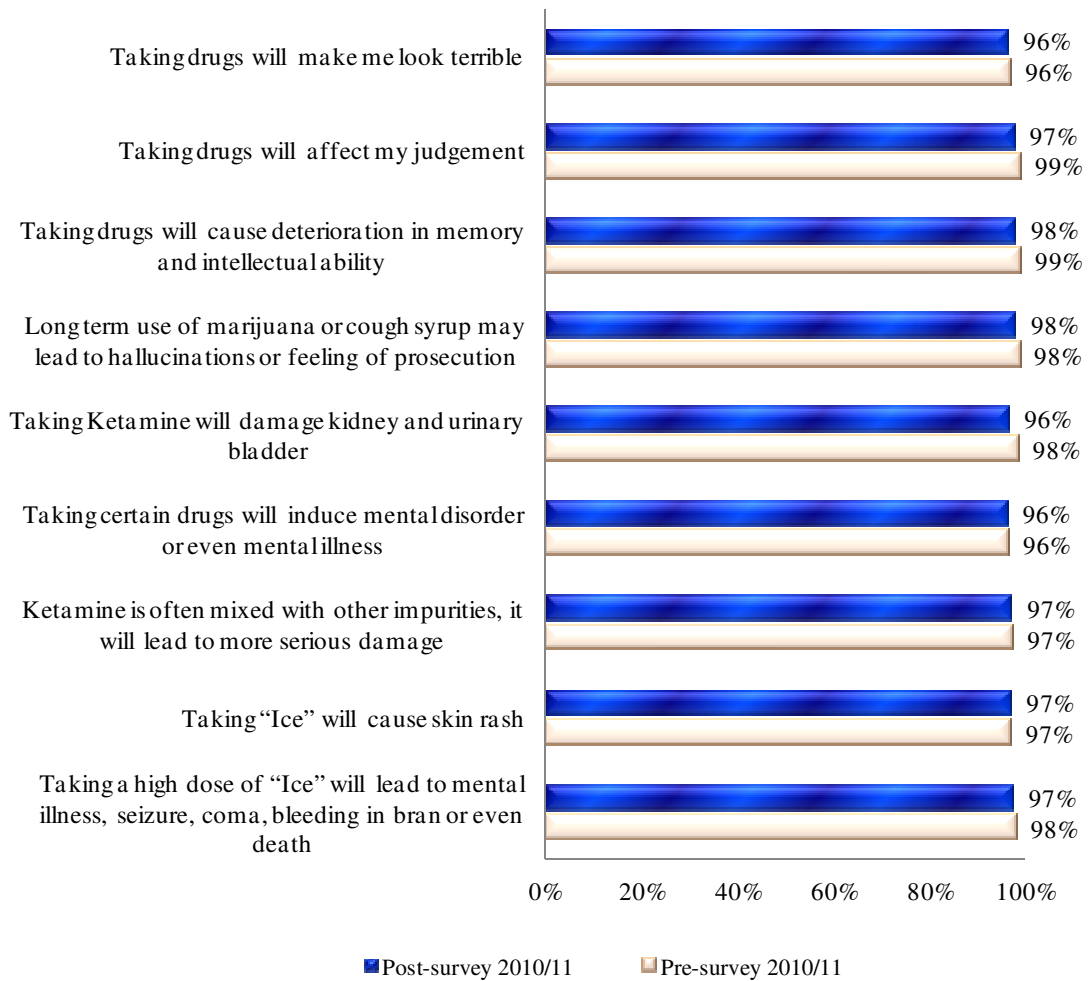
29. Nine questions were used in to assess changes in students' knowledge of drugs. It may be noted from the chart below that the great majority of Tai Po students were aware of the harmful effects of drugs. Compared with October 2010, the percentage of students in Tai Po who were aware of the harmful effects of drugs in June 2011 was slightly higher for most aspects on the harmful effects of drugs,

indicating that students in Tai Po have become more aware, albeit by a very small margin, of the harmful effects of drugs after the launch of the 2010/11 Scheme.



30. For non-Tai Po students, the great majority of them were also aware of the harmful effects of drugs. Nevertheless, compared with October 2010, the percentage of non-Tai Po students who were aware of the harmful effects of drugs in June 2011 was slightly lower for a number of aspects on the harmful effect of drugs, indicating that non-Tai Po students had become less aware, albeit by a very small margin, of the harmful effects of drugs in June 2011, as compared with October 2010.

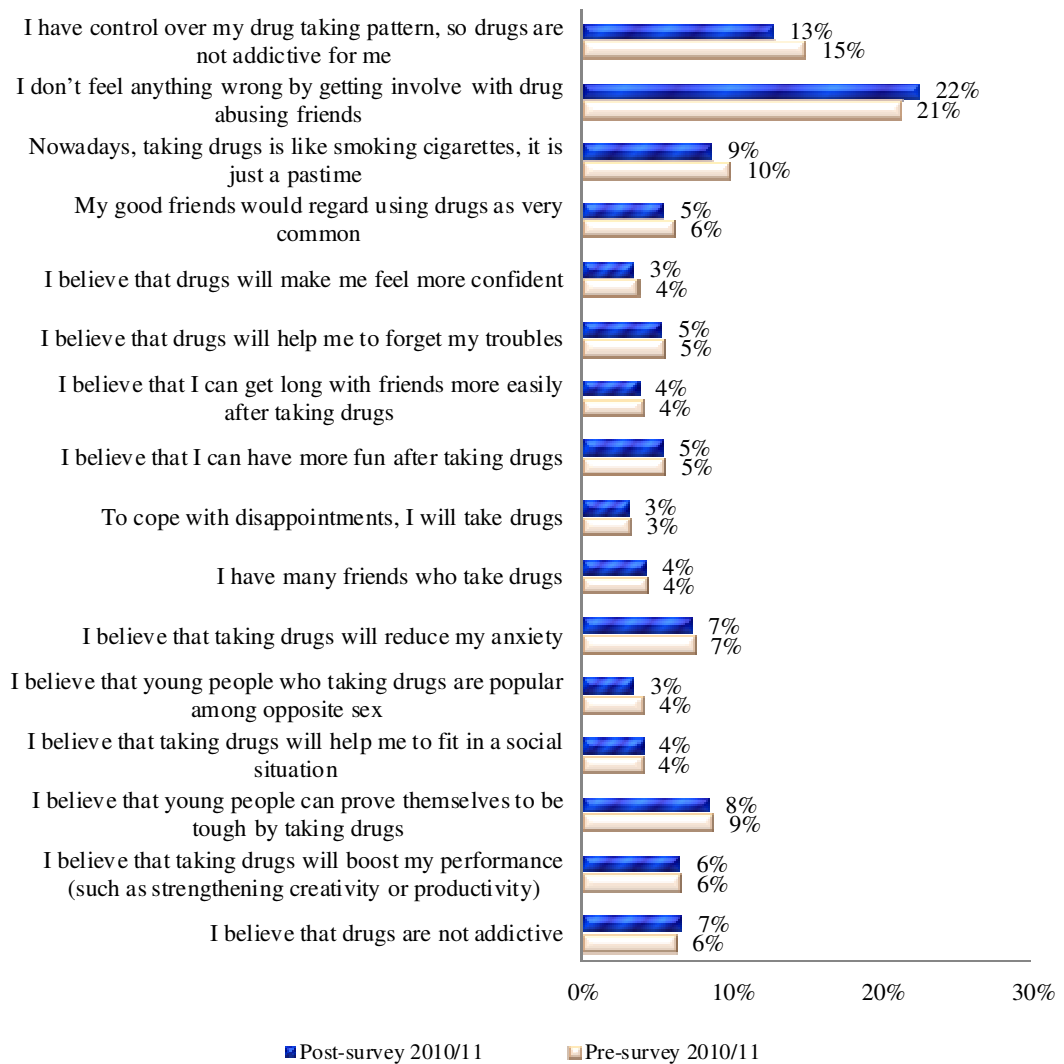
Harmful on health: percentage agreed for non-Tai Po students



Misconception about drugs

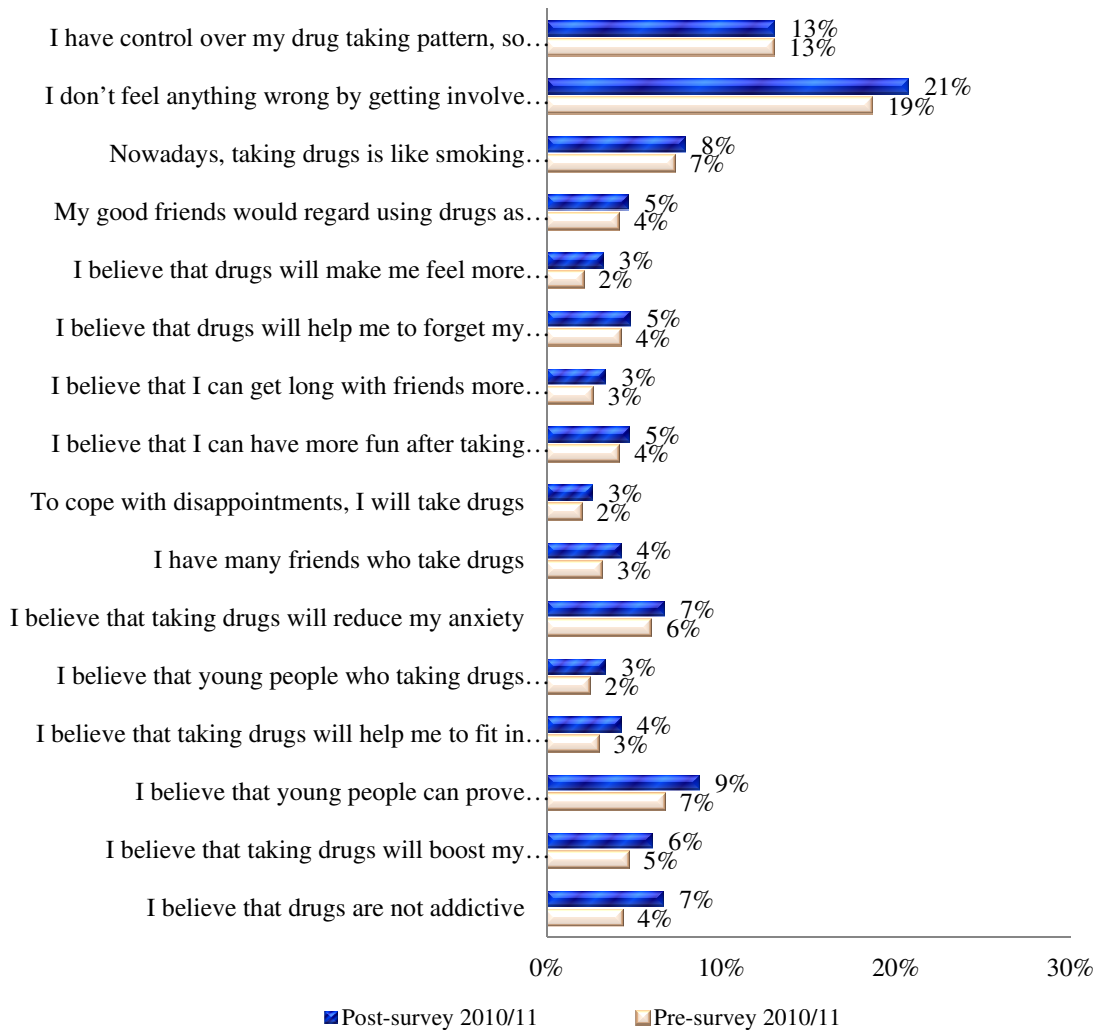
31. 16 questions were used to assess students' misconception about drugs. It may be seen from the chart below that the proportion of students who agreed with 14 of the statements was rather small, at 10% or below. In other words, about 10% or less of students had misconceptions about drugs as far as these statements were concerned. It may also be worth noting that percentage was slightly higher in June 2011 as compared with October 2010.

Percentage of Tai Po students who agreed



32. For non-Tai Po students, the pattern is similar. As shown in the chart below, the proportion of students who agreed with the 14 statements was rather small, at 10% or below. In other words, about 10% or less of students had misconceptions about drugs as far as these statements were concerned. It may also be worth noting that percentage was slightly higher in June 2011 as compared with October 2010.

Percentage of non-Tai Po students who agreed

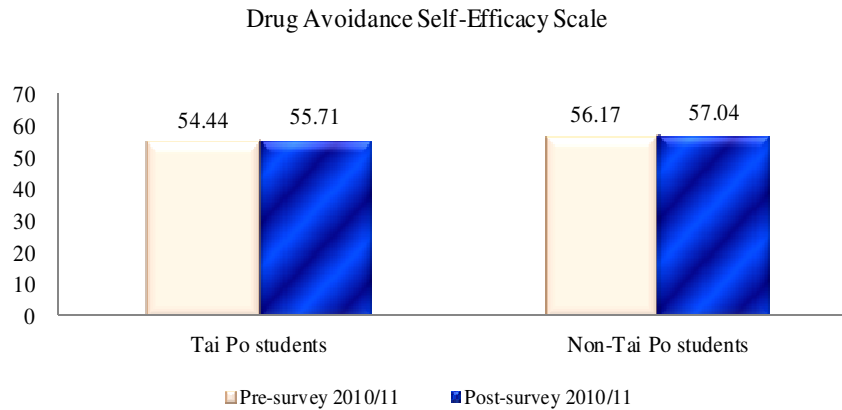


Drug avoidance self-efficacy

33. Ten questions were used to assess students' self-efficacy in avoiding drugs. The 10 items were based on the Beat Drug Fund Evaluation Question Set 3 or the Drug Avoidance Self-Efficacy (DASE) Scale. For each item in the Scale, the students were asked to imagine themselves in a particular situation and to rate their level of confidence (self-efficacy) to resist drug use in that situation. The Scale covers a broad range of levels of confidence and has been shown to be sensitive to changes in self-efficacy associated with treatment as well as to post-treatment adaptation to the natural environment following inpatient treatment.

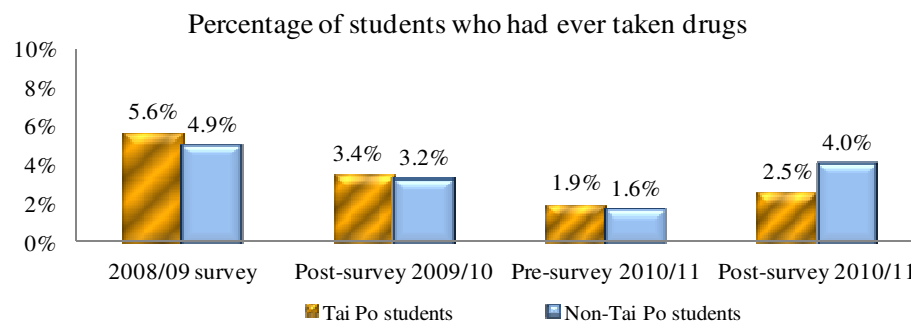
34. For the Scale, a summary score may be compiled from the 10 items which purport to measure this underlying factor on drug avoidance self-efficacy, with a higher score indicating a higher level of self-efficacy to avoid drugs. Based on the matched sample of nearly 17,000 students, the overall score on drug avoidance self-efficacy is compiled for Tai Po students and non-Tai Po students, in October 2010 and June 2011, and shown in the chart below. It may be seen that for Tai Po students, the

score was slightly higher in June 2011 (at 55.7), as compared with that in October 2010 (54.4). As regards non-Tai Po students, the index was also slightly higher in June 2011 (57.0), as compared with that in October 2010 (56.2). The findings indicated that for both Tai Po students and non-Tai Po students, their drug avoid self-efficacy has increased in June 2011, as compared with October 2010, and the extent of improvement is greater for Tai Po students.



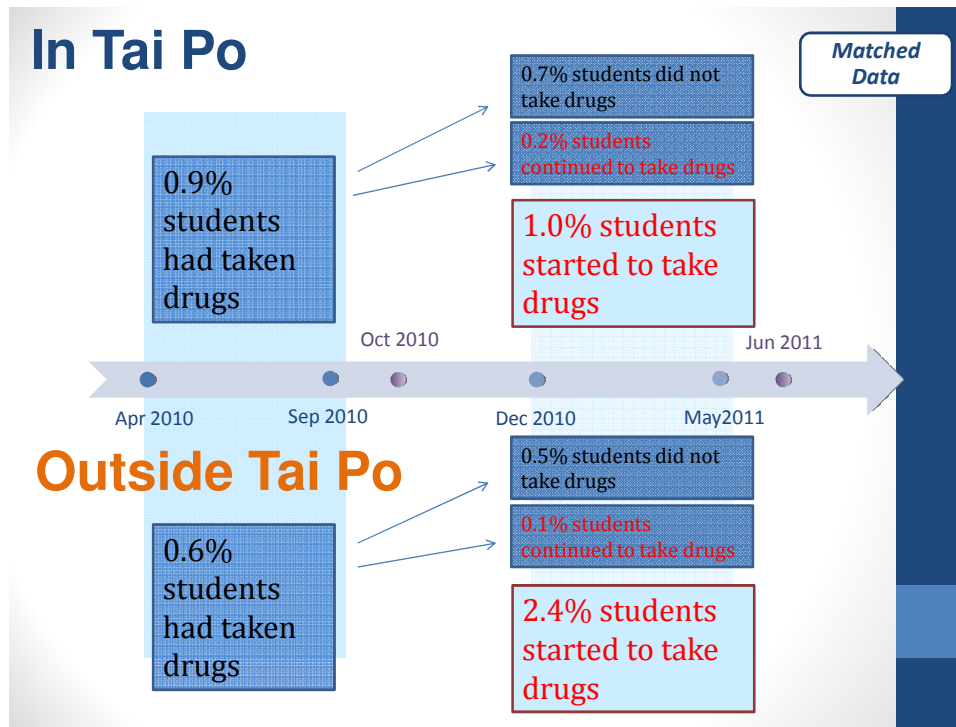
Drug taking behaviour

35. For Tai Po students, it may be seen from the chart below that the percentage who admitted to have abused drugs has decreased steadily from 5.6% in 2008/09 to 3.4% in June 2010, 1.9% in October 2010 and slightly increased to 2.5% in June 2011. For non-Tai Po students, however, the percentage who admitted to have abused drugs increased significantly from 1.6% in October 2010 to 4% in June 2011, after decreasing steadily from 4.9% in 2008/09 to 3.2% in June 2010 and 1.6% in October 2010.



36. It may also be of interest to note that, based on students' self-reports on their drug taking behaviour during the 6 months prior to the survey period (i.e. October 2010 and June 2011), while only 1% of Tai Po students admitted to have started taking drugs during the 6 months before June 2011, 2.4% of non-Tai Po students admitted to have started taking drugs during the 6 months before June 2011.

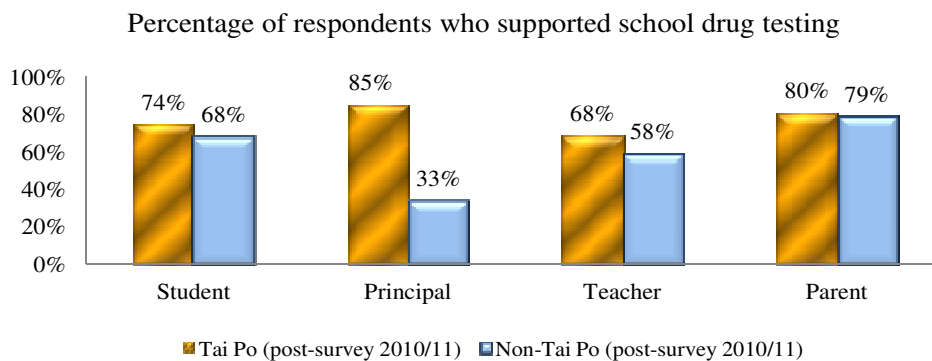
Apparently, the Scheme might have a deterrent effect on the drug abuse behaviour of Tai Po students.



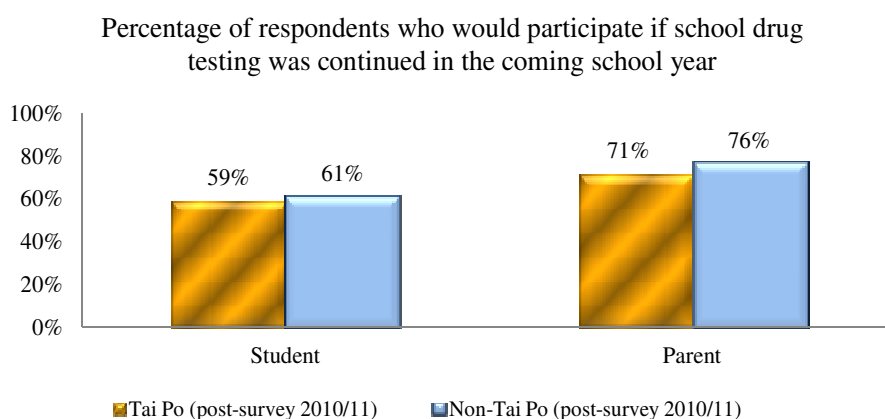
School Drug Testing: The Way Forward

Support of school drug testing

37. The majority of Tai Po students and their parents, and principals supported the continuation of school drug testing in the coming school year. For students attending secondary schools in Tai Po and those outside, as high as 74% and 68% respectively supported the continuation of school drug testing. For their parents, the percentage supporting school drug testing was even higher.



38. If school drug testing continued to be implemented in the coming school year, 59% of Tai Po students and 61% of non-Tai Po students indicated that they would participate. For their parents, 71% of Tai Po parents and 76% of non-Tai Po parents indicated that they would allow their children to participate in school drug testing if it was implemented in the coming school year.



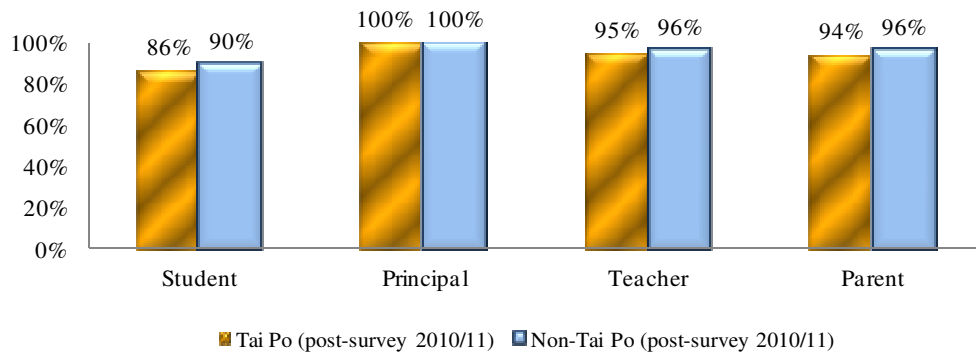
39. During focus group discussions, most teachers of secondary schools in Tai Po voiced support of the continuation of the present Scheme. They considered that the Scheme had not increased teacher workload nor affected learning and teaching at schools. To reinforce the impact of the Scheme, some teachers suggested that students should be asked to make a pledge of not abusing drugs. Besides, efforts should be made to encourage students to participate in the Scheme, with teachers assuming a more active role in promoting the Scheme and winning the support of students.

40. During discussions with social workers, several of them opined that drug testing was not in line with the principles cherished by social workers. They suggested that more resources should be devoted to providing counselling services to students, by say providing additional social worker support to schools. They believed that social workers would not like to be involved in drug testing. They also expressed concern over the resource implications and whether resources similar to those provided to schools in Tai Po under the Scheme would be available to schools if the Scheme was extended to more schools in districts outside Tai Po.

Anti-drug educational and promotional activities

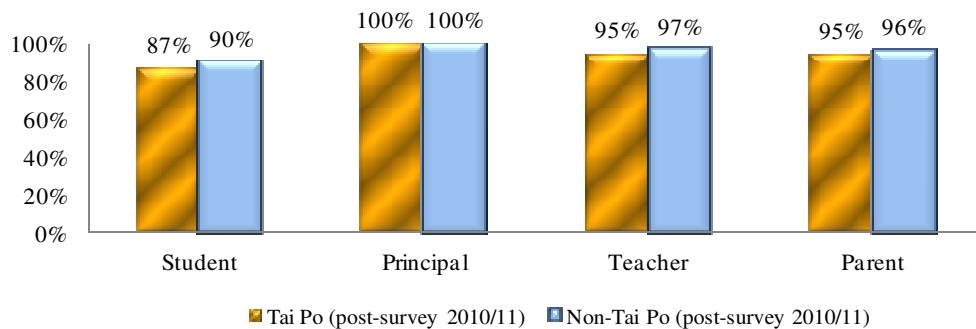
41. Apart from drug testing and the various support programmes, there were also a host of educational and promotional anti-drug activities organized by secondary schools in Tai Po as part of the healthy school policy aimed at instilling positive values on students, helping them develop healthy lifestyles, in addition to anti-drug education. Such anti-drug activities were supported by students, parents and teachers and school principals. Findings of the June 2011 post-survey indicated that the great majority of Tai Po students (86%) and non-Tai Po students (90%), Tai Po parents (94%) and non-Tai Po parents (96%), Tai Po teachers (95%) and non-Tai Po teachers (96%) as well as Tai Po principals (100%) and non-Tai Po principals (100%) agreed that activities designed to alert students about the harmful effects of drugs should be organized.

Percentage of respondents who agreed that activities to alert students about the harmful effects of drugs should be organized

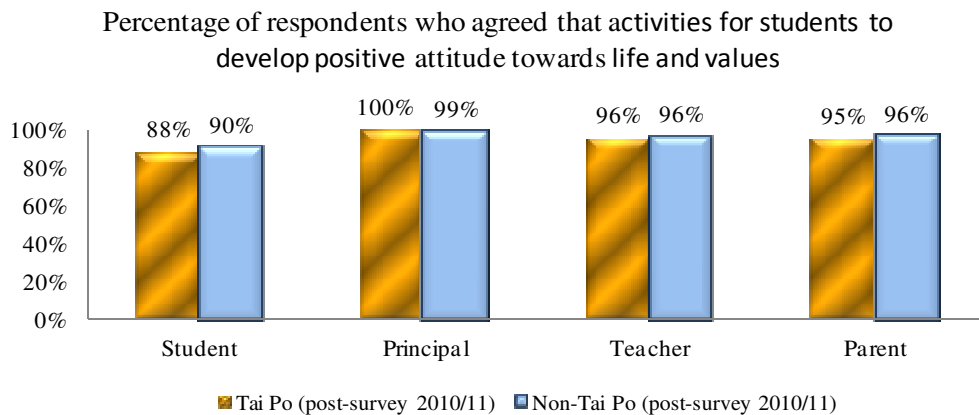


42. In addition, the great majority of Tai Po students (87%) and non-Tai Po students (90%), Tai Po parents (95%) and non-Tai Po parents (96%), Tai Po teachers (95%) and non-Tai Po teachers (97%) as well as Tai Po principals (100%) and non-Tai Po principals (100%) agreed that activities to enhance students' anti-drug attitude should be organized.

Percentage of respondents who agreed that activities to enhance students' anti-drug attitude should be organized

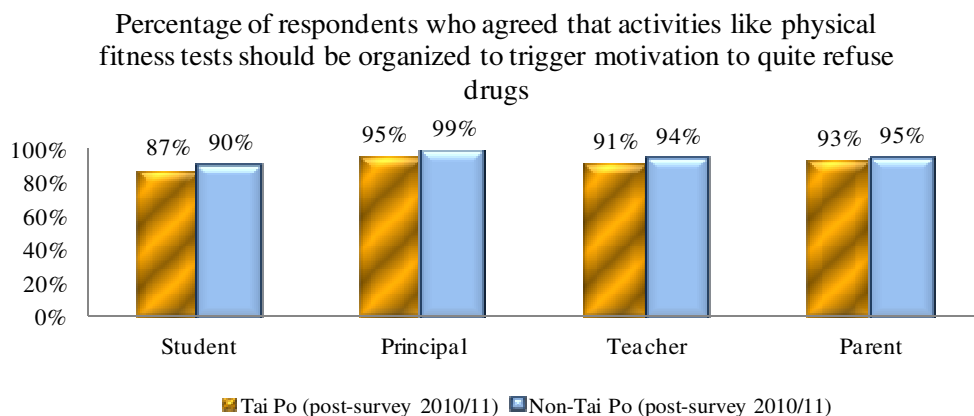


43. Apart from enhancing students' anti-drug attitude and their awareness of the harmful effects of drugs, it is also desirable to help students develop positive values and healthy lifestyle. Findings of the June 2011 post-survey showed the great majority of students (88% for schools in Tai Po and 90% for schools outside Tai Po), school principals (100% and 99% respectively), teachers (96% and 96%) and parents (95% and 96%) agreed that activities should be organized for students to help them develop positive attitude towards life and value.



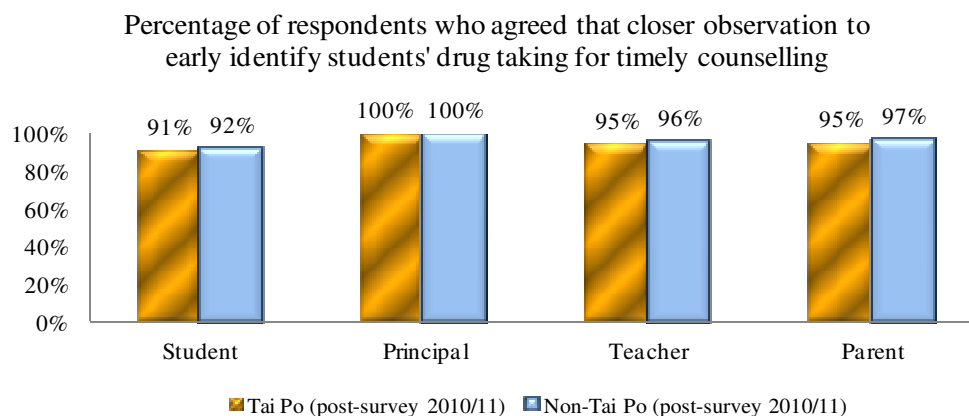
Early identification and intervention

44. Apart from educational and promotional anti-drugs, a number of schools visited by the project team have introduced measures that facilitate early identification of students who have abused drugs or at risk of abusing drugs and provided timely intervention and assistance. In some schools, physical fitness tests and mental health screening are conducted by a team of medical professionals and social workers. Through these tests and screening, students with physical health, emotional and drug abuse problems are identified and timely intervention and assistance are provided to these students. During discussions with the social workers and nursing staff concerned, they pointed out that this approach was more acceptable to students, with little labelling effects, if any, on them. Findings of the June 2011 post-survey showed that the great majority of Tai Po students (87%) and non-Tai Po students (90%), Tai Po parents (93%) and non-Tai Po parents (95%), Tai Po teachers (91%) and non-Tai Po teachers (94%) as well as Tai Po principals (95%) and non-Tai Po principals (99%) agreed that activities like physical fitness test designed to trigger students' motivation to quit drugs should be organized.



45. In addition, the great majority of Tai Po students (91%) and non-Tai Po students (92%), Tai Po parents (95%) and non-Tai Po parents (97%), Tai Po teachers

(95%) and non-Tai Po teachers (96%) as well as all Tai Po principals and non-Tai Po principals also agreed that steps should be taken to closely observe indication of drug taking by students for the purposes of early identification and timely counselling. It is worth noting that the proportion of non-Tai Po students, parents and teachers holding such a view was slightly higher than those in Tai Po.

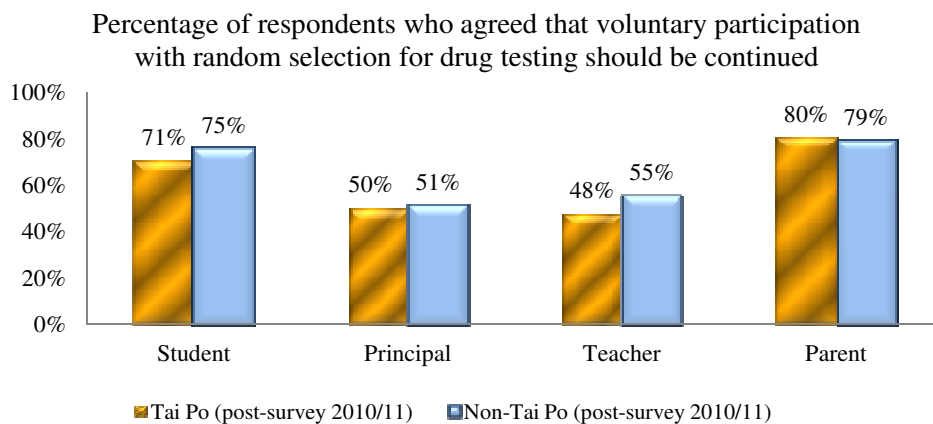


Support to parents

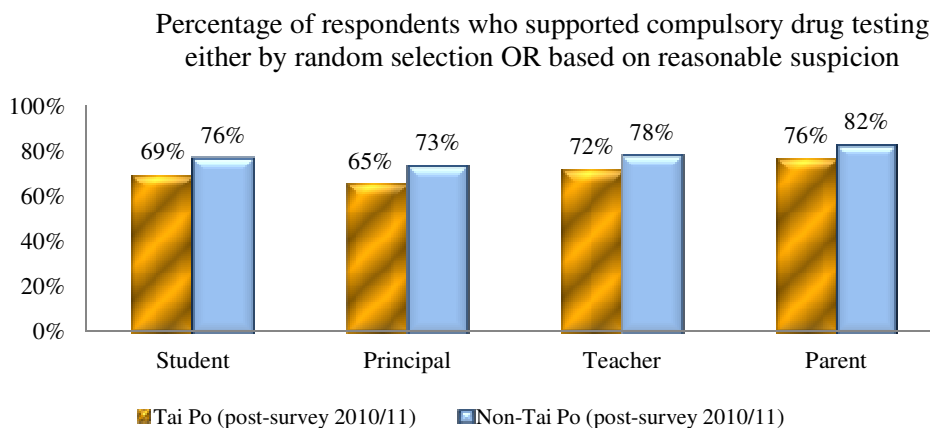
46. Parental involvement in anti-drug education of their children is weak as revealed in the June 2010 survey and June 2011 post-survey. There is a need for providing support to parents in helping them to deal with drug-related problems of their children. In connection with the Scheme, parents could also play a more active role in encouraging their children to participate in the Scheme, and in various anti-drug education activities organized by schools.

School drug testing: voluntary or compulsory

47. For the Scheme in Tai Po, participation is voluntary and written consent from both parents and students is required. Findings of the June 2011 post-survey showed that the majority of Tai Po students (71%) and non-Tai Po students (75%) and Tai Po parents (80%) and non-Tai Po parents (79%) supported voluntary participation with random selection of students for drug testing, same as the Scheme in Tai Po. However, slightly less than half of Tai Po teachers (48%) and principals (50%) supported this arrangement, and slightly more than half of non-Tai Po teachers (55%) and principals (51%) of secondary schools supported this approach.



48. On the other hand, most Tai Po students (69%) and non-Tai Po students (76%) and Tai po parents (76%) and non-Tai Po parents (82%), Tai Po teachers (72%) and non-Tai Po teachers (78%) and Tai Po principals (65%) and non-Tai Po principals (73%) supported compulsory. In particular, the proportion of students, parents, teachers and school principals in favour of compulsory drug testing was higher than the corresponding percentage for those in favour of voluntary drug testing.



49. During discussions with social workers, most social workers admitted with compulsory drug testing would be more effective. A few remarked that if the purpose of the Scheme was mainly educational and promotional, then whether drug testing was compulsory or not was immaterial. It should be clearly understood by all concerned that voluntary drug testing would not be effective for the purposes of early identification. A few social workers suggested that the Government should make up their mind about the purpose(s) of the Scheme, whether it was for prevention or early identification, or both.

50. Several social workers voiced support of compulsory drug testing. As students at risk, including those who had abused drugs, would usually not seek help voluntarily, compulsory drug testing would facilitate early identification and timely intervention. This was in the best interest of students. It would not be desirable for students who had abused drugs to wait until their health had been adversely damaged by

drugs to seek help. There should be adequate follow up services and sufficient resources to cope with students identified through compulsory drug testing, including those required to tackle more difficult cases arising from students who were not willing to receive treatment after having been identified to have abused drugs or who dropped out from schools in order to avoid drug testing.

51. A few social workers cautioned that compulsory drug testing was quite controversial and might have a negative impact on students. Some members of the community might find it unacceptable. There should be sufficient justifications to support the introduction of compulsory drug testing. There were social workers interviewed in the course of the research, on the other hand, who were against compulsory drug testing. In their opinion, compulsory drug testing would ruin relationship between schools and students, and between social workers and students. As a result, it would be difficult for schools and social workers to engage students and effectively provide counseling and assistance to them. If students dropped out from schools, social workers would have to devote more time to locate and contact these students and to offer assistance.

Observations

52. Based on the findings of the research, including quantitative data obtained from the October 2010 pre-survey and June 2011 post-surveys, and views expressed by stakeholders consulted, a number of observations may be made, as follows:

- a) The 2010/11 Scheme is found to be effective as a preventive measure to enhance the resolve of most students to stay away from drugs. It has enhanced their resolve to refuse illicit drugs, helped build an anti-drug culture in schools and triggered the motivation of those students who had abused drugs to quit drugs;
- b) Drug testing was considered by most school principals, teachers, students and parents and as drug testing was being implemented over the past two years, increasing proportions of them had a positive view of drug testing. In short, drug testing had become part of school life with minimal disruption to other aspects of the school operation;
- c) It was considered desirable to enhancing the effectiveness of the Scheme, through closer collaboration between the SDT team and school social workers, underpinned by a comprehensive anti-drug policy drawn up by schools and by strengthening support to parents, students and teachers;
- d) It was considered desirable to increase the drug testing effectiveness by exploring the use of different drug testing methods, including hair drug testing and the testing of urine samples in the laboratory;
- e) Consideration should be given to encouraging participation from students in the Scheme, by proactively engaging students by social workers and teachers, through different anti-drug activities;
- f) Continued research should be conducted to monitor and verify the effectiveness of the Scheme as it is modified and adapted by schools, so that experience can be shared by schools.

Recommendations

53. In light of the research findings, the following recommendations are put forward by the project team:

- a) *The Scheme in Tai Po should be continued to help students stay away from drugs. It is also recommended that the government should continue to support and fund initiatives of schools outside Tai Po to introduce the Scheme;*
- b) *Schools implementing the Scheme should enhance the preventive anti-drug education and counseling component of the Scheme, targeting in particular, students likely to be at risk, and encourage closer cooperation between the SDT team and school social workers, underpinned by a comprehensive anti-drug policy to be drawn up by schools, in consultation with teachers and social workers;*
- c) *As part of the Scheme, resources should be provided to enhance anti-drug education and support services to parents, in order to enable parents play a useful role in providing anti-drug education and guidance to students, and in encouraging their children to participate in the Scheme;*
- d) *As part of the Scheme resources should be provided to support teachers, in terms of say training, to help them deliver anti-drug education and guidance to students, especially those who are likely to be at risk;*
- e) *To increase the effectiveness of drug testing, it is recommended that the present arrangement should be modified such that those students who claim to have taken medications should still be tested with their urine samples taken to the laboratory for screening and confirmatory tests. Furthermore, other methods of drug testing such as the use of hair sample should be explored and adopted in future, having considered the unique situation of each school;*
- f) *Following a school-based approach, teachers and social workers should be encouraged to assume a more active role in providing advice and counseling services to students on matters relating to the Scheme, with a view to encouraging students participate in the Scheme, while maintaining the voluntary nature of drug testing;*
- g) *Schools implementing the Scheme may review the arrangement on whether schools should be informed of the drug test results, in consultation with teachers, parents and students;*
- h) *As part of the Scheme, different anti-drug activities designed to engage students at risk should be organized for all students, including those who have or have not participated in the Scheme, with a view to facilitate early identification and timely intervention;*
- i) *Study / monitor should be conducted on the modified Scheme(s) to be implemented by school(s) in 2011/12.*