



Australian Secondary Students' Alcohol and Drug Survey 2022/23

Western Australian results – tobacco and e-cigarette use

Key findings



Tobacco use

- Tobacco use (or smoking) among students has continued to decline and is at its lowest rate since the survey began in 1984.
- An estimated 2.1 per cent of students are current smokers (i.e. had smoked in the week prior to the survey).
- More than 84 per cent of students had never tried smoking.
- Of those students who had never smoked, 16.4 per cent were susceptible to future smoking, a significant increase since 2017 (12.8 per cent).



E-cigarette use

- Almost one in three (32 per cent) students had ever tried an e-cigarette (vape), a significant increase since 2017 (13.5 per cent).
- Of those students who had tried vaping, 18.4 per cent had vaped in the past month, 6.9 per cent had vaped on 20 or more days in the past month, and 3.5 per cent reported vaping daily.
- Older students (aged 16 to 17 years) were significantly more likely to have tried vaping and regularly vape than younger students (aged 12 to 15 years).
- Most students (81.6 per cent) had not vaped in the past month.

Prevalence of tobacco use among students

In 2022/23, 16 per cent of students reported having ever smoked in their lifetime (Table 1). Of those who had tried smoking, around one in ten (10.7 per cent) reported smoking in the past year, 3.9 per cent in the past month, and 2.1 per cent in the week prior to the survey.

Older students (aged 16 to 17 years) were significantly more likely to have tried smoking and to have smoked in the past year, month, or week, compared to younger students (aged 12 to 15 years). There were no statistically significant differences in smoking prevalence between male and female students.

Table 1: prevalence of smoking among students by gender and age group, 2022/23

	Total	Gender ^b		Age group	
	(n=1805) ^a %	Male (n=906) %	Female (n=853) %	12 to 15 (n=1300) %	16 to 17 (n=505) %
Lifetime (ever) smoking	15.6	14.0	17.7	12.1	24.7
Past year smoking	10.7	9.5	12.0	8.3	16.7
Past month smoking	3.9	4.1	3.6	3.1	5.9
Past week smoking	2.1	2.3	2.0 [#]	1.5	3.7

a The total n (weighted) varied very slightly (<1%) for each recency period due to missing data.

b 'Other' and 'Not stated' genders were not reported due to small cell sizes.

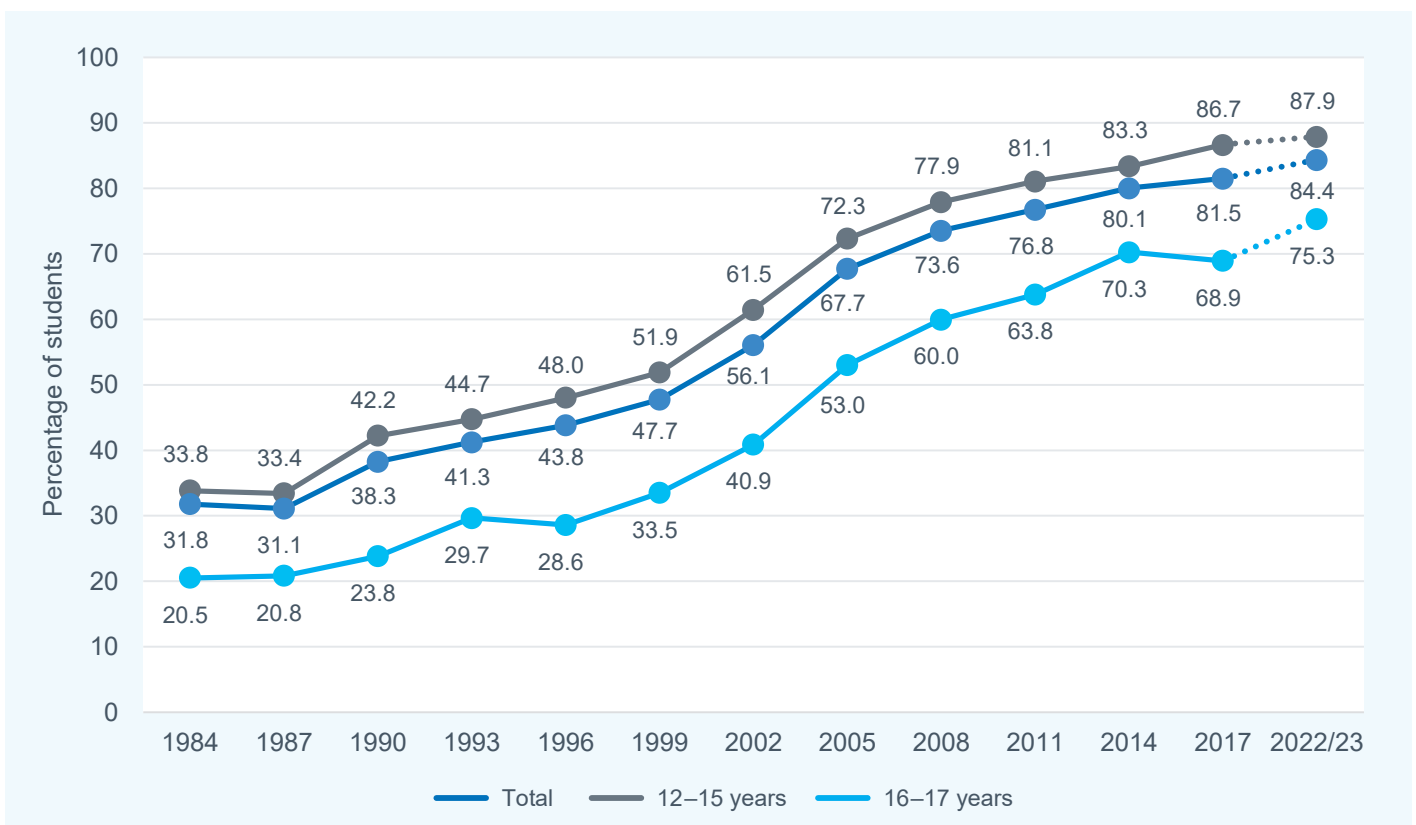
Estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution.

Light blue shading and bolding = Significant difference by age group at $p < 0.05$.

Prevalence of students who have never smoked

The prevalence of students who have never smoked has increased significantly since the survey began in 1984 (Figure 1).

Figure 1: prevalence of students who have never smoked over time by age group, 1984 to 2022/23



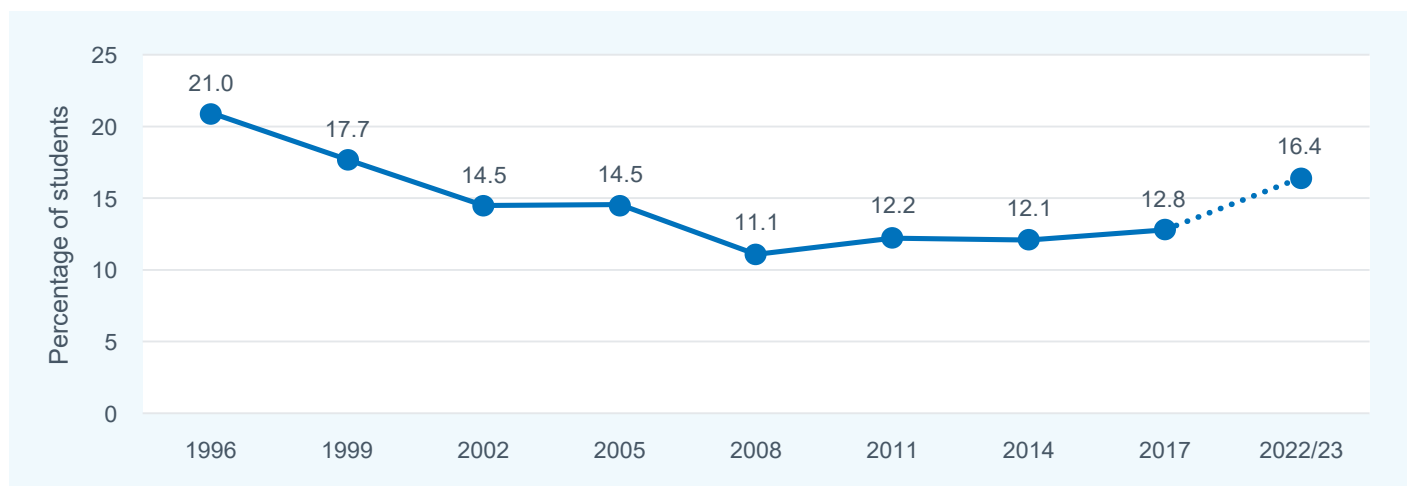
Susceptibility to smoking among never smokers

Susceptibility to smoking, defined as the lack of a firm commitment to not smoke in the next 12 months, is a strong, independent predictor of smoking experimentation among young people.

Susceptibility to smoking was highest in 1996 (21 per cent), declined to its lowest proportion in 2008 (11.1 per cent), and remained stable in previous survey years (Figure 2). In 2022/23, 16.4 per cent of students who had never smoked were susceptible to future smoking, a significant increase since 2017 (12.8 per cent).

Female students (19.5 per cent) were significantly more susceptible to future smoking than male students (14.1 per cent) in 2022/23. There were no statistically significant differences between age groups.

Figure 2: smoking susceptibility among students who have never smoked over time, 1996 to 2022/23



Students who had never smoked and gave a response in the survey other than certain not to be smoking in the next 12 months were categorised as being susceptible to smoking.

Prevalence of e-cigarette use (or vaping) among students

In 2022/23, almost one in three (32.2 per cent) students reported having ever tried vaping (Table 2). Of those who had tried vaping, 18.4 per cent had vaped in the past month, 6.9 per cent had vaped on 20 or more days in the past month (i.e. regular vaping), and 3.5 per cent reported vaping daily.

Older students (aged 16 to 17 years) were significantly more likely to have tried vaping and to have used a vape in the past month, on more than 20 days in the past month or daily, compared to younger students (aged 12 to 15 years). There were no statistically significant differences between male and female students.

Table 2: prevalence of e-cigarette use among students by gender and age group, 2022/23

	Total	Gender ^b		Age group	
	(n=1787) ^a %	Male (n=900) %	Female (n=841) %	12 – 15 (n=1286) %	16 – 17 (n=501) %
Lifetime vaping	32.2	29.6	35.4	25.1	50.4
Past month vaping	18.4	17.3	20.1	14.1	29.3
Regular vaping [^]	6.9	6.6	7.4	4.2	13.8
Daily vaping	3.5	3.4	3.6	2.5	6.2

a The total n (weighted) varied very slightly (<1%) for each recency period due to missing data.

b 'Other' and 'Not stated' genders were not reported due to small cell sizes.

Light blue shading and bolding = Significant difference by age group at p<0.05.

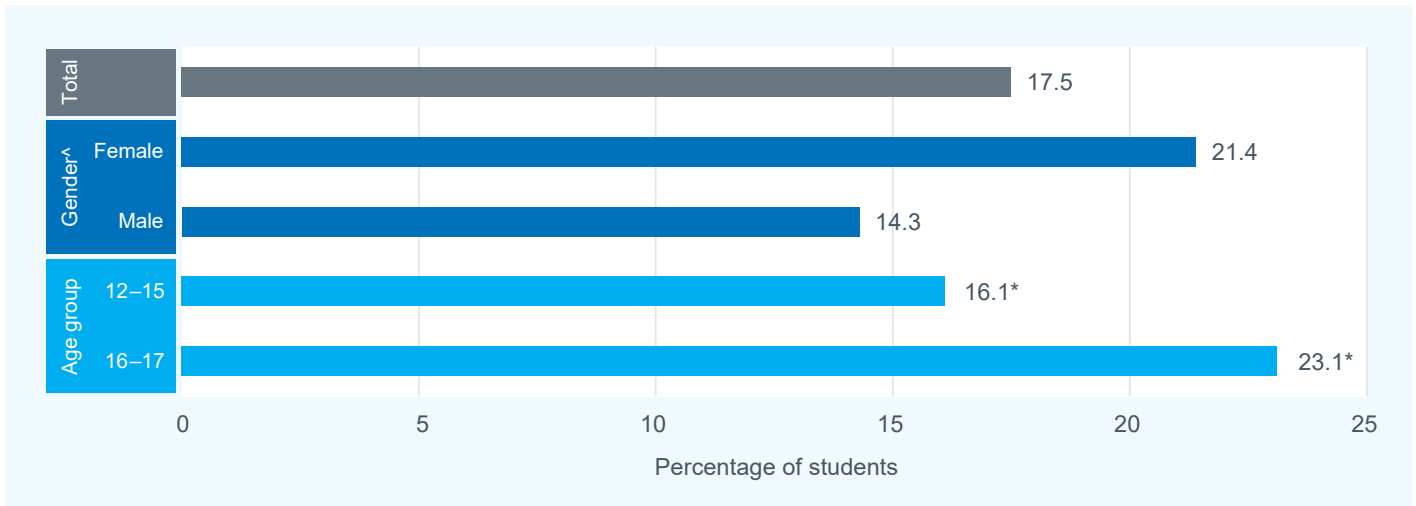
[^] Vaped on 20 or more days in past month.

Susceptibility to e-cigarette use among never vapers

In 2022/23, 17.5 per cent of students who had never vaped were susceptible to future vaping (i.e. when asked about their intention to vape in the next 12 months, gave a response other than certain not to be vaping) (Figure 3).

Older students (23.1 per cent) were significantly more likely to be susceptible to vaping than younger students (16.1 per cent). Female students (21.4 per cent) reported a higher susceptibility to vaping than male students (14.3 per cent), however this was not statistically significant.

Figure 3: vaping susceptibility among students who have never vaped by gender and age group, 2022/23



[^] 'Other' and 'Not stated' genders were not reported due to small cell sizes.

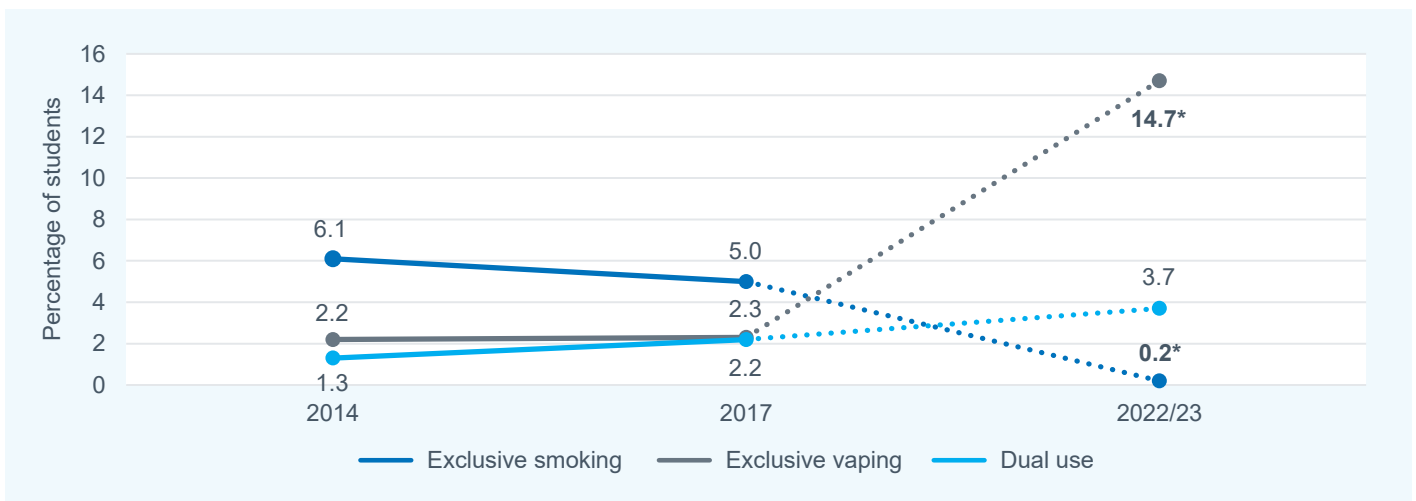
* Significant difference by age group at $p < 0.05$.

Exclusive and dual use of tobacco and e-cigarettes

In 2022/23, 18.6 per cent of students reported either vaping or smoking in the past month. This comprised 14.7 per cent of students who had exclusively vaped, less than 1 per cent of students who exclusively smoked, and 3.7 per cent who had both smoked and vaped in the past month (Figure 4).

Past month use of both tobacco and e-cigarettes (i.e. dual use) was significantly higher in 2022/23 compared to 2014 (3.7 per cent as opposed to 1.3 per cent), but not 2017 (2.2 per cent).

Figure 4: prevalence of tobacco and e-cigarette use in the past month among students, 2014 to 2022/23

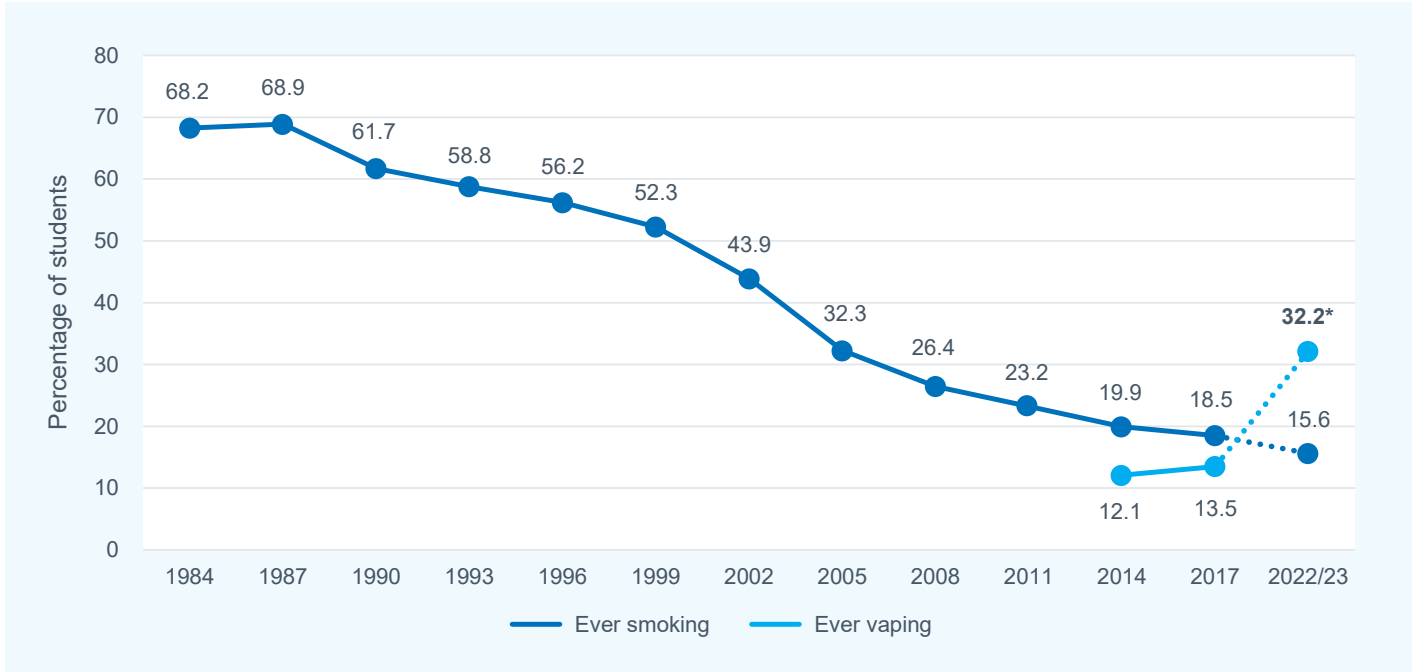


* Significant difference between previous year at $p < 0.05$.

Trends in smoking and vaping prevalence

While the proportion of students who have ever tried smoking has continued to decrease over time, a significantly higher proportion of students (32.2 per cent) reported they had ever tried vaping in 2022/23 compared to 2017 (13.5 per cent) (Figure 5).

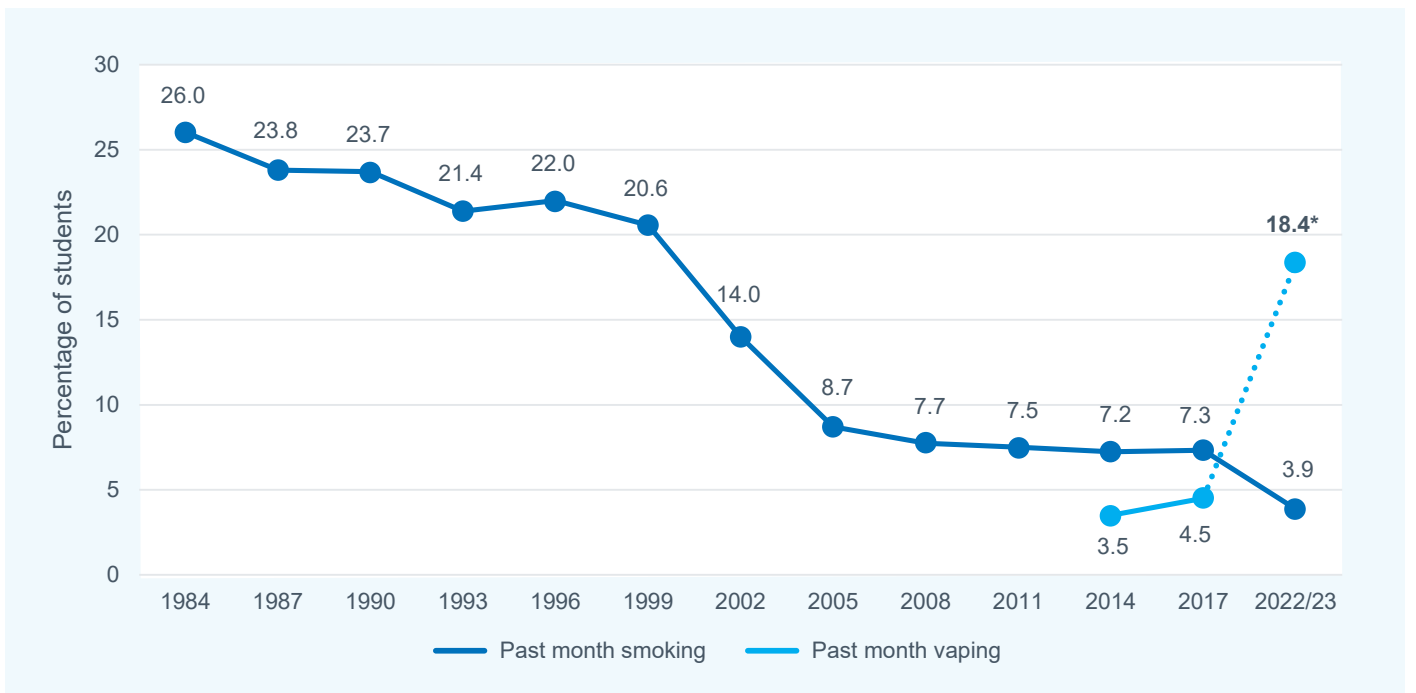
Figure 5: lifetime smoking and lifetime vaping over time among students, 1984 to 2022/23



* Significant difference between previous year at $p < 0.05$.

The proportion of students who had vaped in the past month was also significantly higher in 2022/23 (18.4 per cent) compared to 2017 (4.5 per cent) (Figure 6).

Figure 6: past month smoking and past month vaping over time among students, 1984 to 2022/23



* Significant difference between previous year at $p < 0.05$.

Technical notes

Purpose of the survey

The Australian Secondary Students' Alcohol and Drug (ASSAD) survey provides estimates of current alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarette and other drug use among secondary school students aged 12 to 17 years. The survey has been conducted every 3 years since 1984, except for in 2020, when the survey was delayed until 2022/23 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Who took part in 2022/23?

In 2022/23, 182 WA secondary schools were invited to take part in the survey. Of these, 34 schools agreed to participate and 20 schools were surveyed – a response rate of 11 per cent.

From the schools that took part, 1,817 students completed the survey. Of these, 7 per cent were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and 27 per cent spoke both English and another language at home, or only another language.

Methodology

Students were randomly selected from government, Catholic and independent schools, and voluntarily completed the survey during school hours. The survey was completed via an online questionnaire for the first time. To provide population estimates and to address any over or under sampling, survey responses were weighted to the appropriate WA population group by age, gender and school type.

The dotted line between 2017 and 2022/23 indicates that caution should be exercised when interpreting trends over time. This is due to methodological changes in survey administration, delay in data collection due to COVID-19 and a smaller sample size than previous years staggered over 2 academic years.

Acknowledgements

The WA Department of Health would like to thank the staff at the System Performance, Mental Health Commission (WA) for their work in administering the ASSAD survey in WA. The department also thanks the Centre for Behavioural Research in Cancer, Cancer Council Victoria, for preparing the data for the analysis presented in this bulletin and for their lead role in coordinating the survey nationally.

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