

5.0: DEMOGRAPHICS:

The only demographic information sought by the survey related to age and gender. Among the students who participated in the survey, 51% were girls and 49% were boys, which represents a 6% increase in the number of boys and a commensurate decrease in the number of girls, over last year. Since this profile is reflective of the school's demographic, then it would appear as though the quantity of school age boys has increased and this would have implications for the use of substances examined in this study, since the last investigation revealed that boys were more inclined to experiment than girls and also did so at a younger age. This fact therefore imports an assumption that the expected levels of smoking and other substance use should be slightly higher than was the case in 1999 and in the instance that this is not the case, it could reflect positively on anti-smoking or drug campaigns in Barbados, or other related factors.

The age of respondents for this Barbados study was dictated largely by the requirements of the global study. The age-range of persons surveyed was from 11 to 17. As a result of the form-levels (which included levels 3, 4, and 5) from which the sample was chosen, the largest segment of students was between 14 and 16. The age distribution of this sample is presented in figure 01.

Information was also collected on the ages of students in each form-level surveyed and it is noticeable that the higher and lower ranges of the age group are almost evenly balanced between form-levels 3, 4 and 5. However there is some evidence (which in all cases amounts to less than a percentage point) of very young students in form-level 5 and very old students in form-level 3 and while it is entirely possible that a student can repeat years and grow to 17 in a lower form, the converse is highly unlikely. This raises suspicions about the extent to which students were 100% truthful, or properly understood the instrument they responded to.

