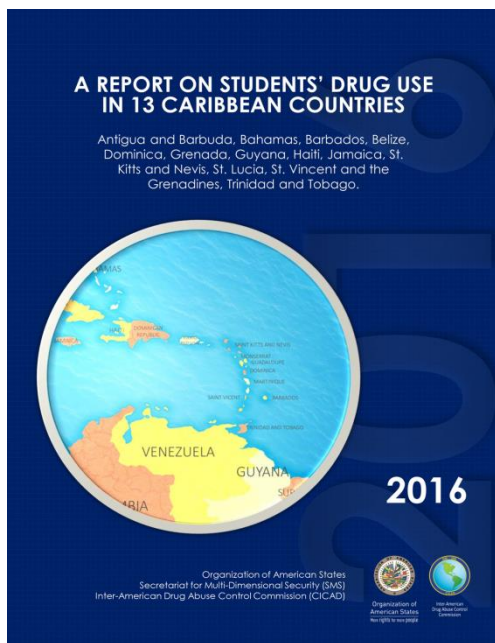




Comparative Analysis of Drug use Among Secondary School Students in 13 Caribbean Countries

*Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica,
Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis,
St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines,
Trinidad and Tobago*



Research Roundtable Discussion

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Inter-American Observatory on Drugs
Secretariat for Multidimensional Security
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Summary

Introduction.

Main Results and comparison with 2010 report.

Analysis of Results.

Conclusions

Policy Implications

Strategic Prevention



Introduction

Drug use, as well as the social context in which that use occurs, are etiological factors in a wide range of other social phenomena

Drug use is known to be causally related to a variety of physical and mental health problems, crime, poor school performance, family disruption, among others

Previous research has also consistently found strong connections between drugs and violence.



Methodology

The SIDUC survey of secondary school students applies a uniform methodology

The main objective of the uniformity of the approach is to allow the direct comparison of data between surveys that have been undertaken in different countries

As a result, the sampling procedures, data collection, and data entry methods are all the same, or comparably similar



Questionnaire

The questionnaire consists of a standard set of questions:

- Basic socio-demographic information
- Beliefs about future academic performance
- Discipline and academic problems
- Perceptions of harm associated with the consumption of drugs
- Prevalence of substance use and patterns of consumption
- Incidence of substance use
- Frequency of use



Objectives

General Objectives

- To estimate the magnitude of illicit and licit drug use among secondary school students in the Caribbean and its distribution according to select demographic variables
- To determine the perceived risk of drug use, access to drugs, availability of drugs, and frequency of use
- To examine risk and protective factors for drug use by school students.



MAIN RESULTS



Alcohol

Alcohol is the most prevalent legal drug used by Caribbean Students.

Prevalence in the past month:

- Average = 31.1%
- Max = 56.4% (Dom)
- Min = 16.5% (Guy)

Average Age of first Use: 11.9 (M), 12.4 (F)

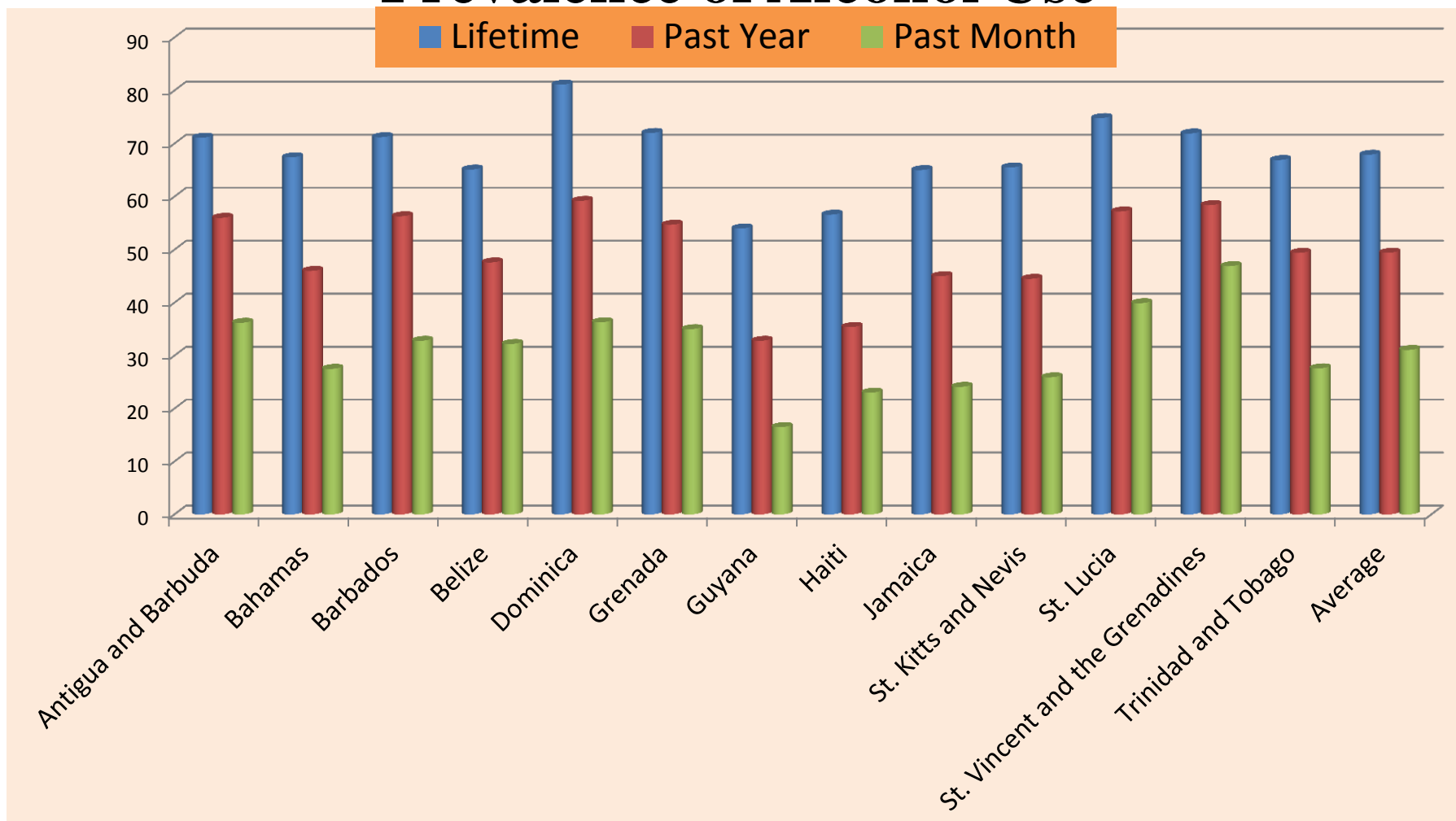
- Range: 10.9 (Dom) to 13.7 (Haiti)

4 out of 13 countries had higher past month prevalence rates for females.

Overall binge drinking rates have increased from 31.5% to 36.8%.



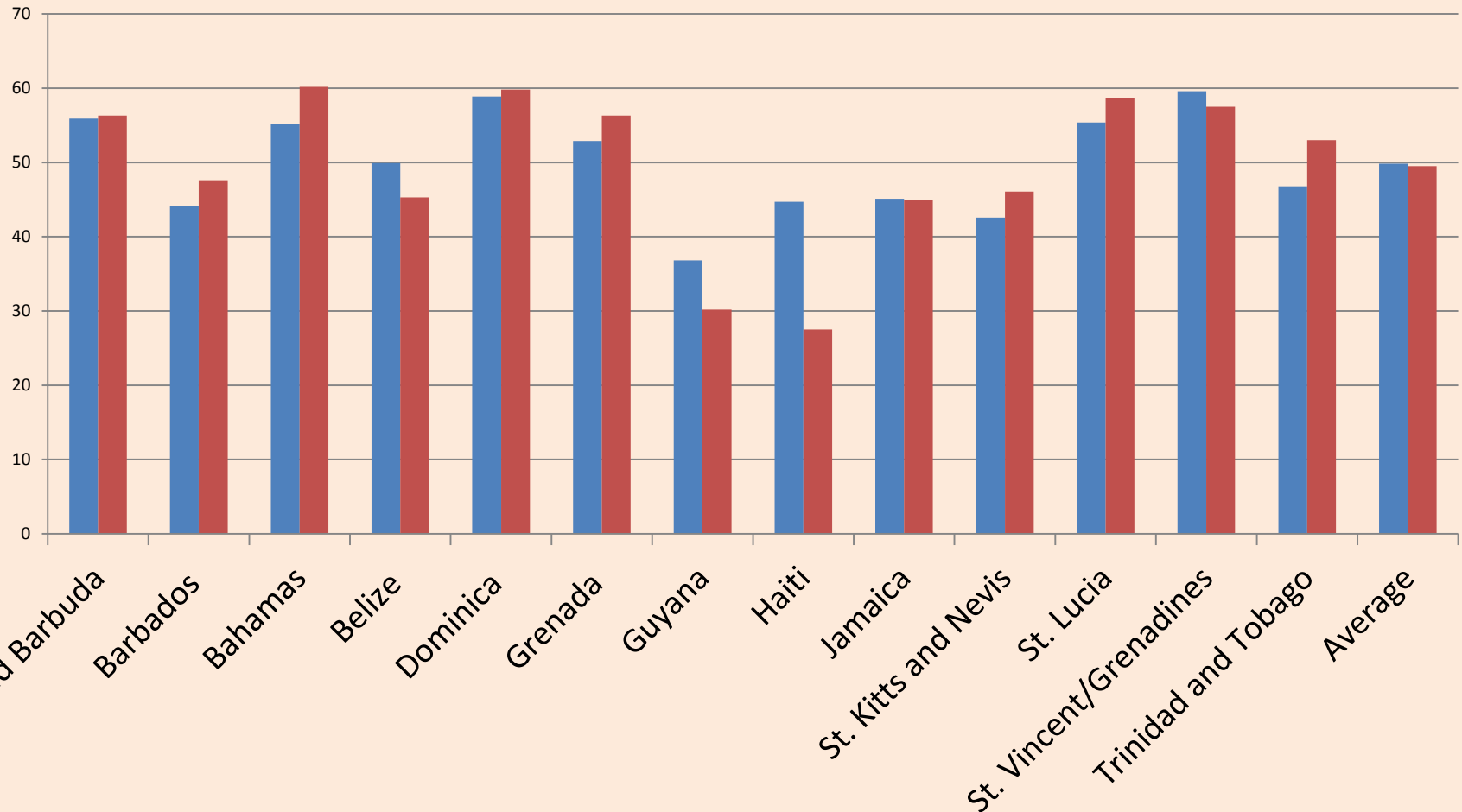
Lifetime, Past Year and Past Month Prevalence of Alcohol Use





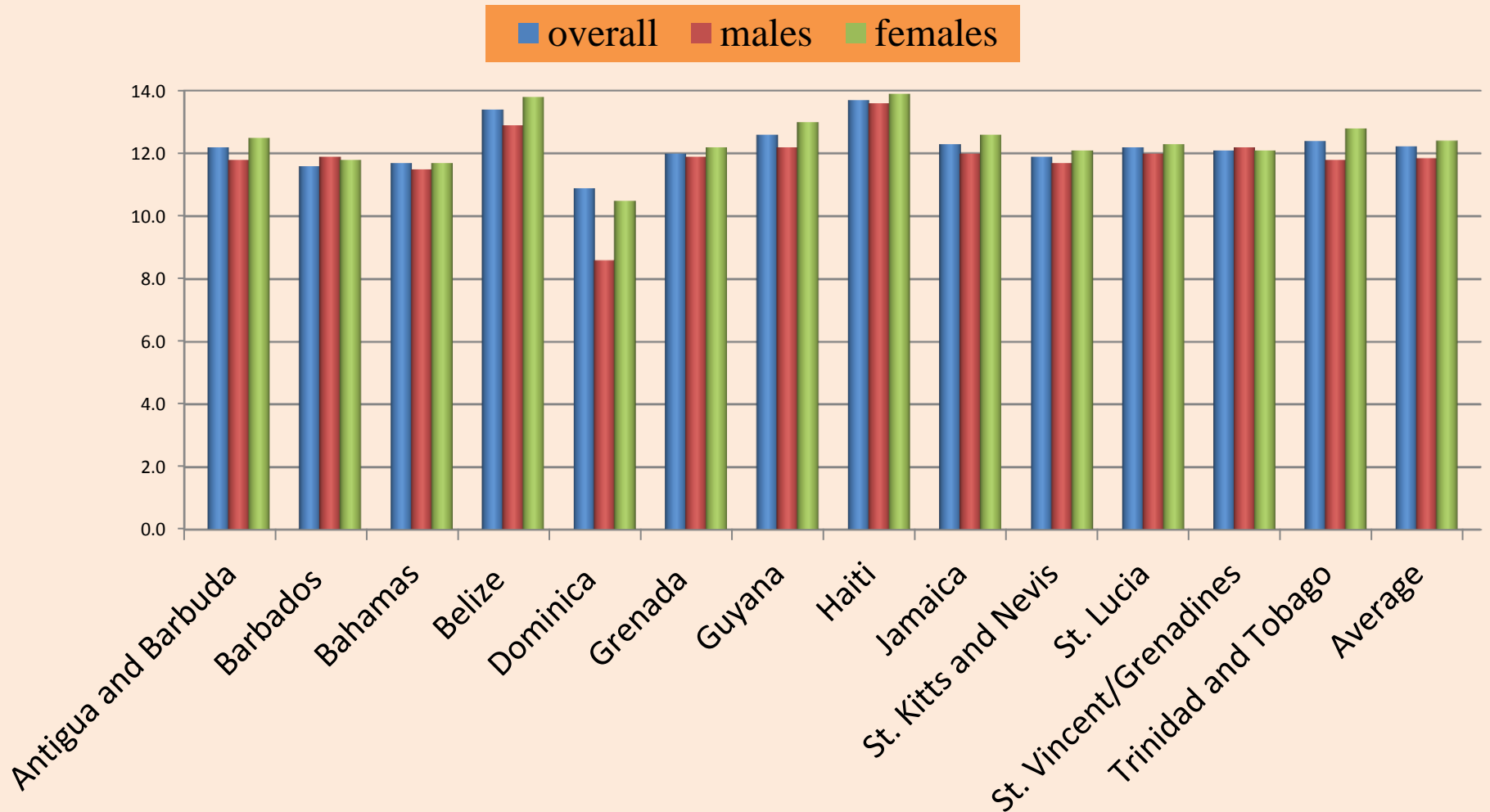
Past Year Prevalence by Gender

■ males ■ females





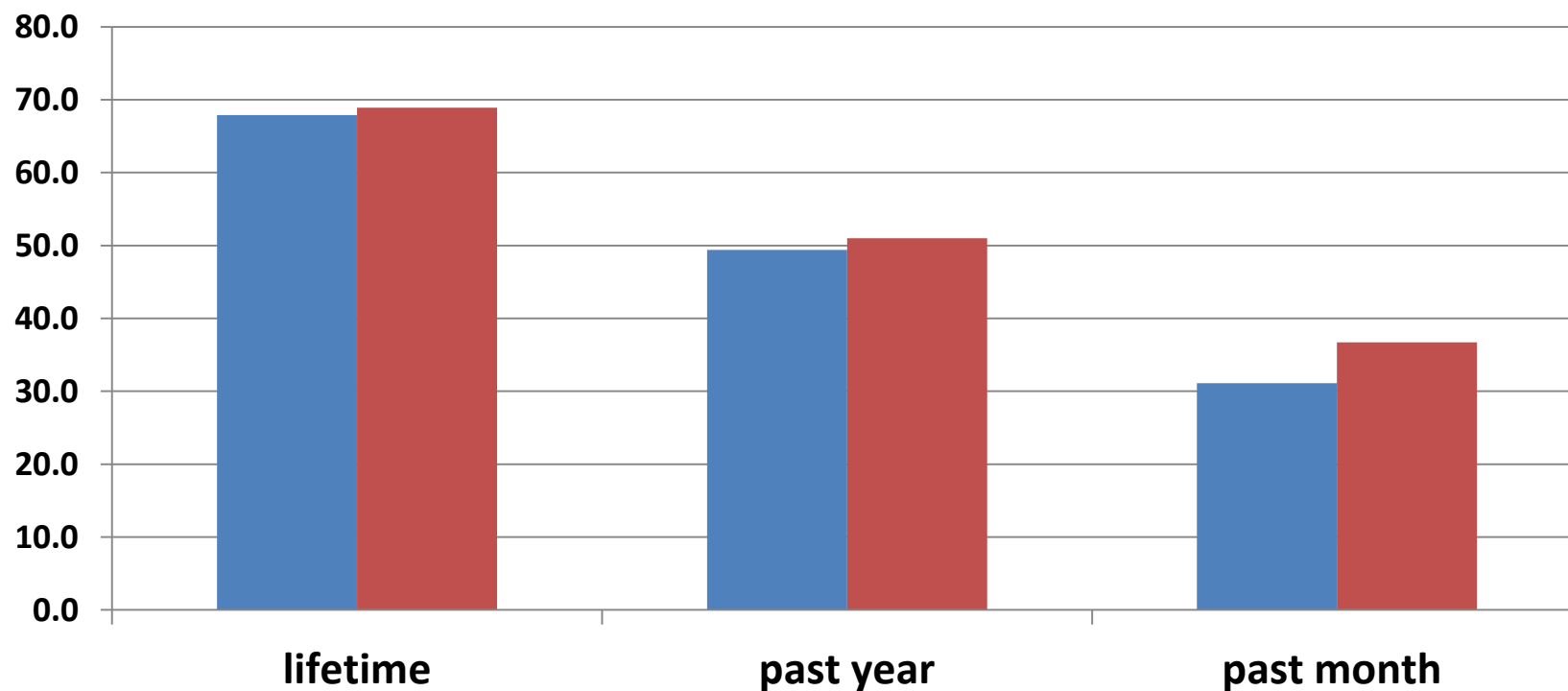
Age of First Use of Alcohol





Comparison of Alcohol Use - Overall Prevalence

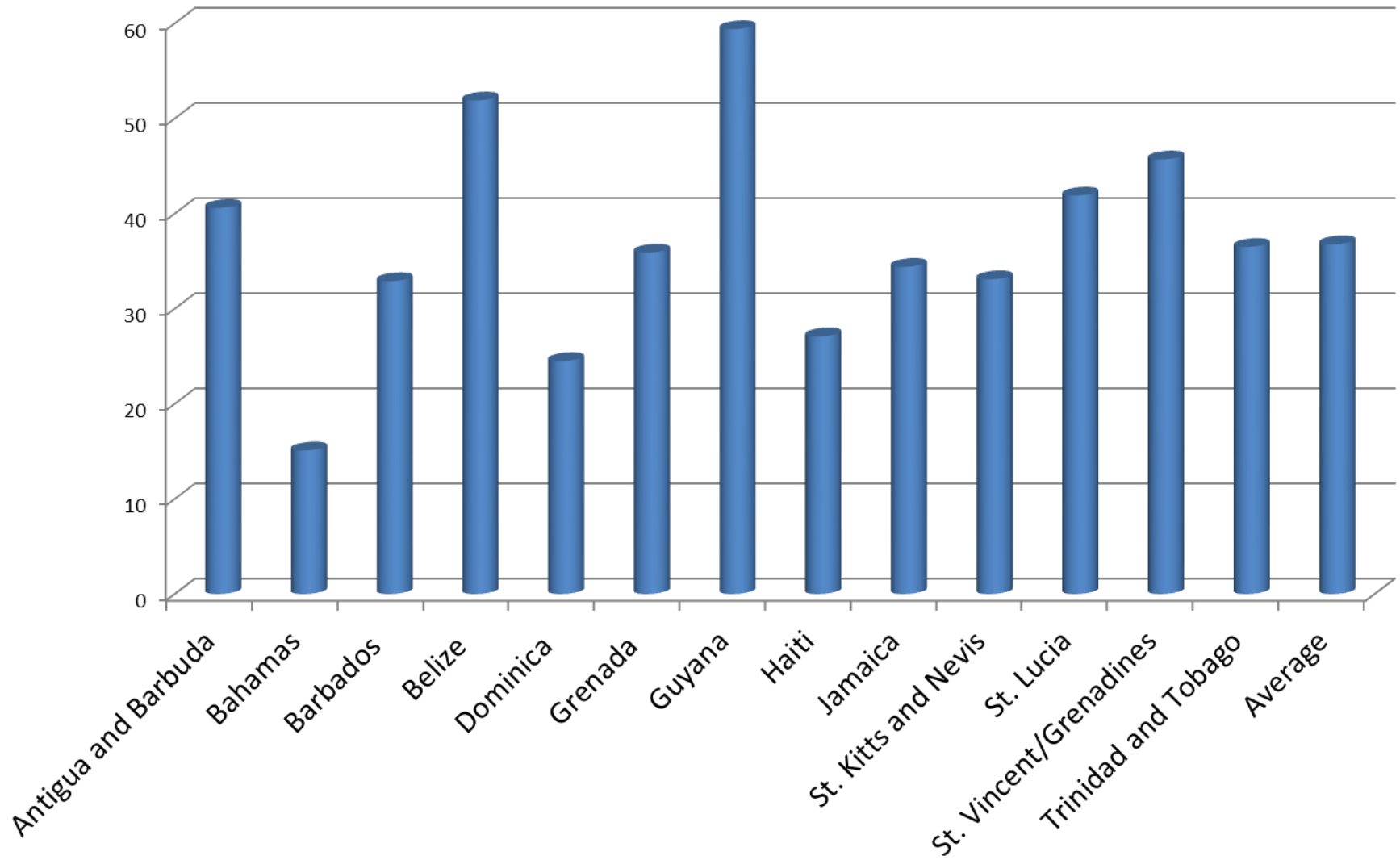
■ 2013 survey ■ 2010 report



Binge Drinking



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Marijuana

Marijuana is the most prevalent illegal drug used by Caribbean Students.

Prevalence in the past year:

- Average = 13.7%
- Max = 19.6% (Dom)
- Min = 2.4% (Hai)

Average Age of first Use: 12.9 (M), 13.6 (F)

- Range: 12.5 (SKN) to 13.9 (Bel)

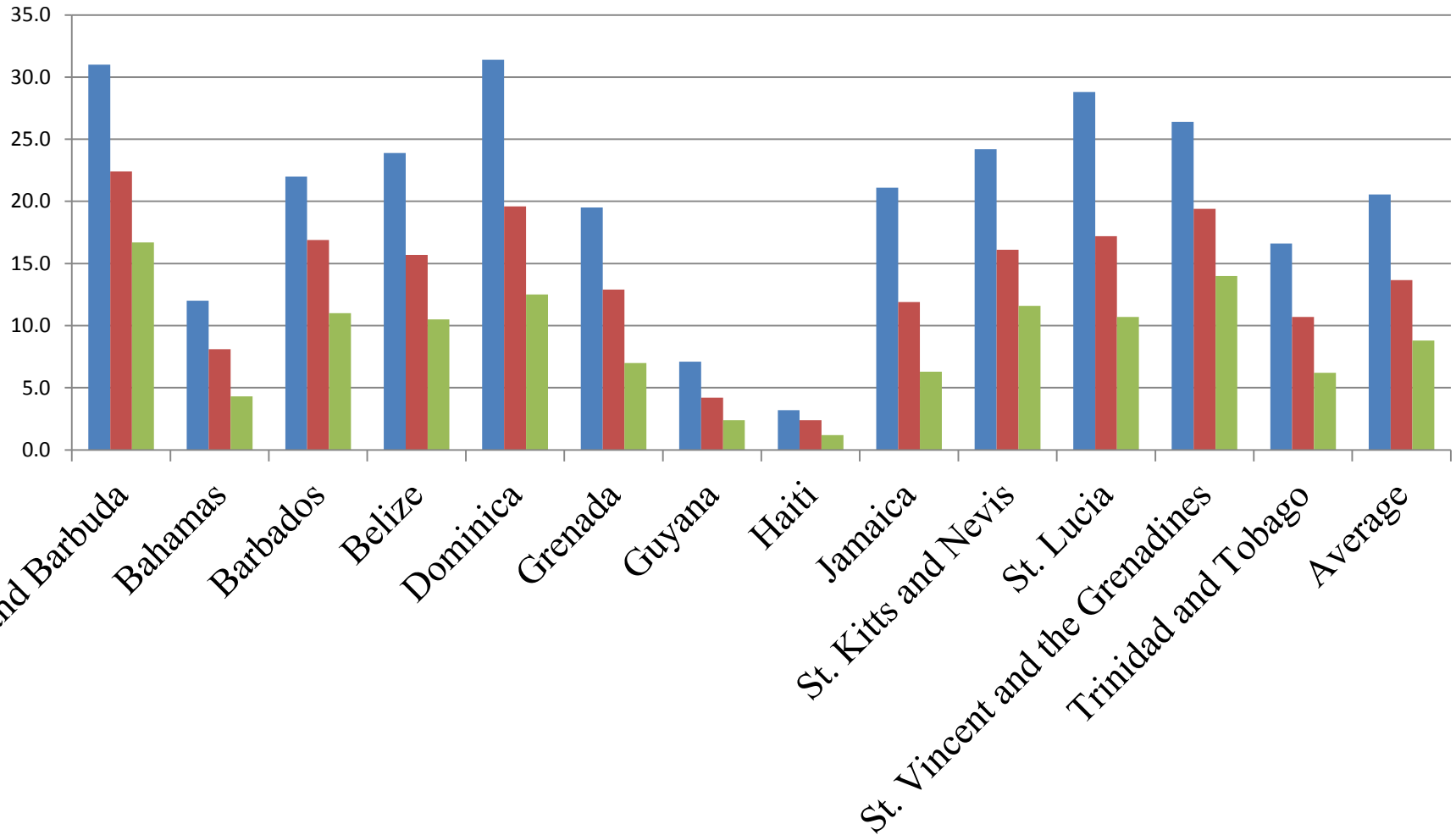
Past year prevalence rates for males was higher than that for females.

The overall perception of harm caused by marijuana smoking has declined since the last round of surveys while the overall prevalence of marijuana has increased (from 9.8% to 13.7% (past year)).



Marijuana Prevalence

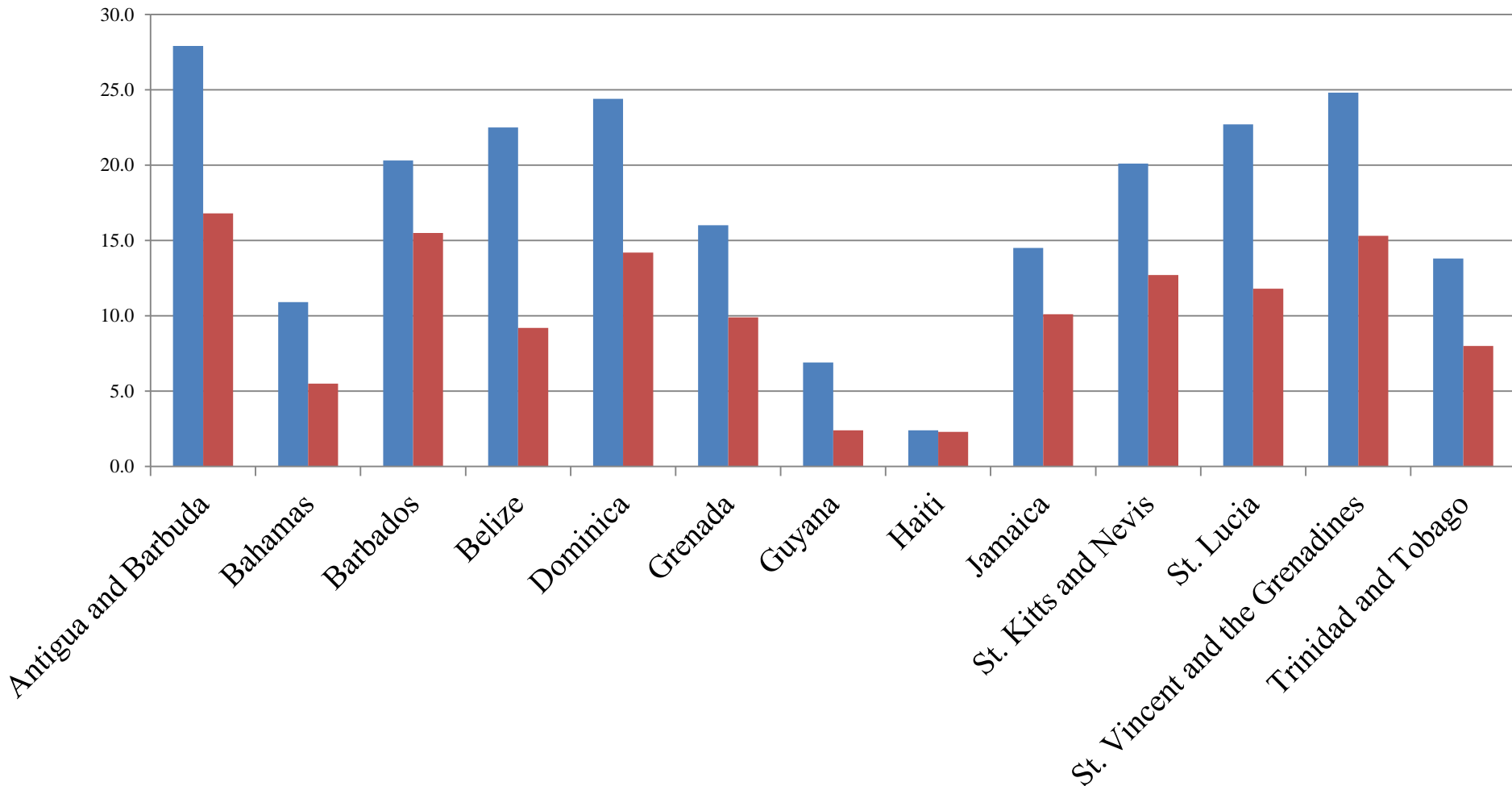
■ Lifetime ■ Past Year ■ Past Month





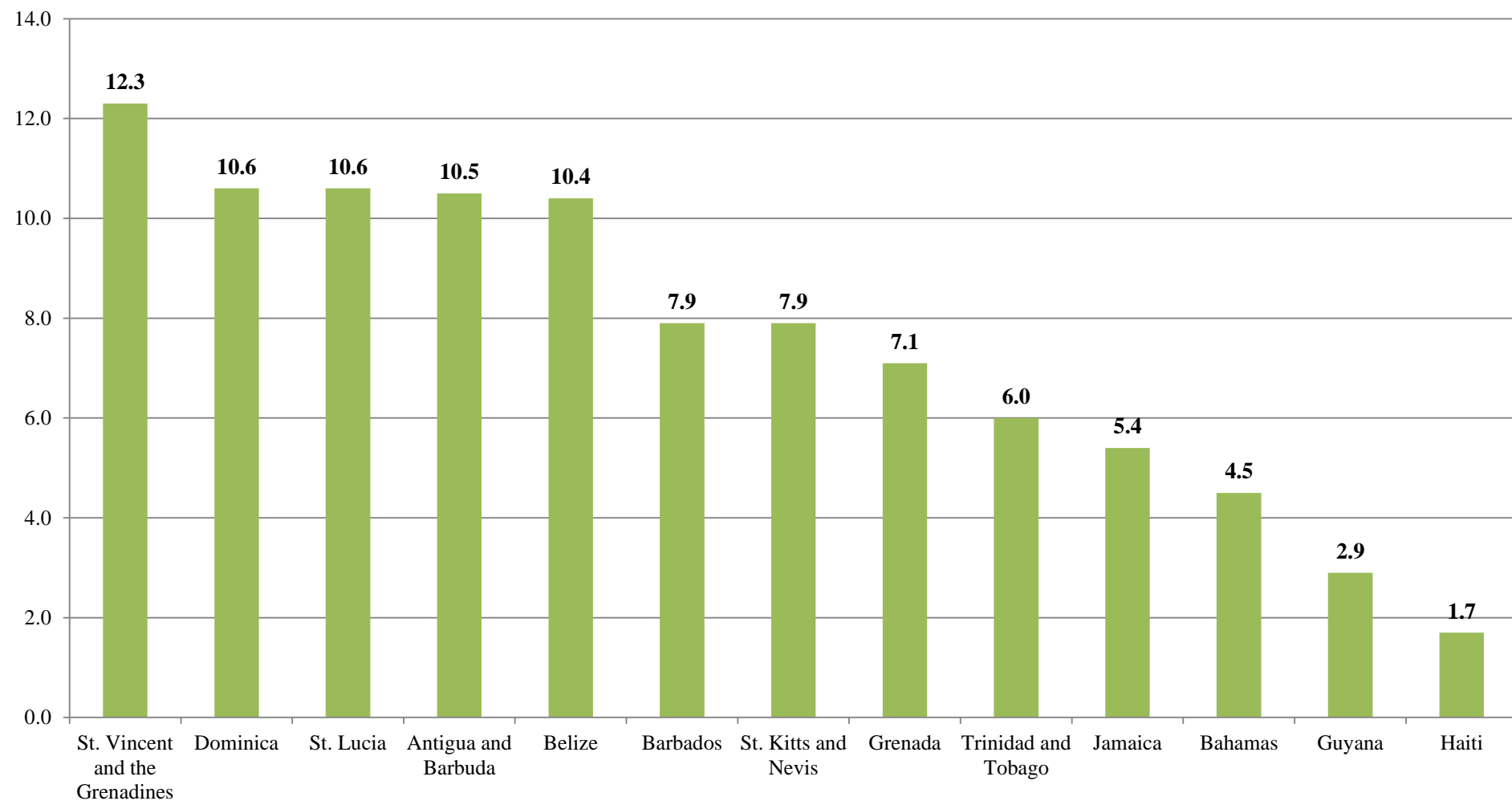
Past Year Marijuana Use by Gender

■ males ■ females





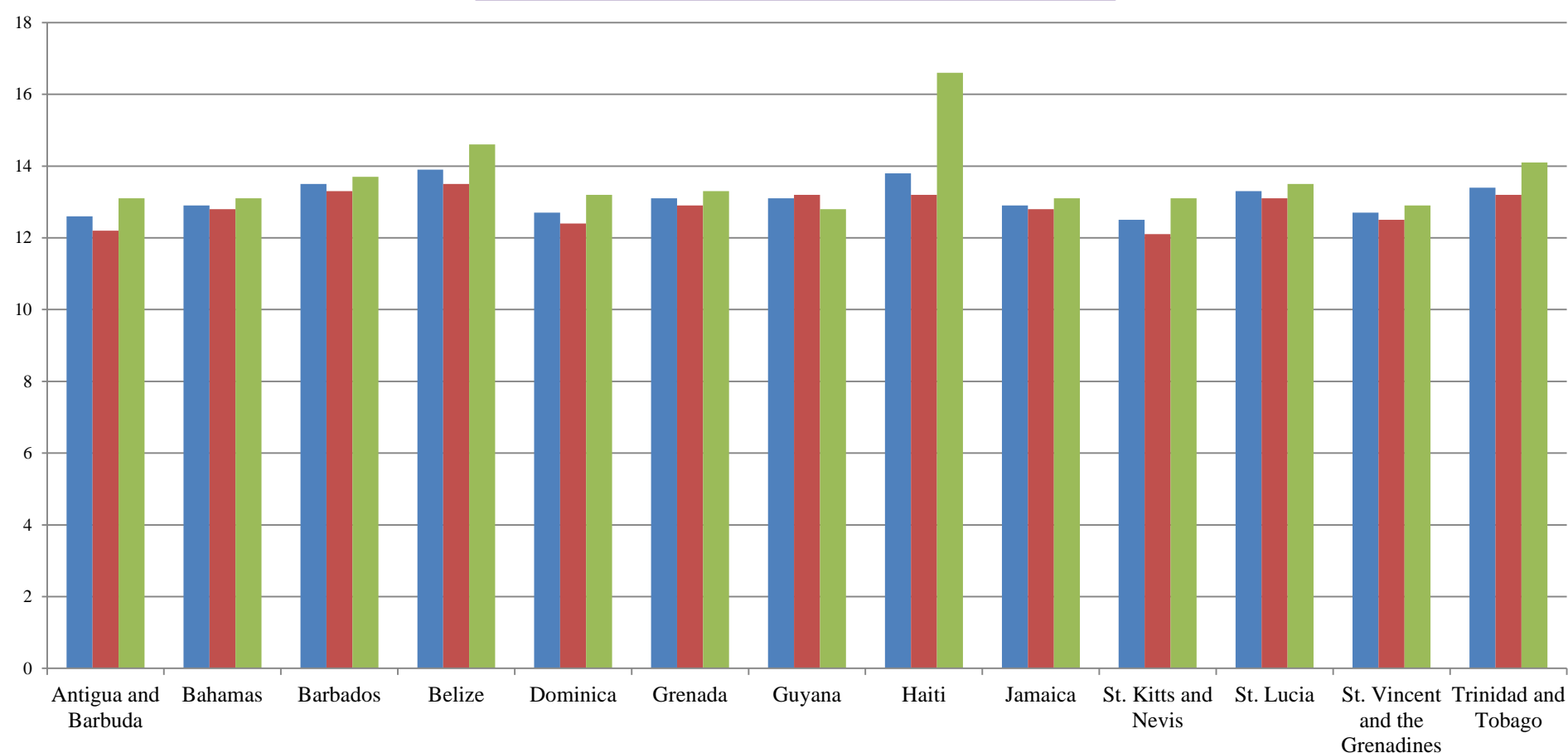
Past Year Marijuana Prevalence for Students 14 Years or Younger





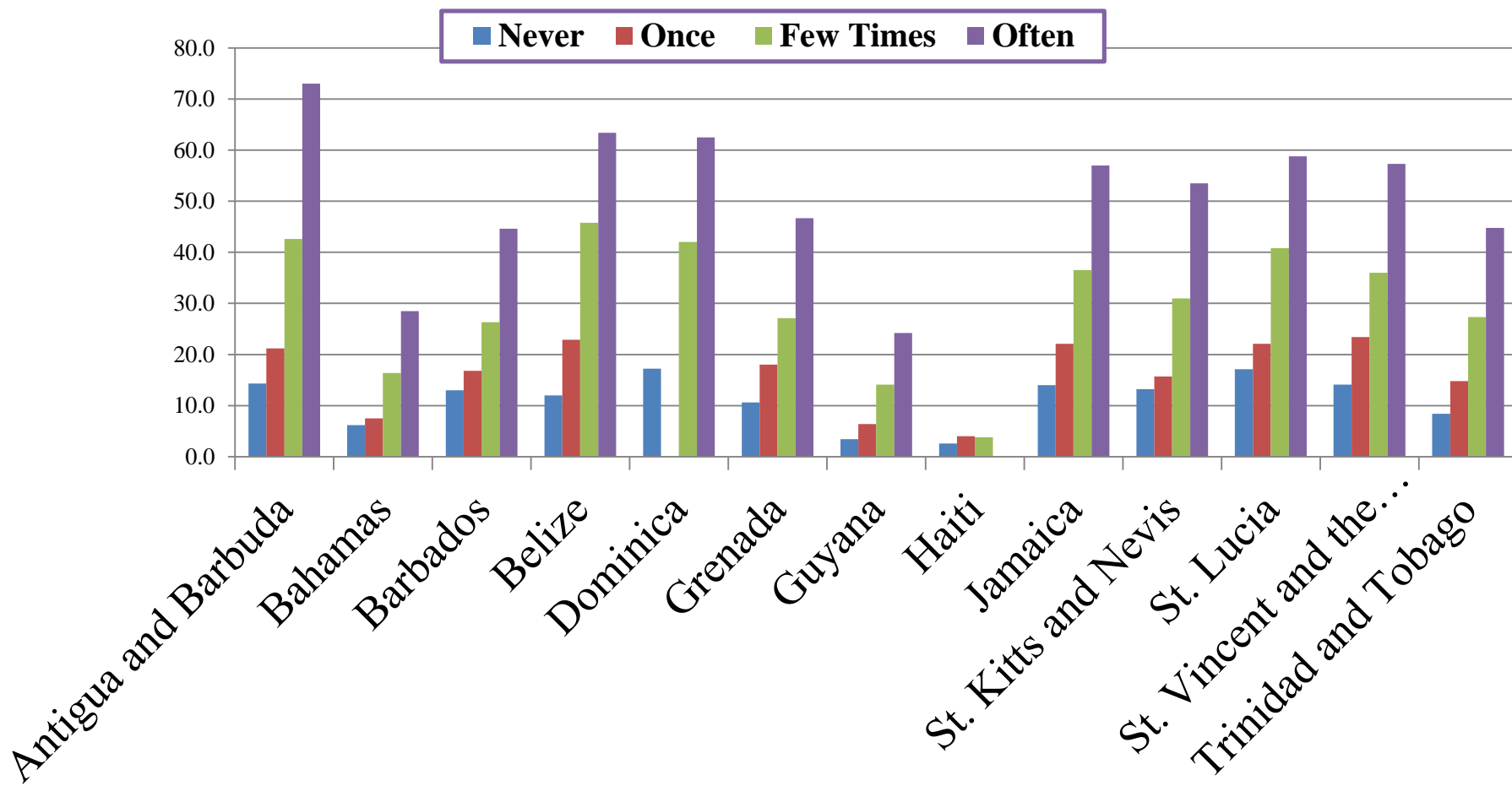
Average Age of First Use of Marijuana by Gender

■ Overall Average ■ Males ■ Females



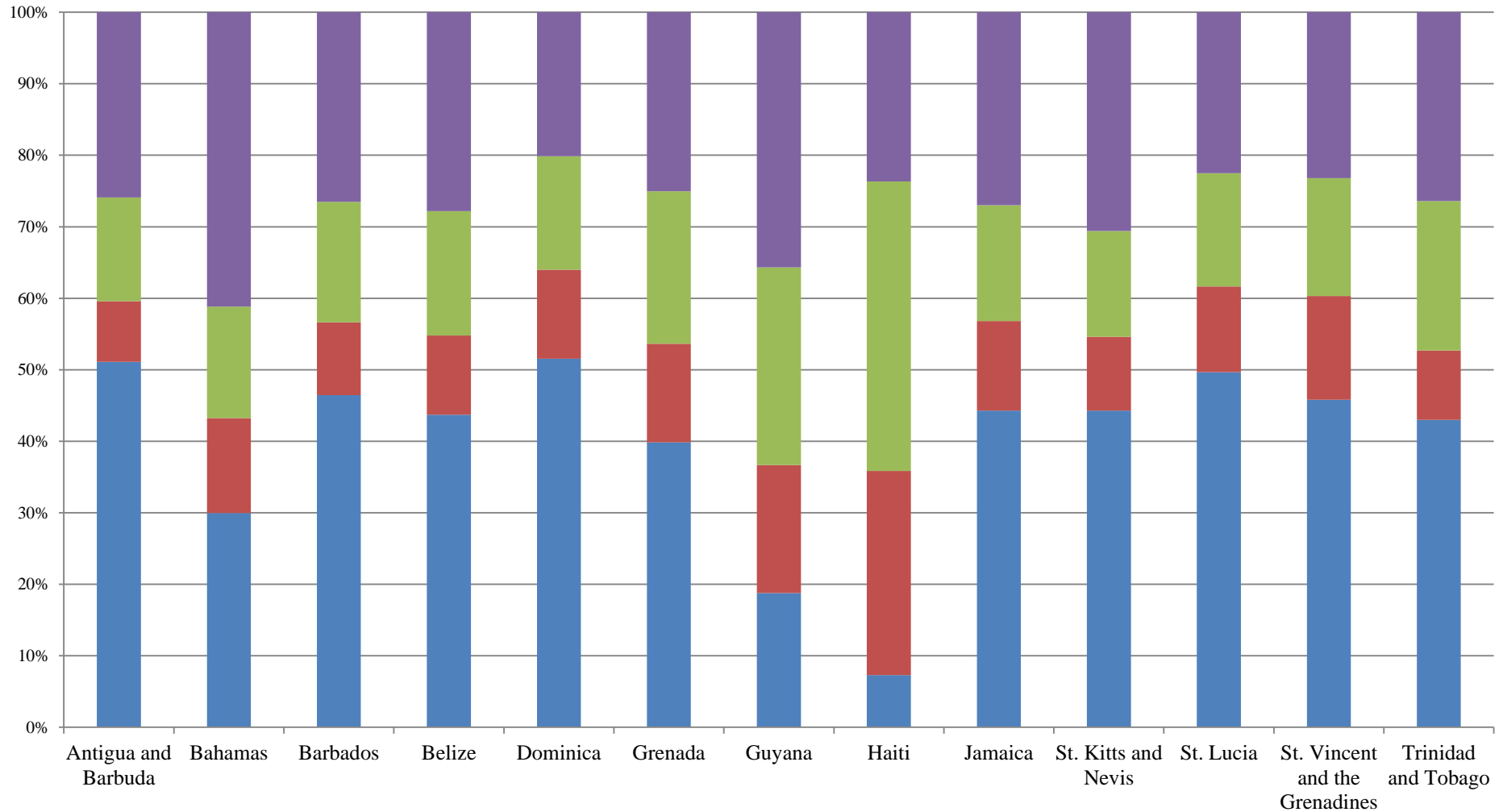


Lifetime Prevalence of Marijuana Use and Behavioral Problems



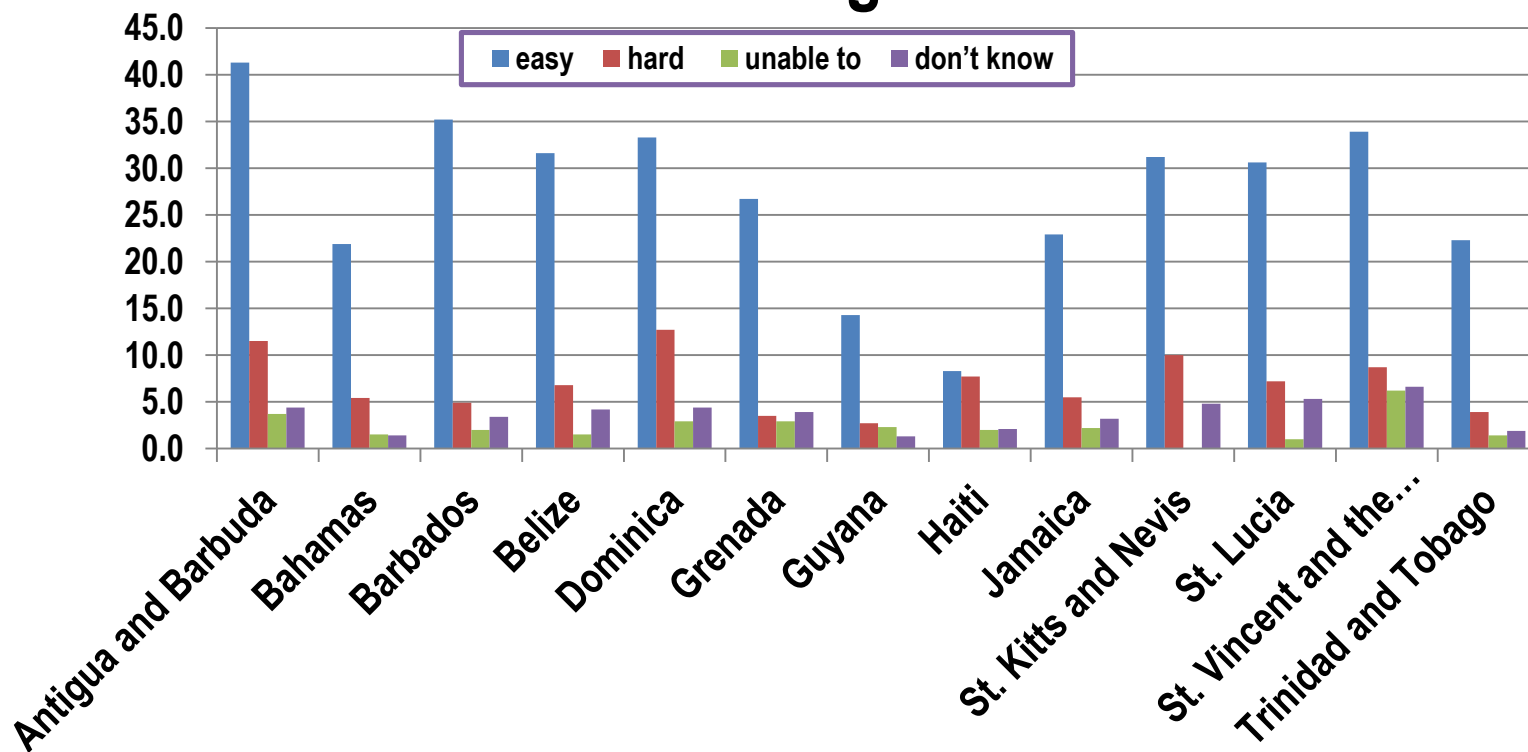


Ease of Obtaining Marijuana



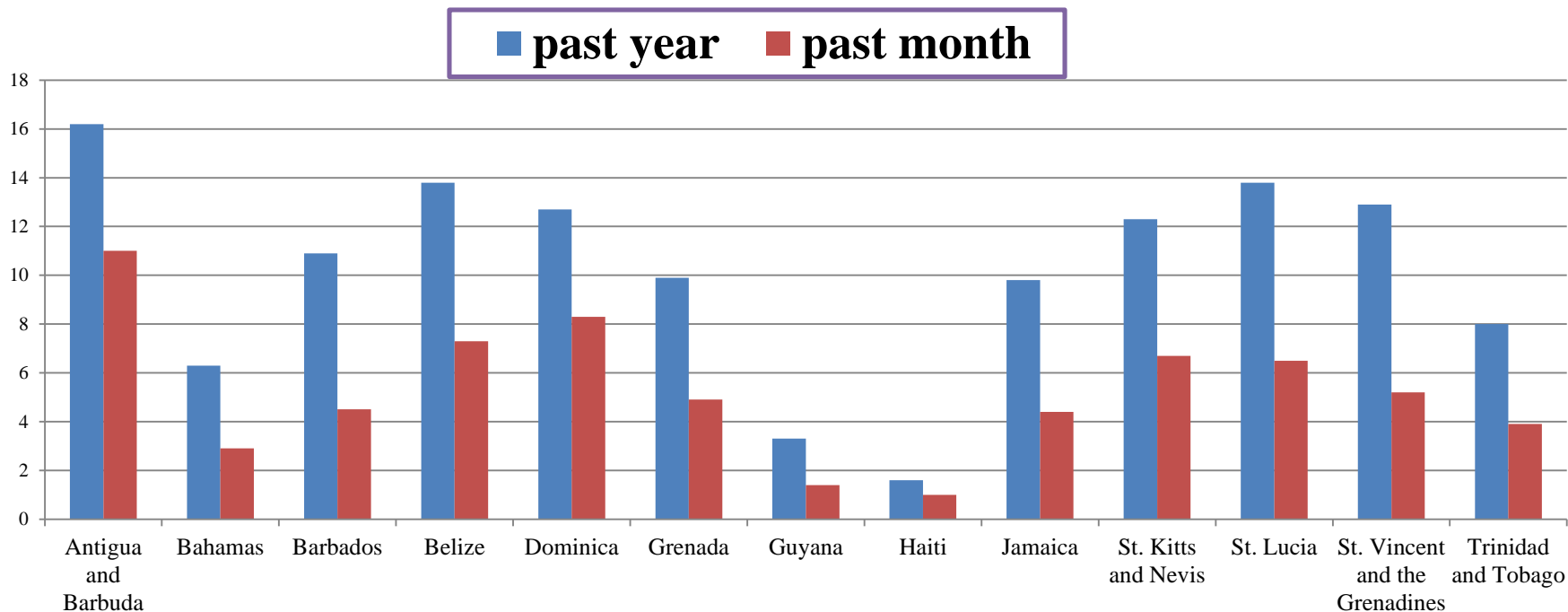


Past Year Marijuana Use by Ease of Obtaining It



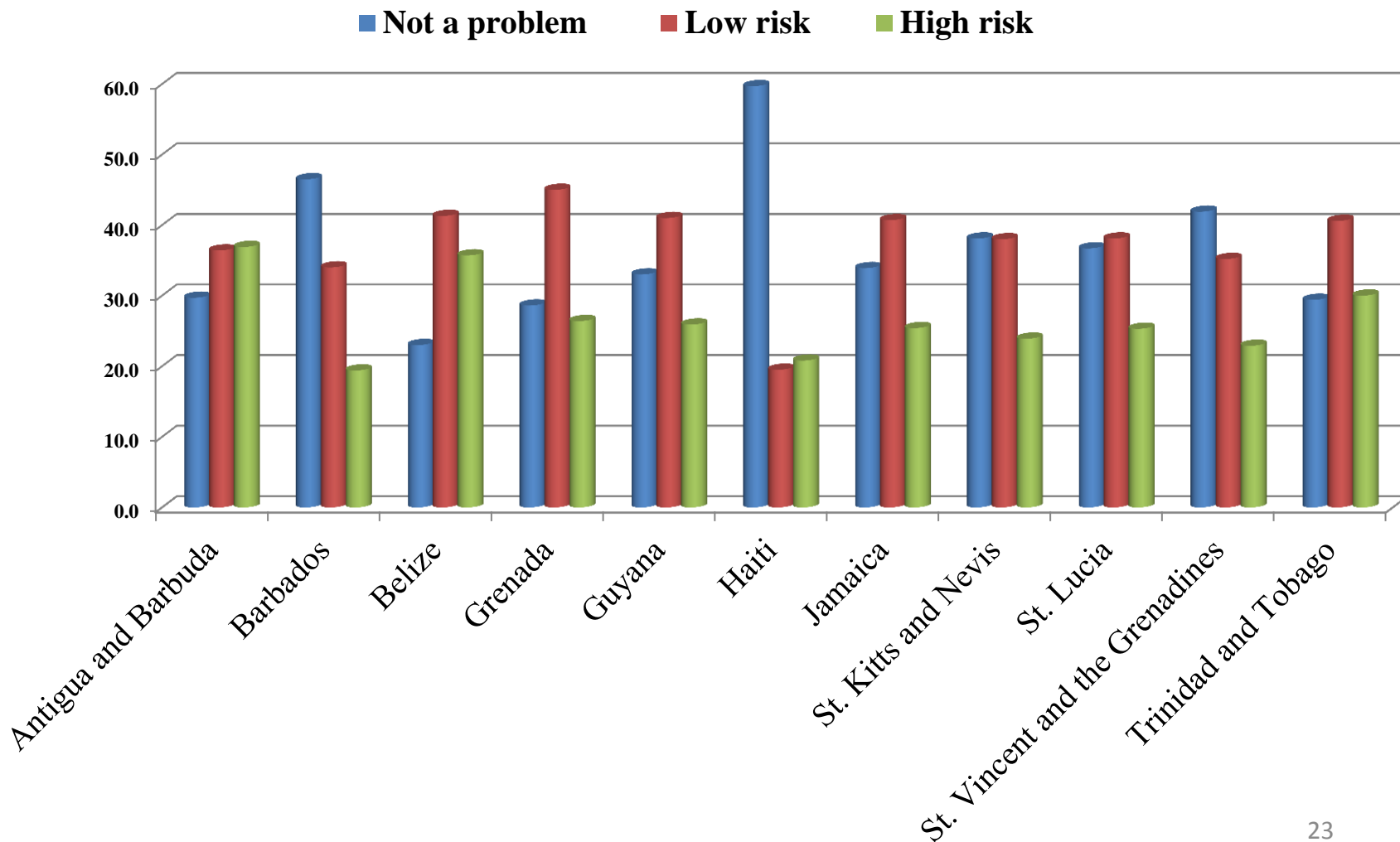


Past Year and Past Month Incidence of Marijuana Use



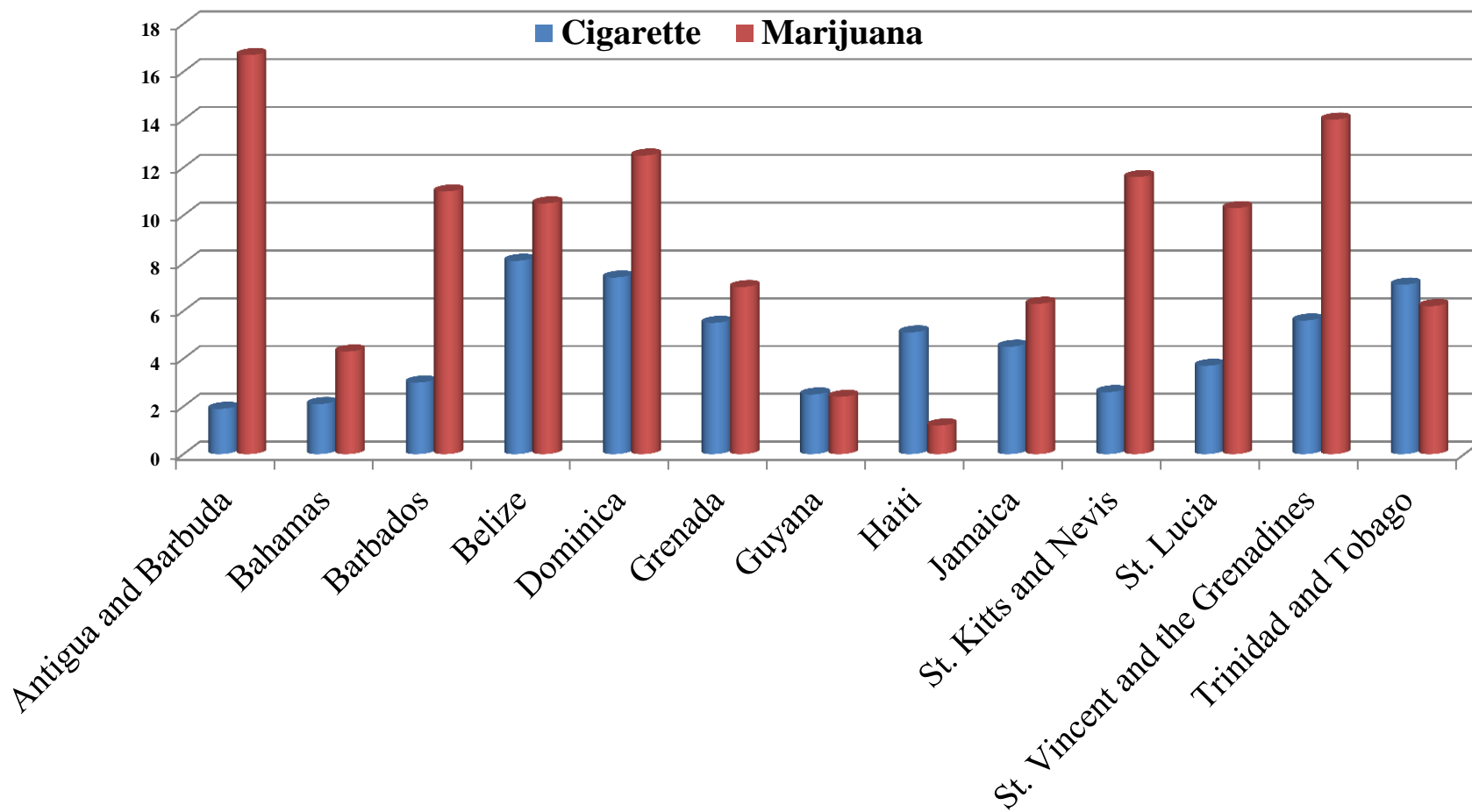


Cannabis Abuse Screening Test (CAST)



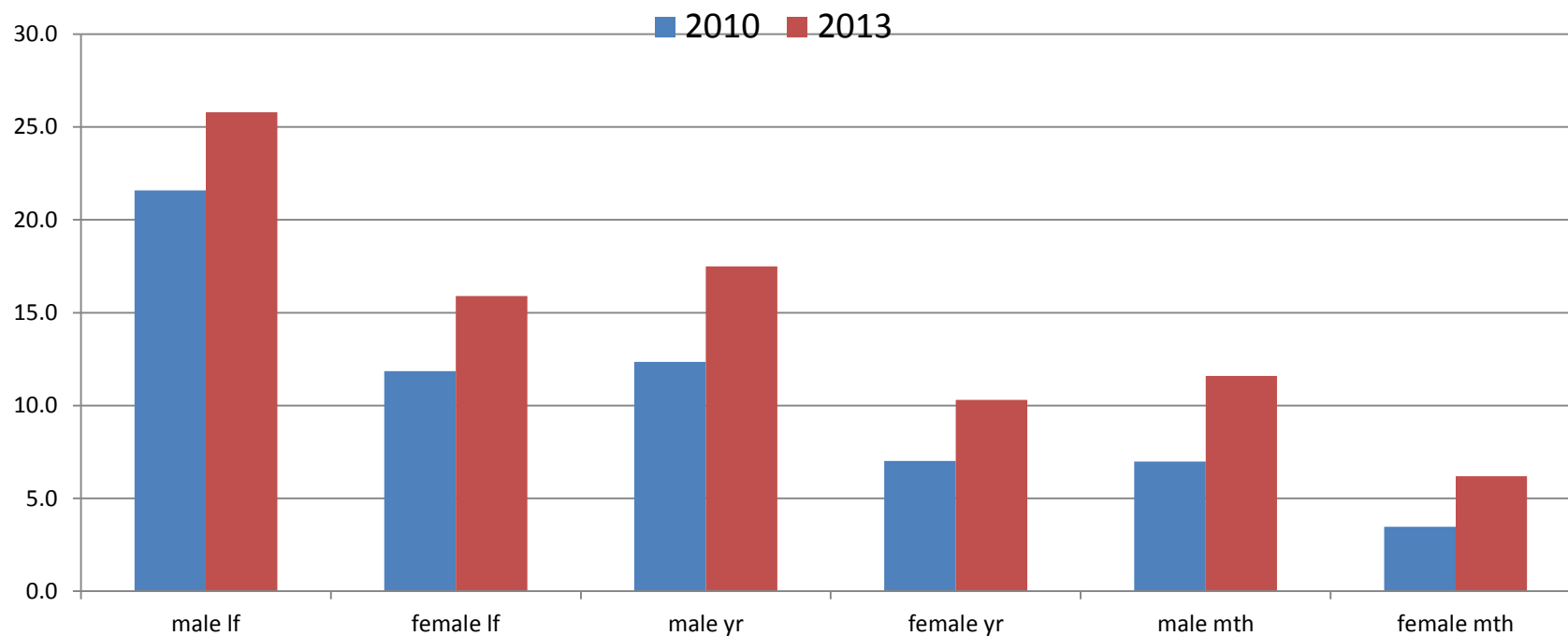


Past Month Prevalence Cigarettes Compared to Marijuana





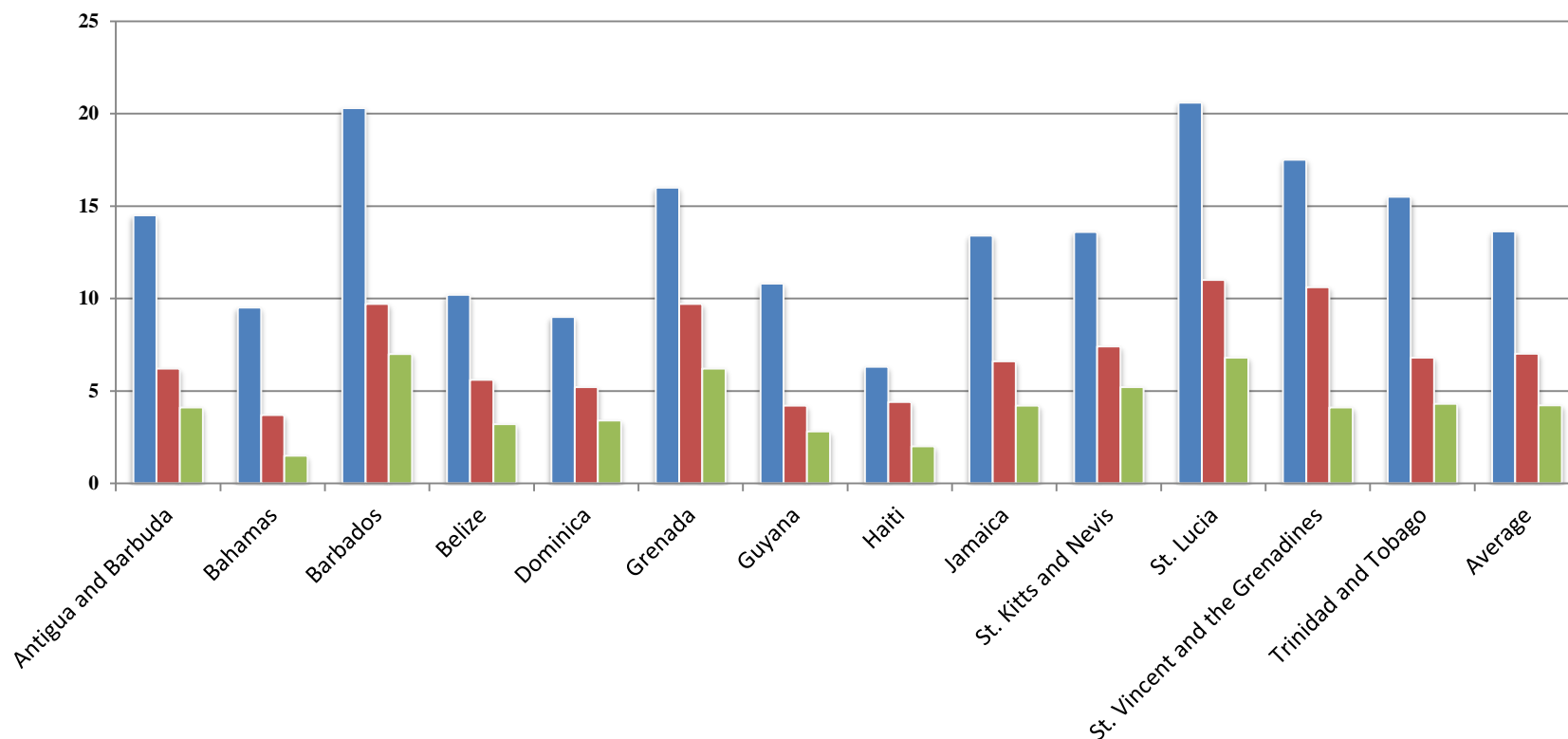
Comparison of Marijuana Use by Gender - Overall Average Prevalence





Prevalence of Inhalant Use

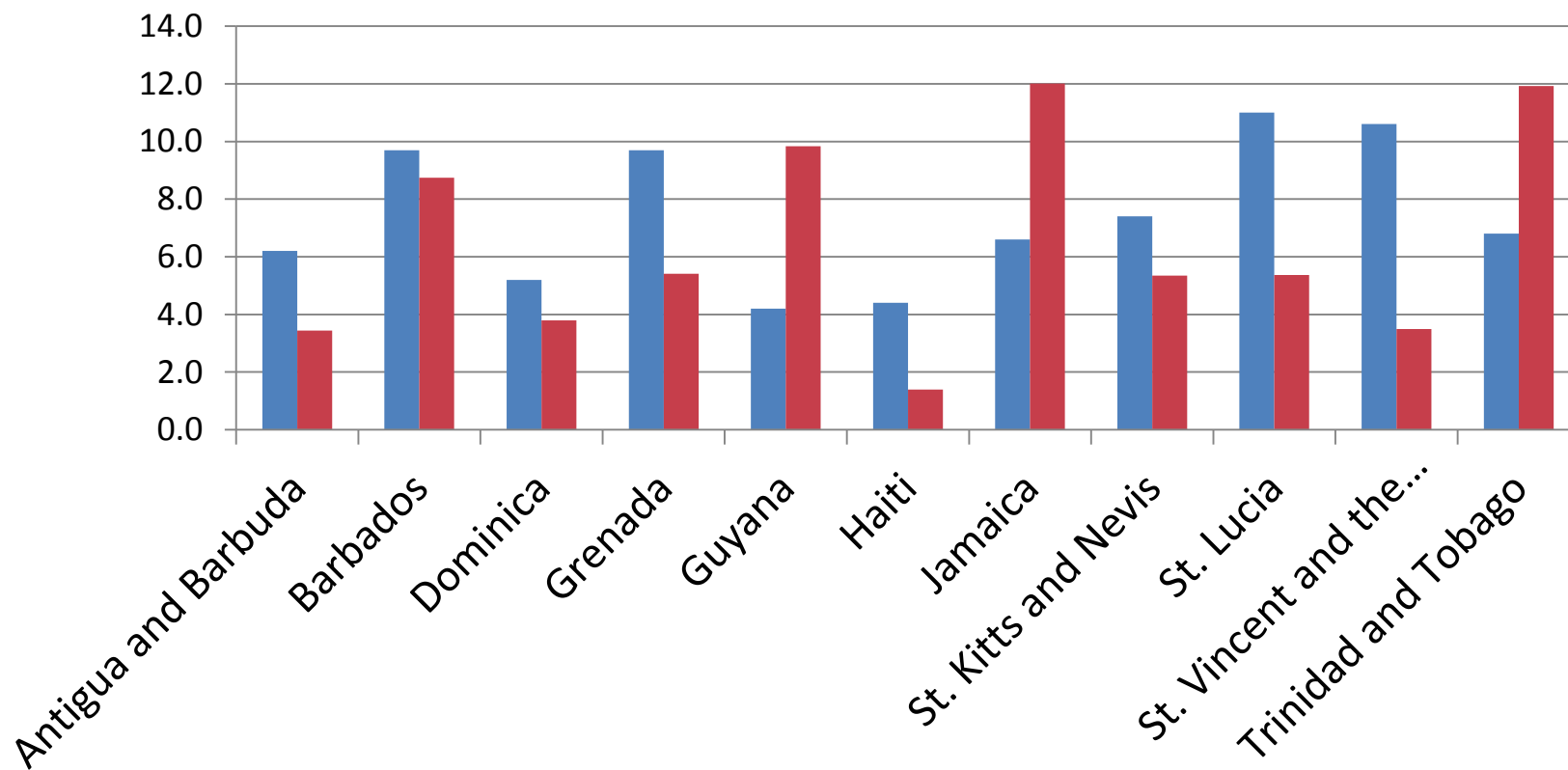
■ lifetime ■ past year ■ past month





Comparison of Inhalant Use - Past Year Prevalence

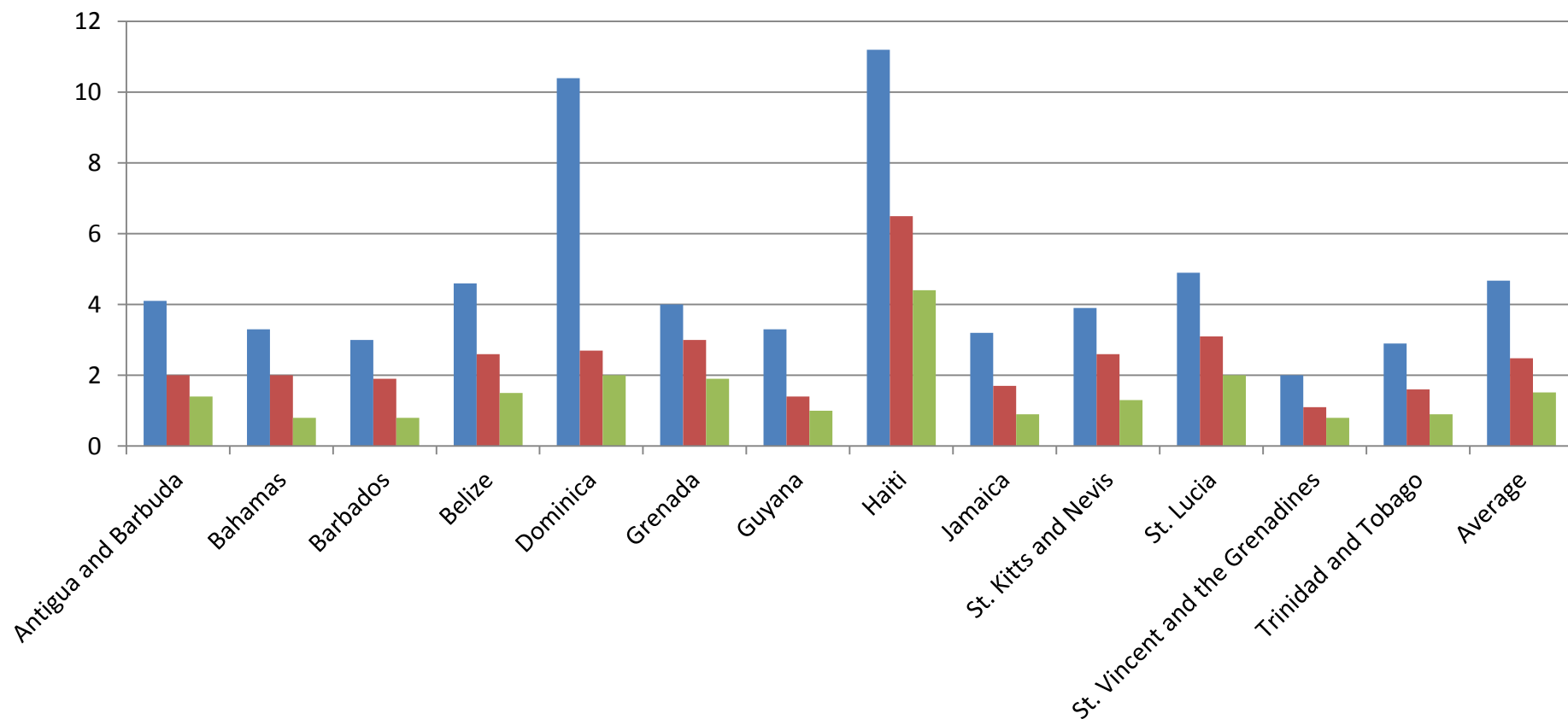
■ 2013 ■ 2010





Prevalence of Tranquilizer Use

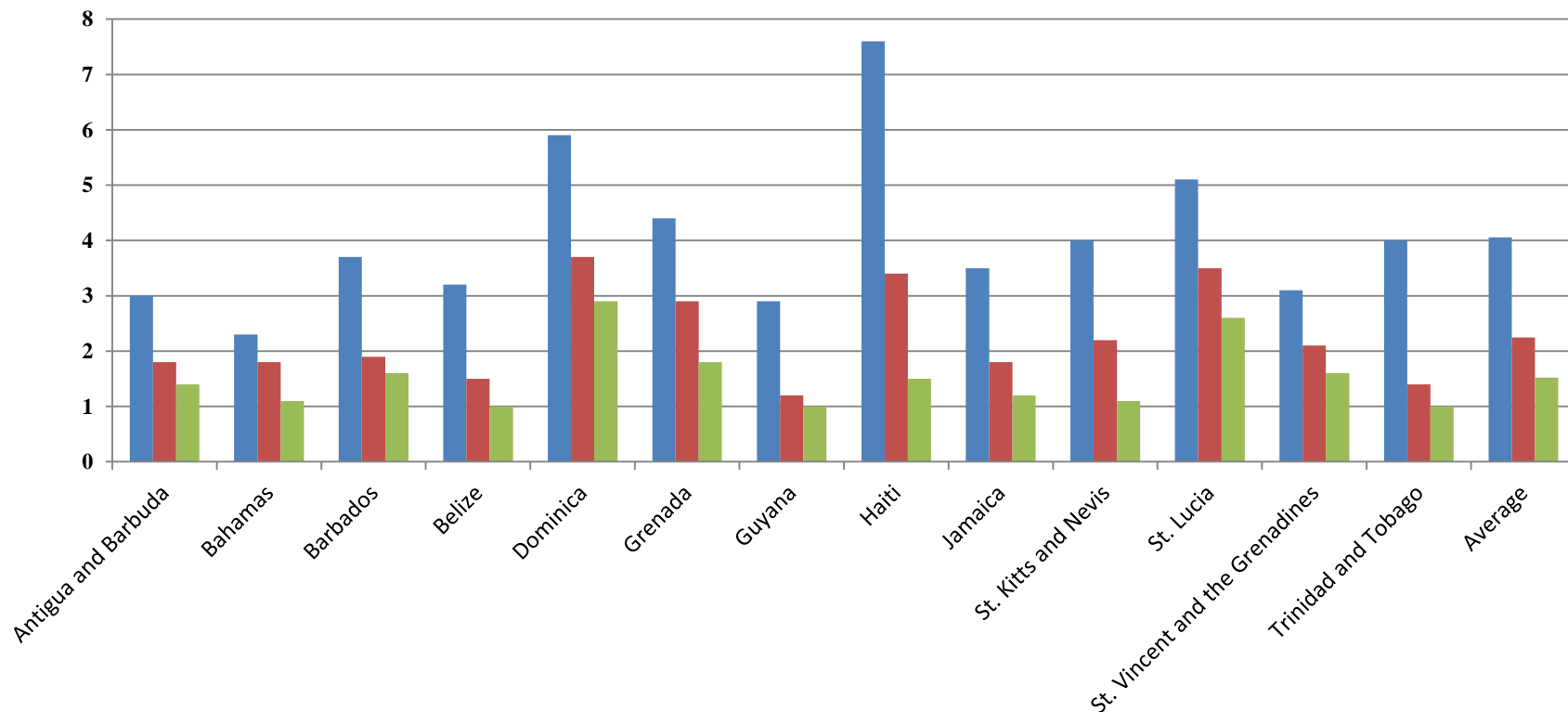
■ Lifetime ■ year ■ month





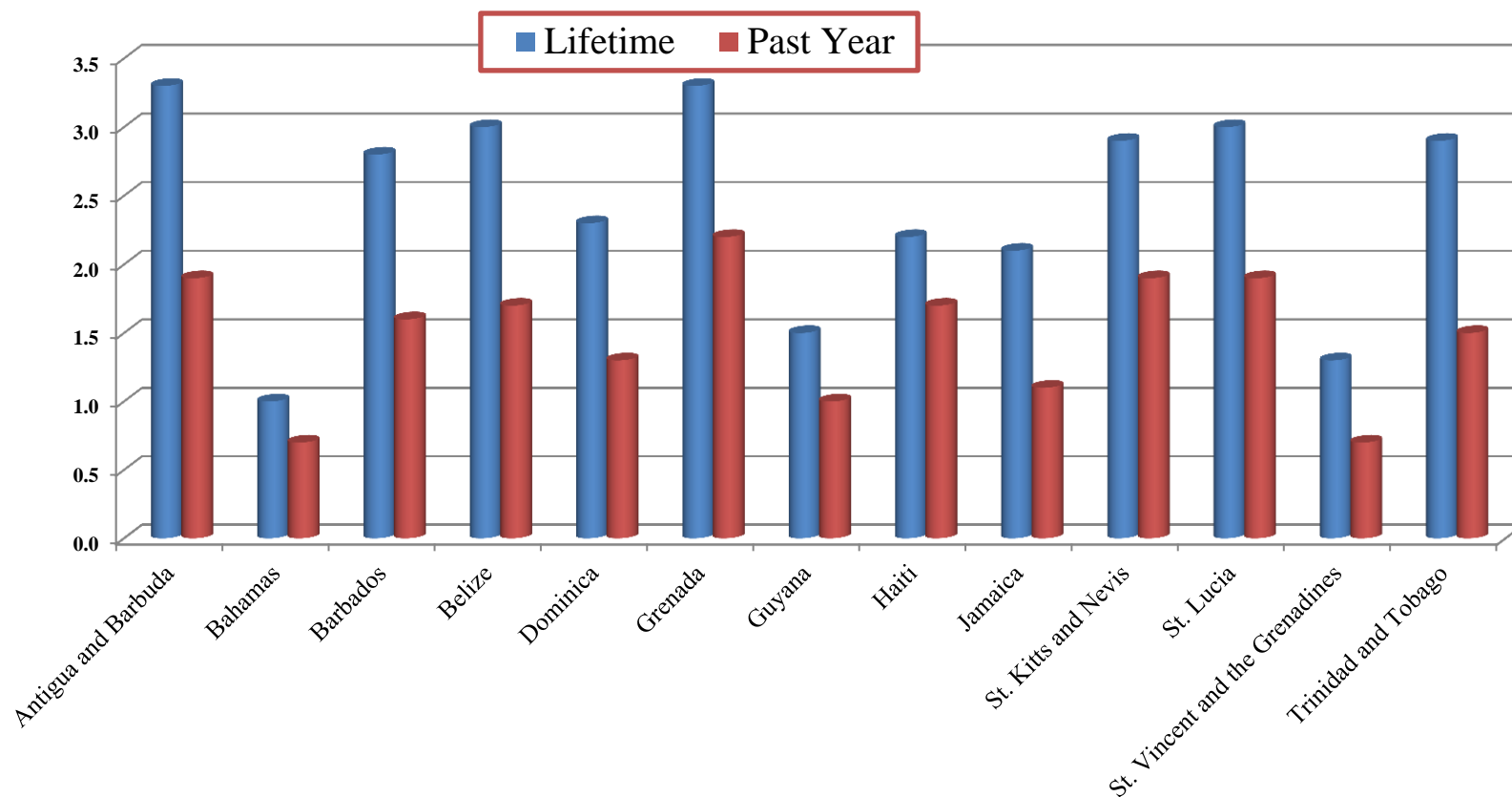
Prevalence of stimulants

■ Lifetime ■ year ■ month



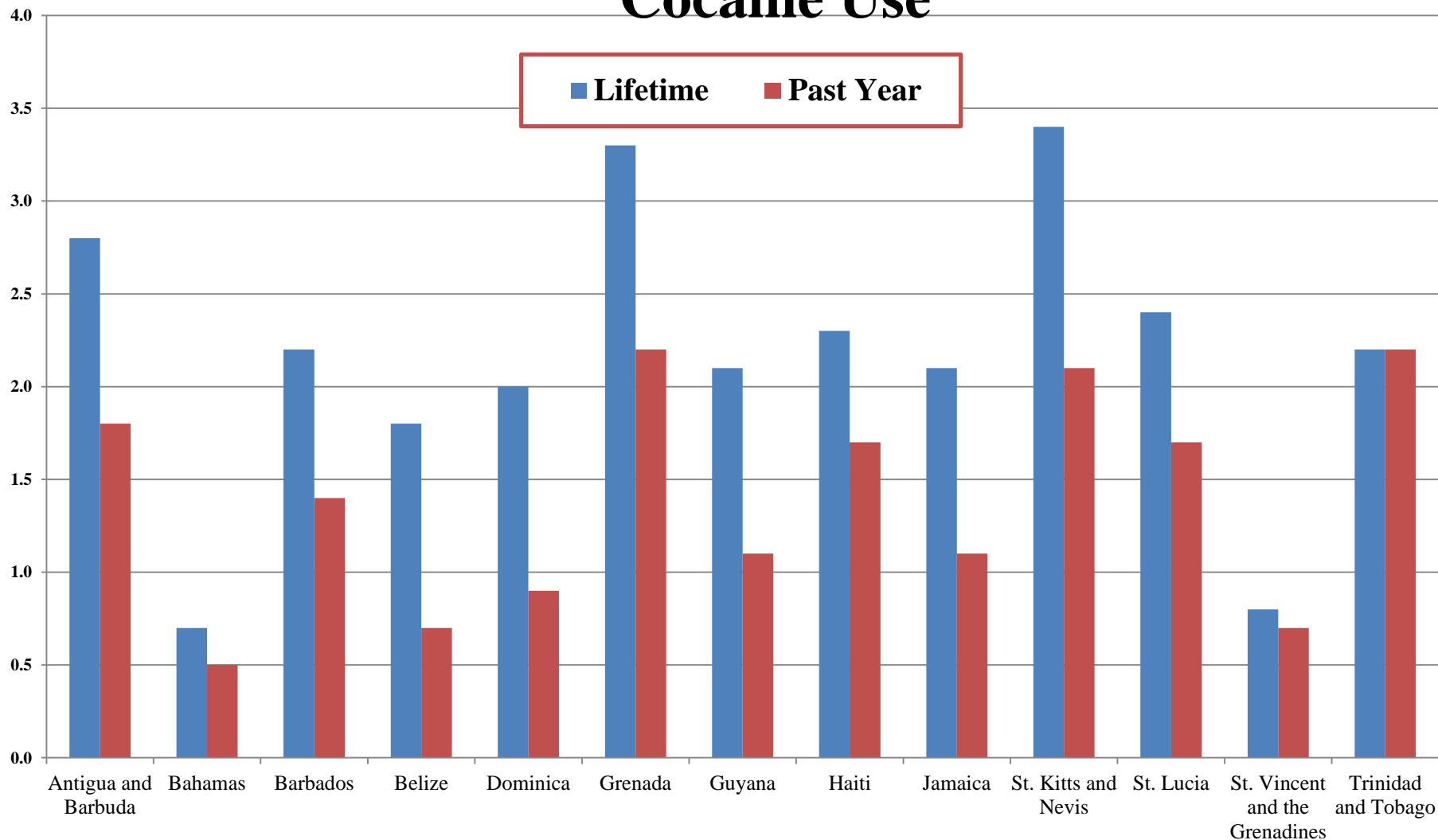


Lifetime and Past Year Prevalence of Cocaine Use



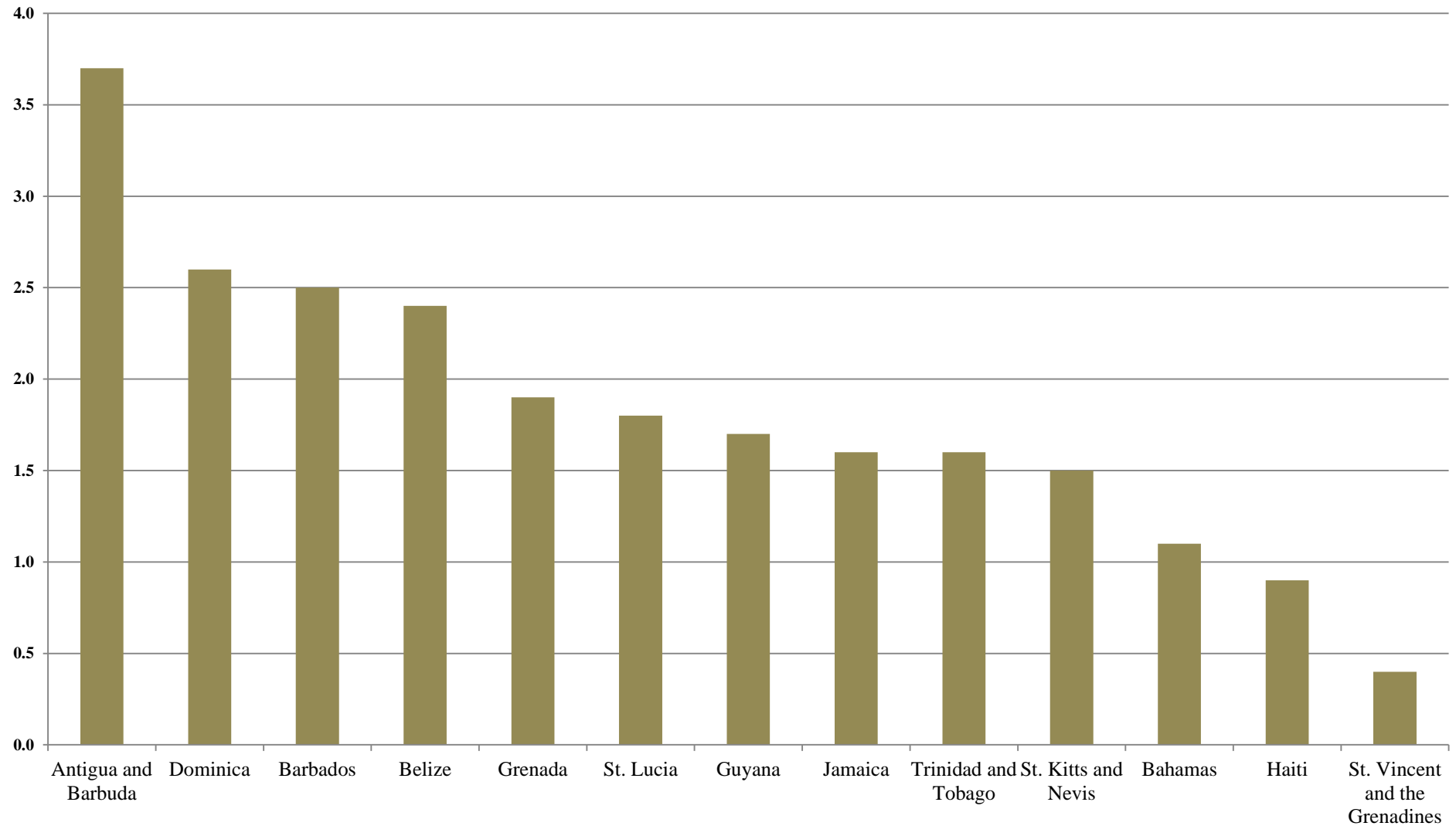


Lifetime and Past Year Prevalence of Crack Cocaine Use





Lifetime Prevalence of Ecstasy





Analysis of Results

- By far the most widely consumed substance is alcohol and this is followed by marijuana.
- Prevalence is relatively high but there is plenty of variability from country to country.
- Marijuana is the most widely used illegal substance and in most cases, its use is even more prevalent than tobacco.



Analysis of Results

- A very important finding relates to students perception of how easy it is to access drugs.
- Perception of availability of marijuana was very high-- four to five of every ten students indicated that they could access marijuana easily in most of the countries.
- Additionally, the perception of harm associated with marijuana appears to be declining among secondary school students



Analysis of Results

- Many students do not know the dangers of:
 - frequent misuse of prescription drugs
 - occasional or frequent use of inhalants
 - occasional or frequent use of ecstasy
- The most important finding about marijuana was that in most countries there was an increase in prevalence when compared to the 2010 report and at the same time there was a decline in the harm associated with marijuana use.



Population-Based Surveys

- Population surveys are important tools used to generate epidemiological information on drug use
- The Caribbean has benefitted from the standardized school surveys developed by CICAD – they allow cross country comparisons to be made



Researchers and Policy Makers

- “There is often an uneasy relationship between researchers and policy practitioners. Each looks at the world through different colored lenses.”

(Edwards 2004)

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What is the perspective of researchers?

- There is a lack of Government interest in research
- Quite often there are impediments to researchers accessing data held within bureaucracies
- There is an anti-intellectual approach adopted within government
- There is a risk averse attitude to findings that practitioners could see as embarrassing to the Minister of the government
- Short time frames under which governments operate lead to preferences for immediate 'instrumentalist' policy advice.....in other words all we need are good ideas



What about policy makers?

- Research often deals with issues other than those that are central to and directly relevant to the political and policy debate
- It fails to take the reality of many people's lives into account when identifying research questions
- It is often driven by ideology paraded as intellectual inquiry rather than genuinely seeking to evaluate or interpret impact



How can we influence policy?

Identify stakeholders who *should* be influenced by the results.

Engage them early in the planning process for the research project.

Having a relevant Government agency (or NGO) involved in the project helps.

Determine how the results will feed into the policy making process in your country.

Research results must be followed by ACTION.



Policy Implications

There are serious prevention education implications for the findings related to perception of harm related to substance use. e.g. Marijuana perceptions appear to be changing.

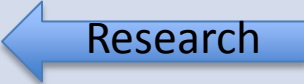

In relation to other regions, the prevalence of use of some of these substances particularly marijuana and inhalants, is relatively high. How do we address this?

The age of first use estimates are fairly consistent across countries so the specific point in time where prevention programs intervene can also be fairly uniform. We think that the primary school to secondary school transition is a critical time for intervention.



SAMHSA Strategic Prevention Framework

SAMHSA has designed a planning process for preventing substance misuse:

- Assess Needs: What is the problem, and how can I learn more? 
- Build Capacity: What do I have to work with?
- Plan: What should I do and how should I do it?
- How can I put my plan into action?
- Is my plan succeeding? 



Guiding Principles

Cultural competence: The ability to interact effectively with members of your population

Sustainability: The process of achieving and maintaining long-term results.



Distinctive Features

Data driven

Dynamic

Focused on population-level change

Considers prevention across the lifespan

Reliant on a team approach



In Conclusion, we need to complete the cycle



Acknowledgements



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Country-Specific Contributions

- **Antigua & Barbuda:** Dr. John Swift, Consultant, and Ms. Norma Jeffrey Dorsett, Substance Abuse Prevention Officer.
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Thank you for your attention