



17th St. & Constitution Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006
United States of America

Organization of American States

P. 202.458.3000
www.oas.org

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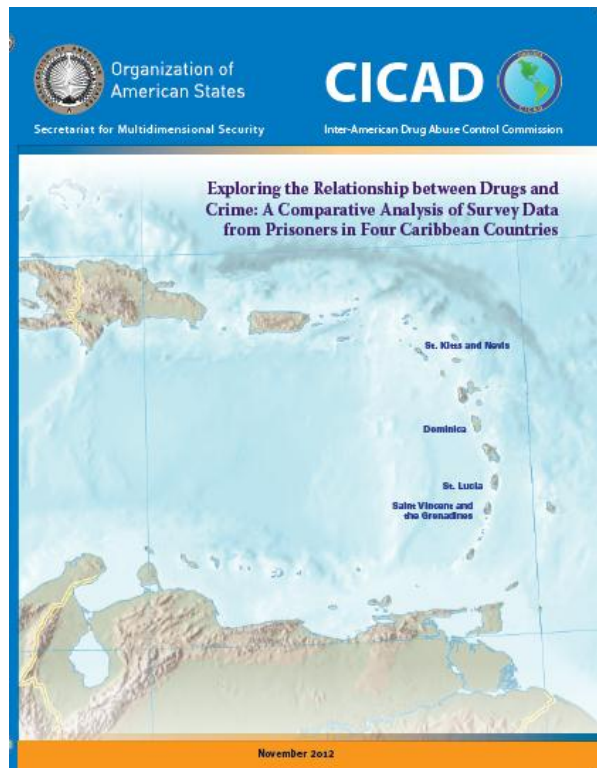
**EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DRUGS AND CRIME
SURVEY OF ADULT PRISONERS IN FOUR CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES
KEN-GARFIELD DOUGLAS, OID CONSULTANT, CICAD**



Organization of
American States

Exploring the Relationship between Drugs and Crime

OAS/CICAD Survey of Adult Prisoners in four
Caribbean Countries



Dominica

St Kitts and Nevis

St Lucia

St Vincent and the Grenadines

*Ken-Garfield Douglas,
PhD*



Acknowledgements

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Background

- Overwhelming evidence supports the idea that there is an association between drugs and crime.
- This association is not a simple one of causation, but one that is best explained by the model of common cause in which the association has a cluster of causes
- This study therefore is an exploratory and diagnostic study to contribute to determining the extent of the relations or links between criminal behavior and drugs
- It was conducted in four countries of the Caribbean: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Dominica, and Saint Lucia.



Three models of the link between drugs and crime was used to explore this relationship

- The psychopharmacological model pointing to drug use on the day the crime is committed
- The economic-compulsive model, which assumes that drug users commit crimes to finance their drug use—the compelling and recurrent need for drugs and their high price lead some users to commit crimes to obtain the money they need to buy drugs.
- The systemic link posits that violence is an integral part of the illegal drug distribution market—the profit opportunities perceived by the various players in the market and the fierce competition in this illegal environment encourage involvement in crimes such as disputes between dealers, problems involved in recovering debts



General objectives of the survey

- To determine the prevalence of reported psychoactive substance use among inmates
- To determine the prevalence and patterns of criminal offending among inmates
- To explore the relationship between drug use and criminal offending



Objectives

- This study does not seek to establish a causal relationship between drug use and crime—and it is important for the investigators to bare in mind at all times the fact that not all drug users are criminals, nor are all criminal acts committed by drug users.
- Also important to note is the fact that drug crimes are crimes that break drug laws, for example, possession and trafficking or possession with intent to supply) while drug related crimes can be any type of crime committed in the context of drug use or dealing in drugs –for example, property offences, violent offences or public order offences.



Methodology

- The study represents the first multi-centric study of drugs, crime and related issues among prisoners in four Caribbean countries.
- The surveys, which were conducted in March and April 2012, covered both adult inmates who were remanded into custody (awaiting trial) and those who had been convicted.
- The design was that of a cross-sectional, descriptive survey using proportional stratified random sampling except in the case of Dominica where a census was carried out).
- Direct interviewing was done by trained interviewers



The data collection instrument consists of a pre-coded questionnaire, to assess the following areas:

- 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of the population under study
- 2. Legal status of the prisoner
- 3. The main drugs consumed within the prison, their traits, their impact on the prisoner, and their link to violence, both outside and within the prison, according to the prisoner
- 4. Incidences of drug consumption among the prison population and the main consumption traits (history of use)

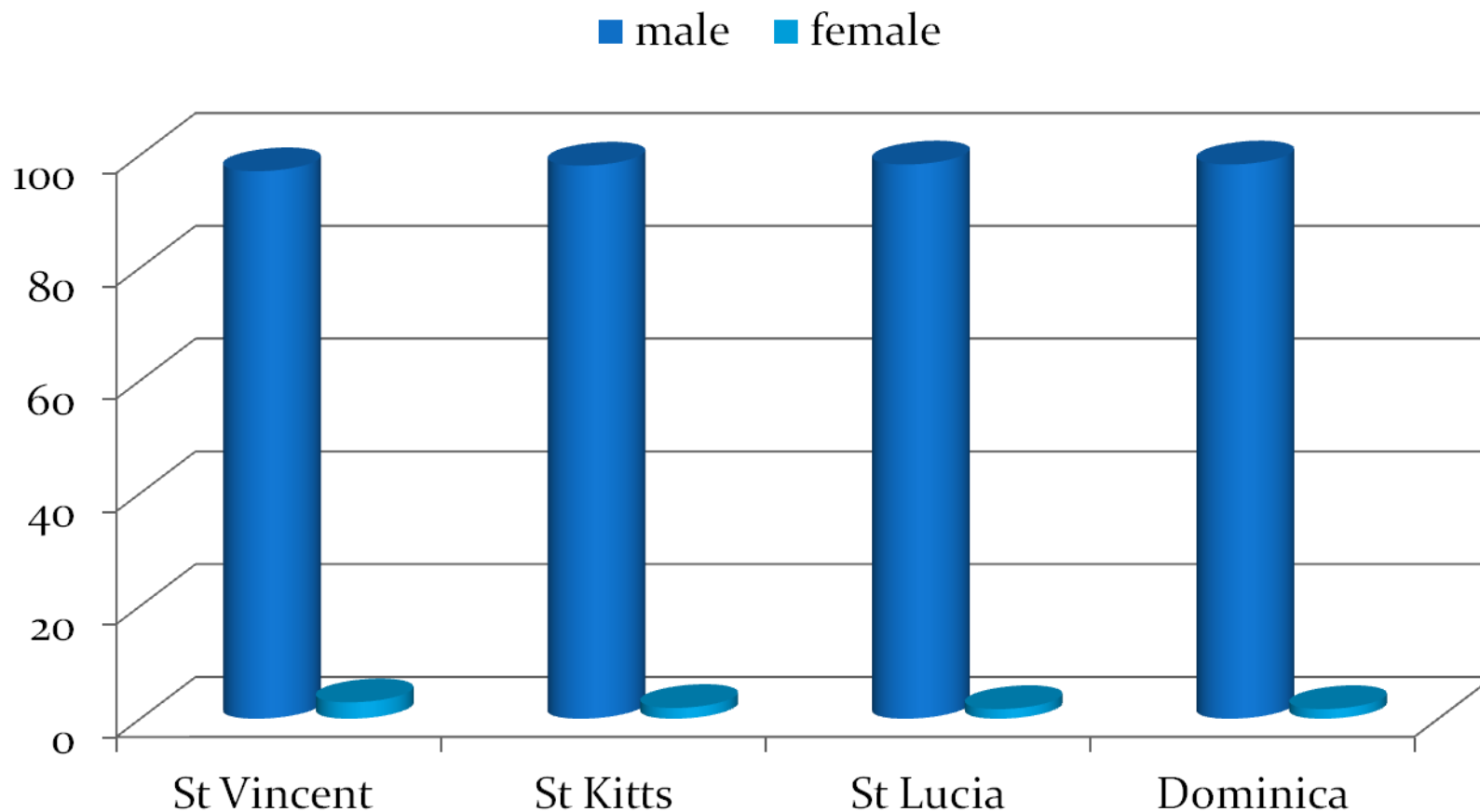


The data collection instrument consists of a pre-coded questionnaire, to assess the following areas:

- 5. Changes in consumption patters, during his/her time in prison
- 6. Link between crime and drug consumption, and its classification, criminal background of each individual under study
- 7. Impact of drug consumption and the criminal act on the prisoner's personal and family life
- 8. Proportion of problematic consumption and treatment needs of the prison population under study

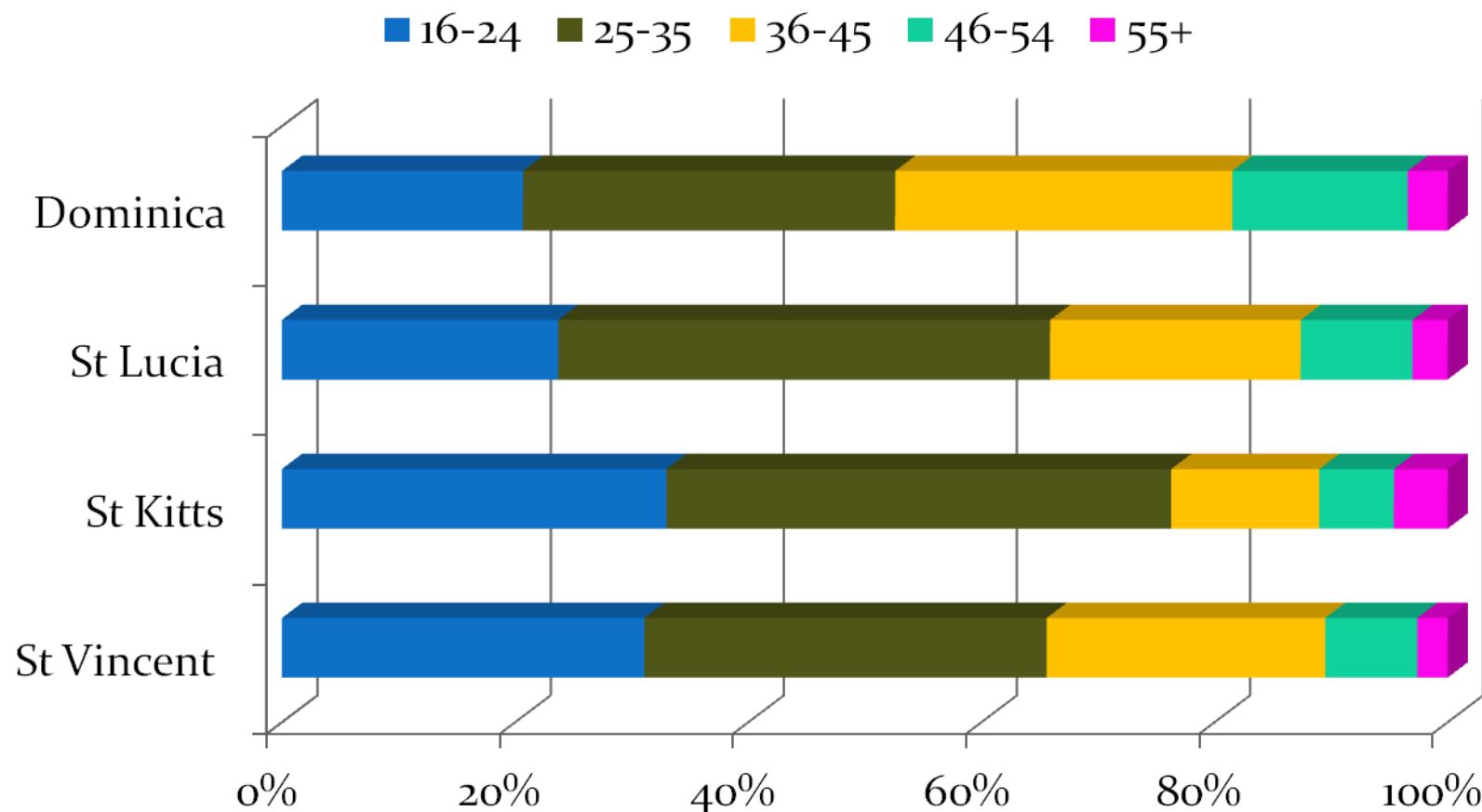


Demographics



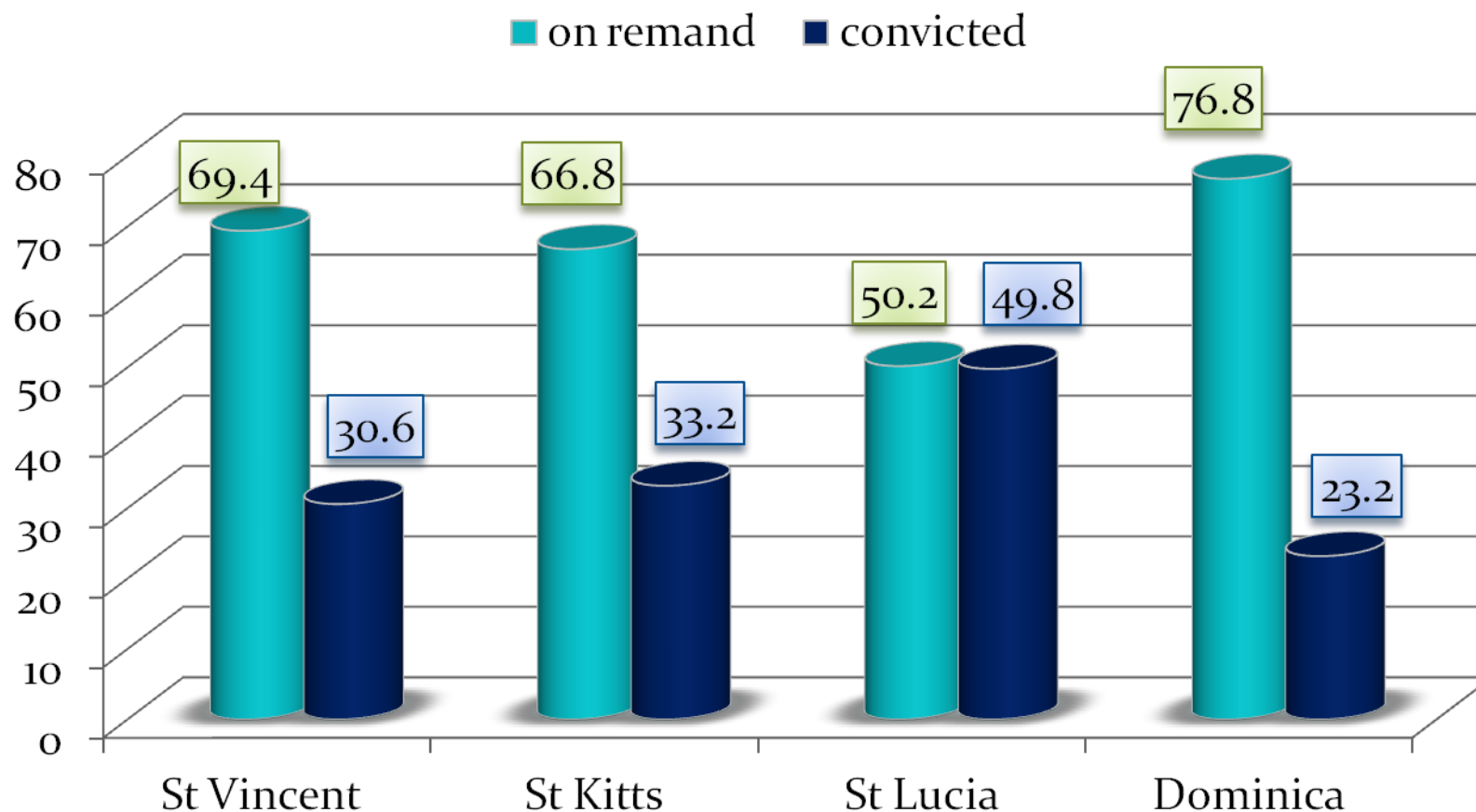


Age grouping





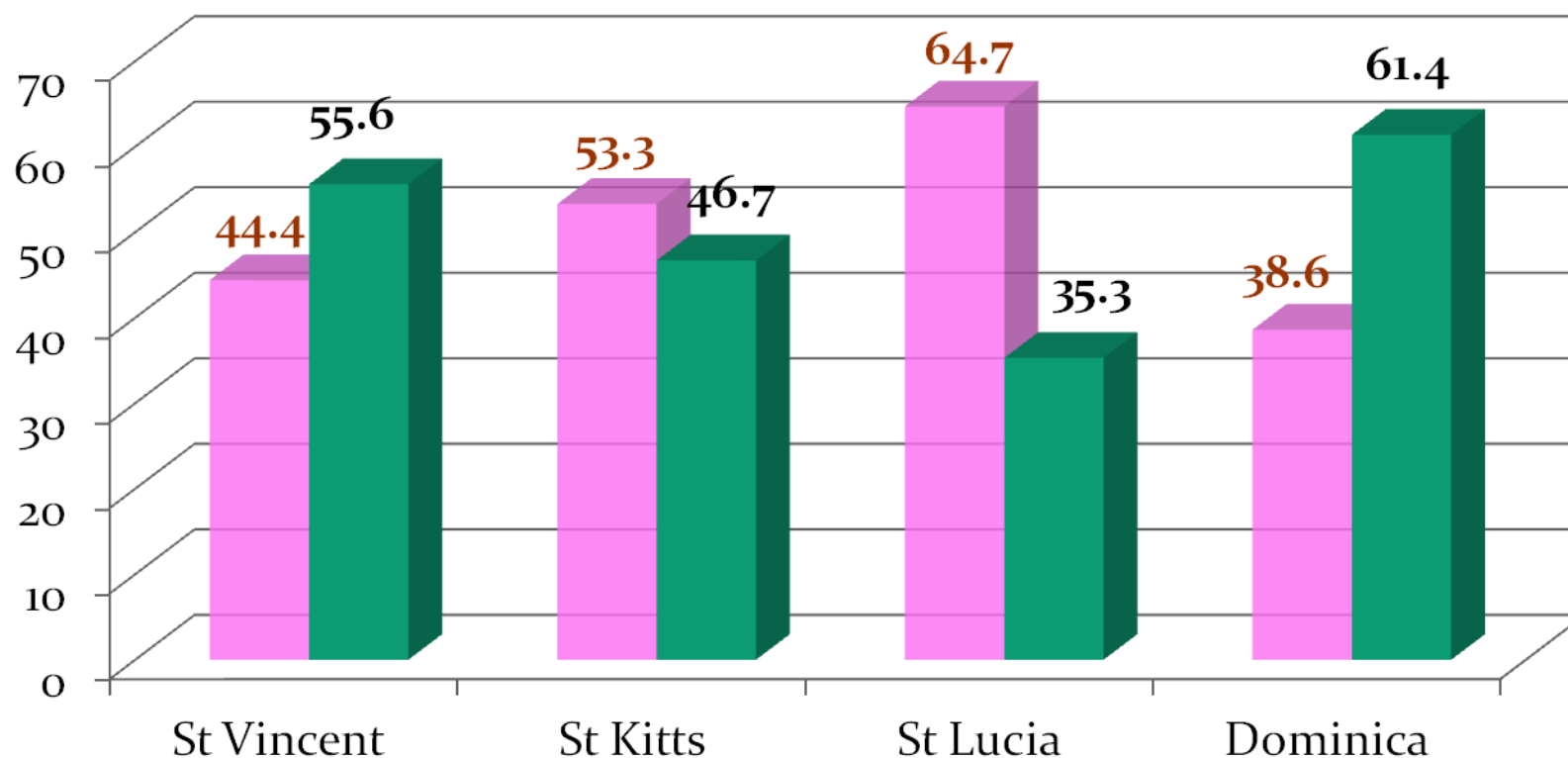
Status of imprisonment





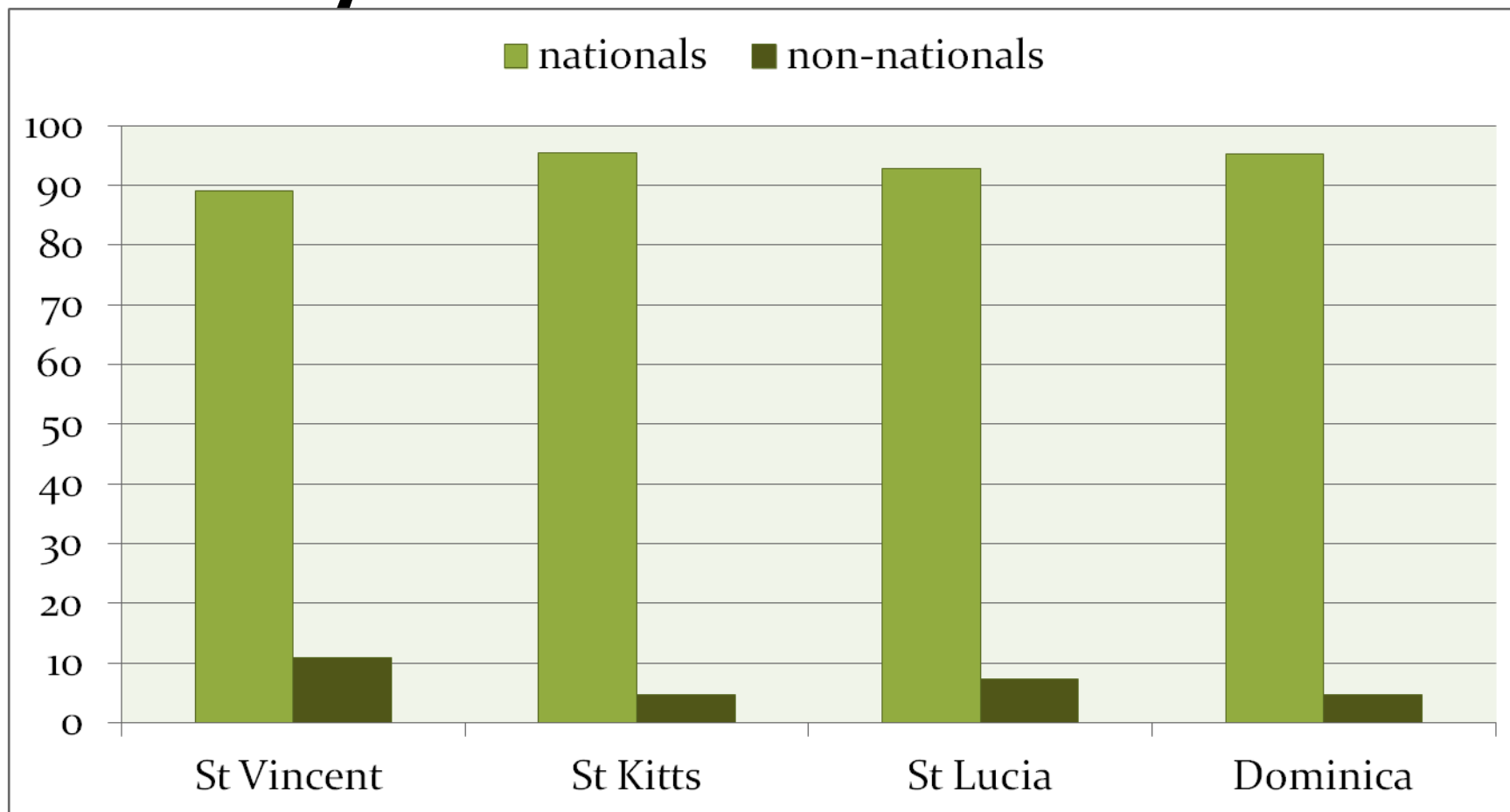
Type of offender

■ first timer ■ repeat offender





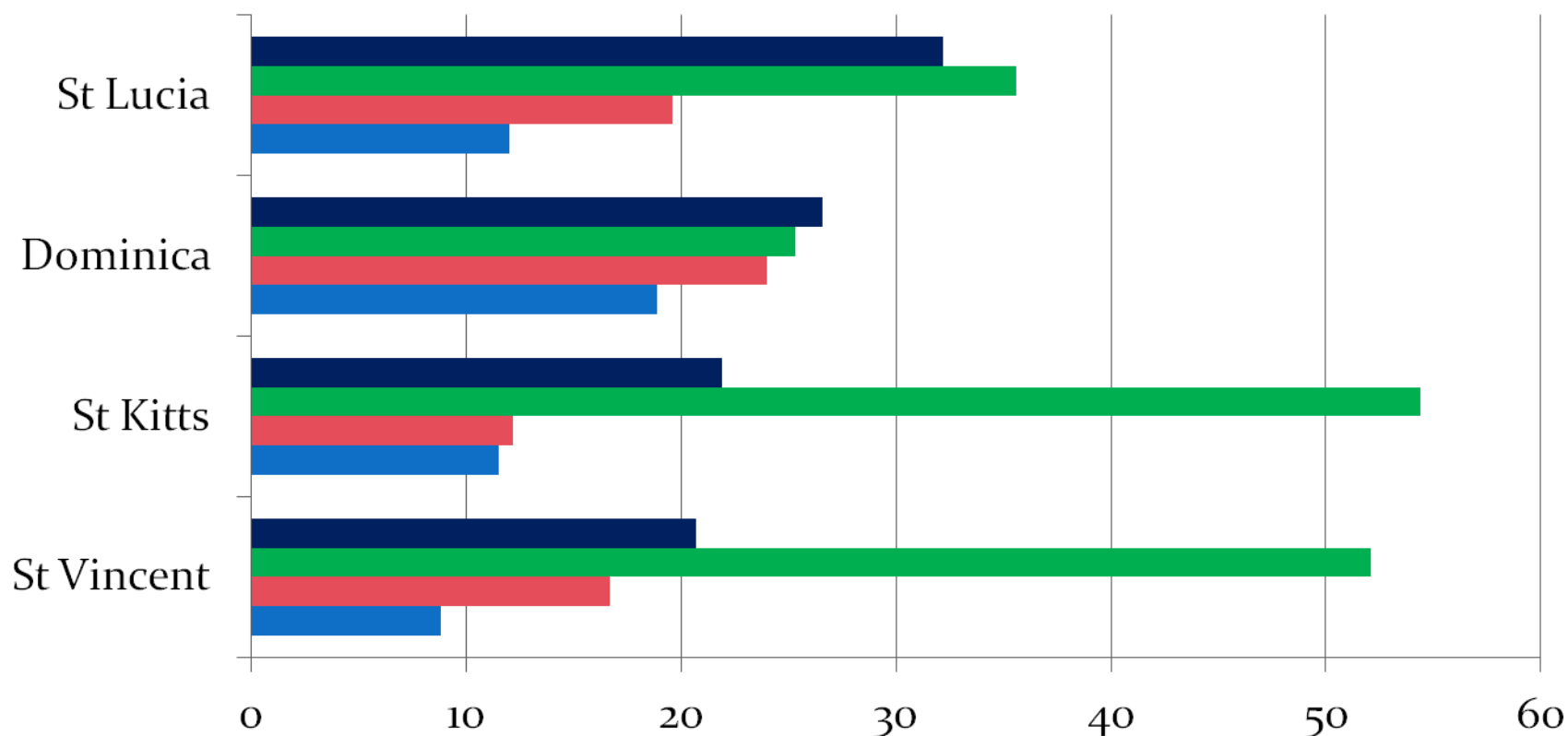
Nationality of offender





Pre-incarceration employment

■ self-employed ■ full-time ■ part-time ■ unemployed





What were the offences

Offence Categories	St Vincent	St Kitts	St Lucia	Dominica
Sexual offence (5.8)	26 (6.3)	25 (7.7)	23 (4.3)	11 (4.7)
Physical assault (9.9)	50 (12.0)	24 (7.5)	29 (5.5)	34 (14.6)
Robbery (7.4)	49 (12.0)	33 (10.2)	19 (3.7)	19 (8.2)
Stealing (11.9)	5 (1.1)	24 (7.5)	26 (4.9)	54 (23.2)
Malicious damage (1.6)	45 (11.1)	2 (0.5)	3 (0.6)	6 (2.6)
Capital crimes (11.8)	46 (11.1)	45 (13.8)	80 (15.1)	17 (7.3)
Drug crimes (6.6)	43 (10.3)	13 (4.1)	17 (3.3)	18 (7.7)
Other (10.9)	7 (1.7)	40 (12.4)	65 (12.3)	20 (8.6)



Frequency of imprisonment and age of first offence

Mean number of times imprisoned

- St Vincent 4.5 times
- St Kitts 3.4 times
- St Lucia 3.5 times
- Dominica 4.7 times

Mean age of first offence

- St Vincent 23.3 years
- St Kitts 22.8 years
- St Lucia 25.3 years
- Dominica 23.6 years

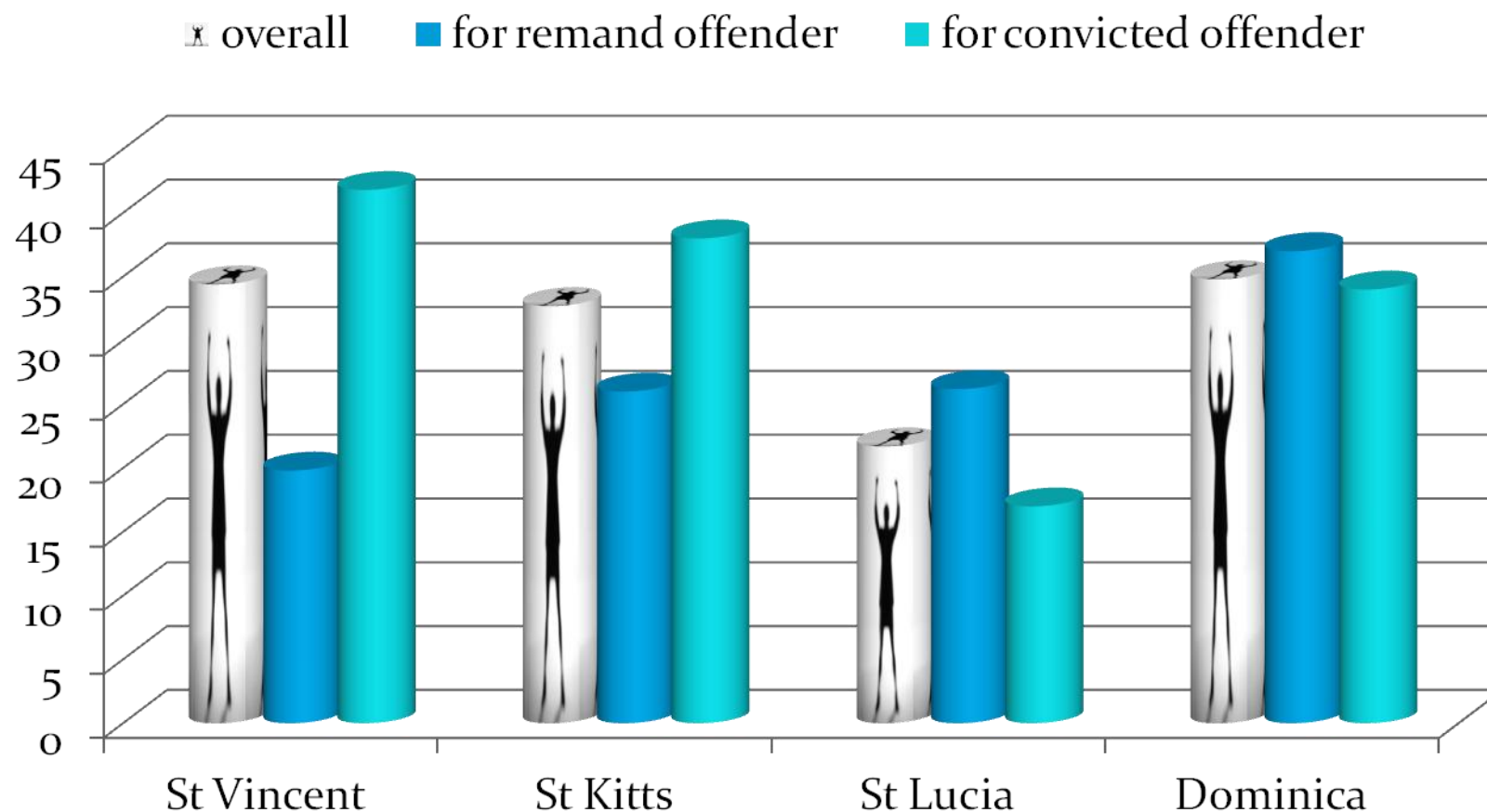


Mean age of first offence

Average		St Vincent	St Kitts	Dominica	St Lucia
23.8	Overall	23.3	22.88	23.68	25.35
23.7	Male	23.1	22.80	23.69	25.30
26.8	Female	31.6	27.00	23.25	25.40
23.8	Remand	23.8	23.04	20.78	27.45
23.4	Convicted	23.1	22.80	24.50	23.13
26.7	First-time offender	26.92	25.97	26.42	27.36
20.7	Repeat offender	20.62	19.48	21.22	21.58



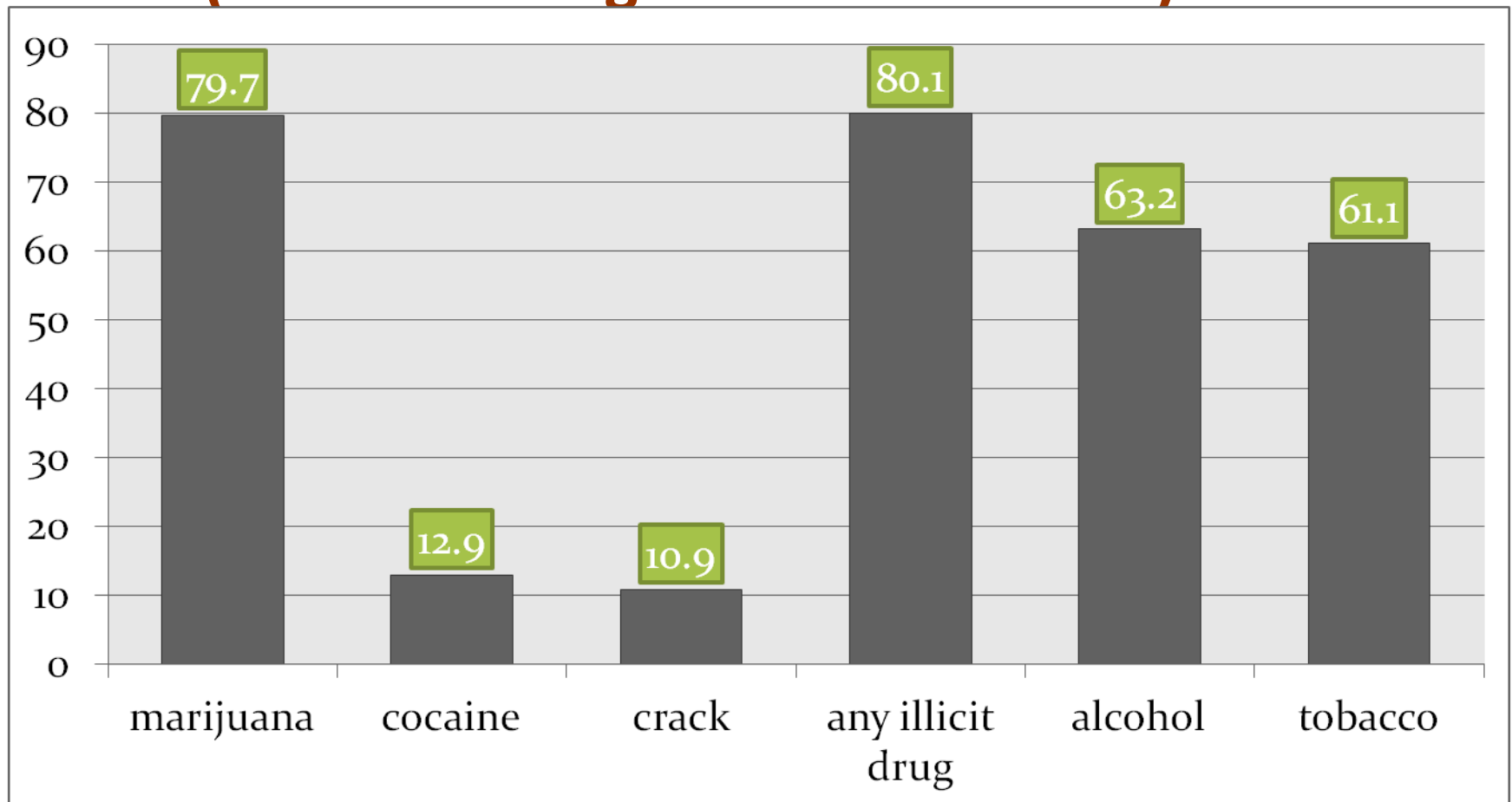
Family member and criminal activities





Self reported lifetime use of drugs

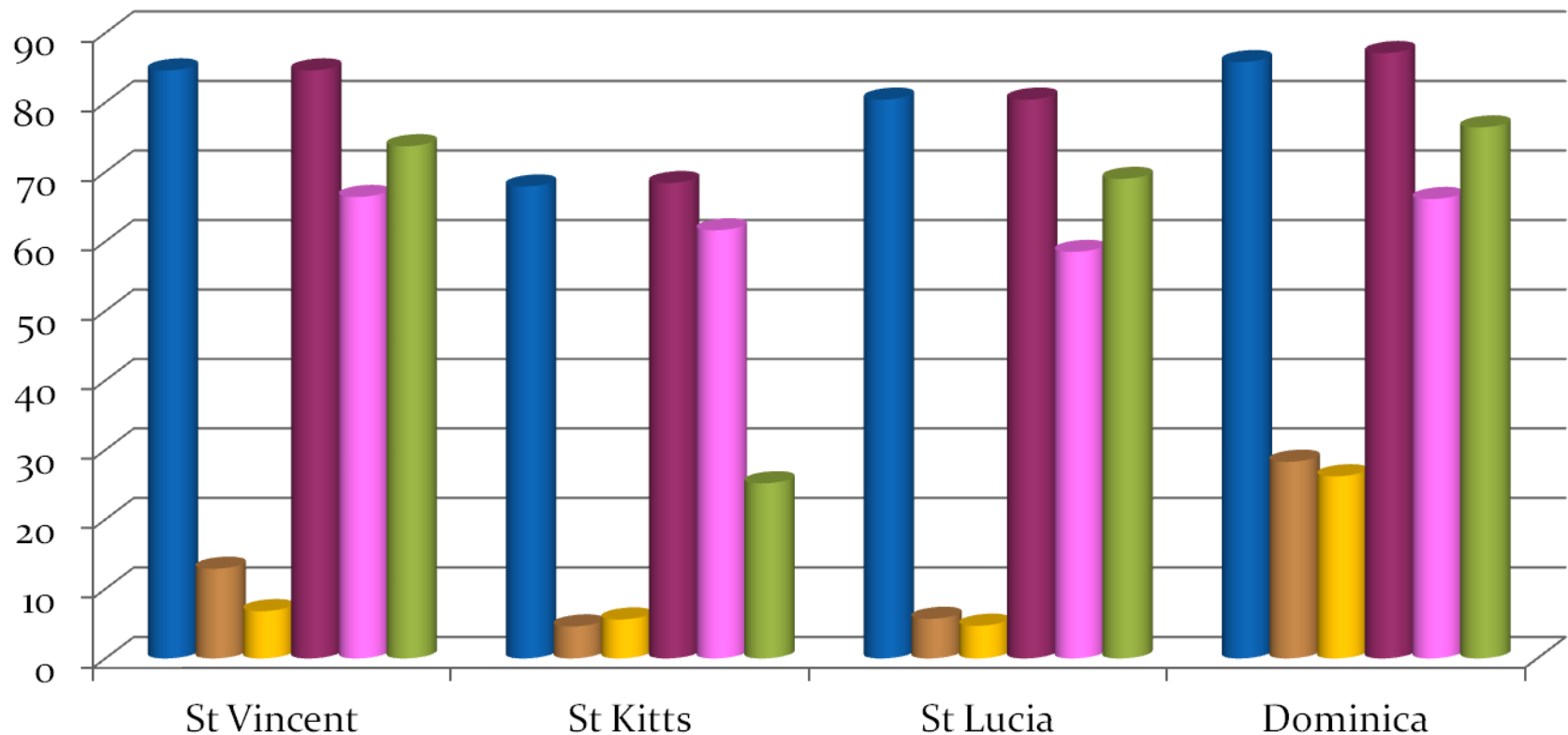
(overall average for all countries)





Self reported lifetime use

■ marijuana ■ cocaine ■ crack ■ any illicit ■ alcohol ■ tobacco



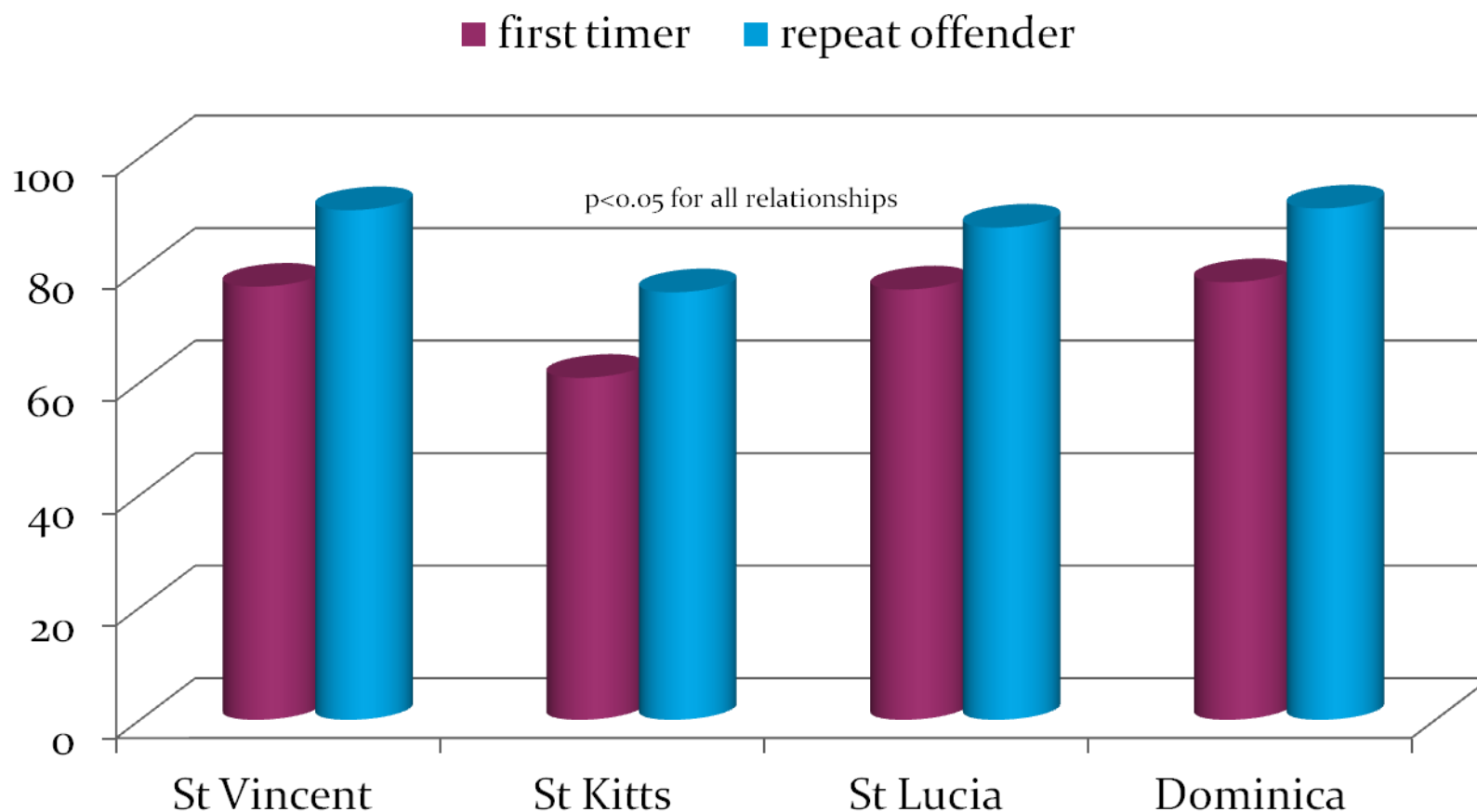


Criminal offending and lifetime marijuana and crack use

Offence Category	<i>St Vincent</i>		<i>St Kitts</i>		<i>Dominica</i>		<i>St Lucia</i>	
	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Crack</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Crack</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Crack</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Crack</i>
Sexual offence	90.9	9.1	53.3	6.7	90.9	18.2	57.1	-
Physical assault	81.0	4.8	52.1	-	91.2	14.7	55.6	-
Robbery	83.3	-	70.0	10.0	78.9	36.8	100.0	16.7
Stealing	90.4	16.4	61.6	13.7	92.6	38.9	87.5	12.5
Malicious damage	50.0	-	100.0	-	83.3	33.3	100.0	-
Capital crimes	87.4	5.2	77.8	7.4	64.7	17.6	73.1	4.1
Drug crimes	87.5	10.3	87.5	12.5	94.4	33.3	62.3	-
Other	83.7	-	62.0	-	90.0	25.0	85.0	5.0

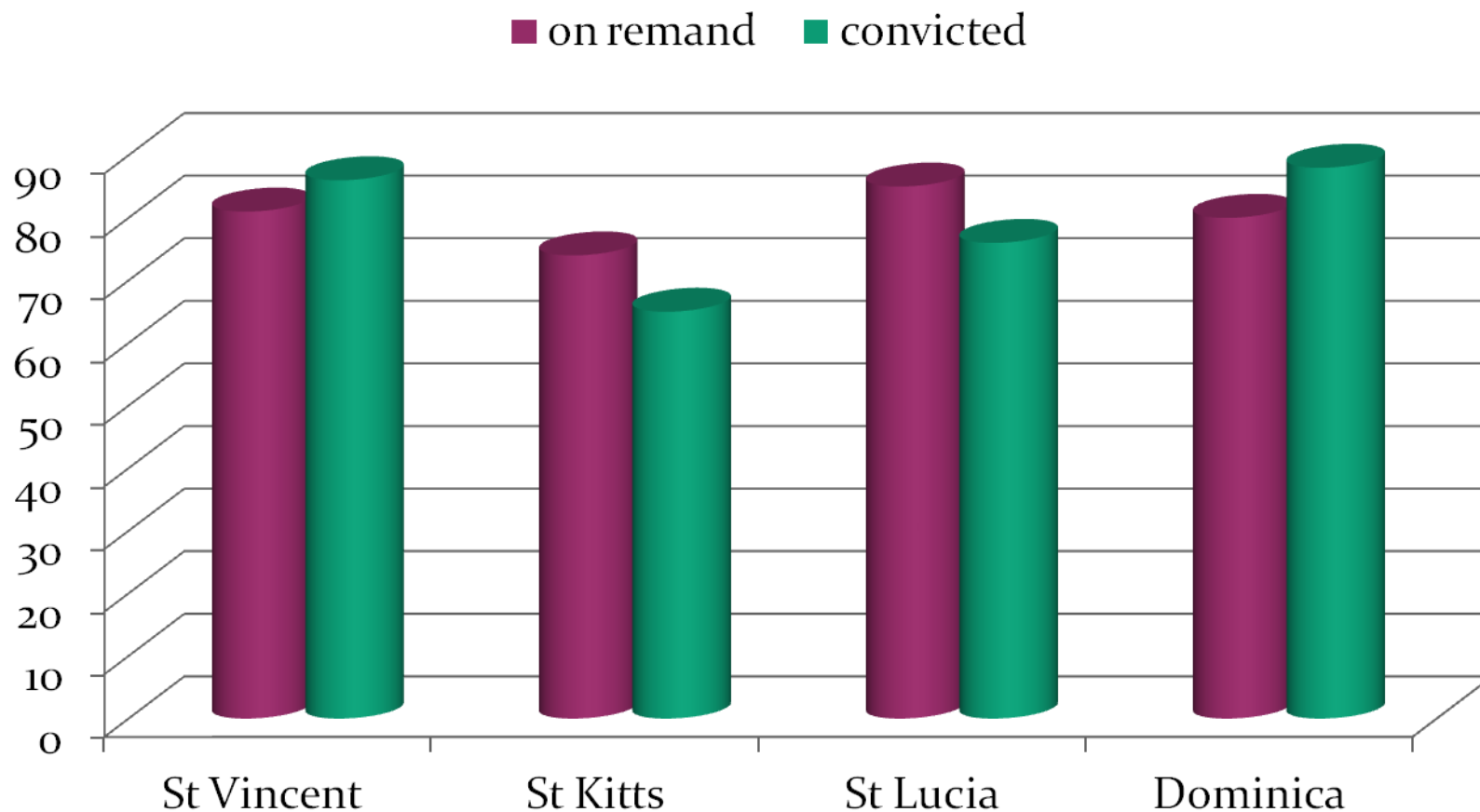


Marijuana lifetime prevalence and type of offender (first-time vs. repeat)





Marijuana lifetime prevalence and status of offender (on remand vs. convicted)





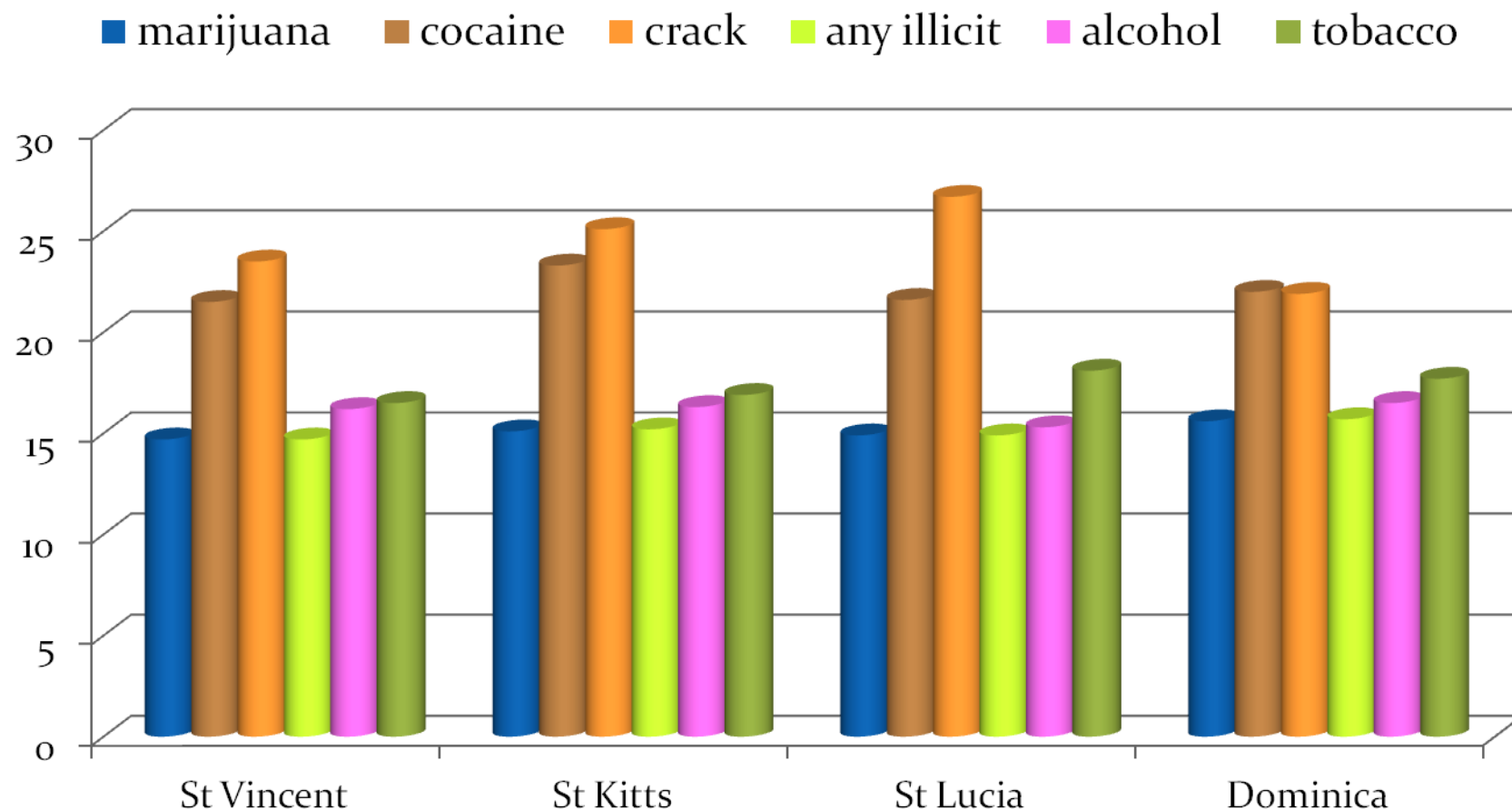
Age of first use among offenders

(survey average among all countries)

Substances	Mean (yrs)	Median (yrs)
Marijuana	15.1	14.3
Cocaine	22.1	21.0
Crack	24.3	22.3
Inhalants	19.4	19.3
Any illicit drug	15.1	14.3
Alcohol	16.1	15.8
Tobacco	17.3	16.8



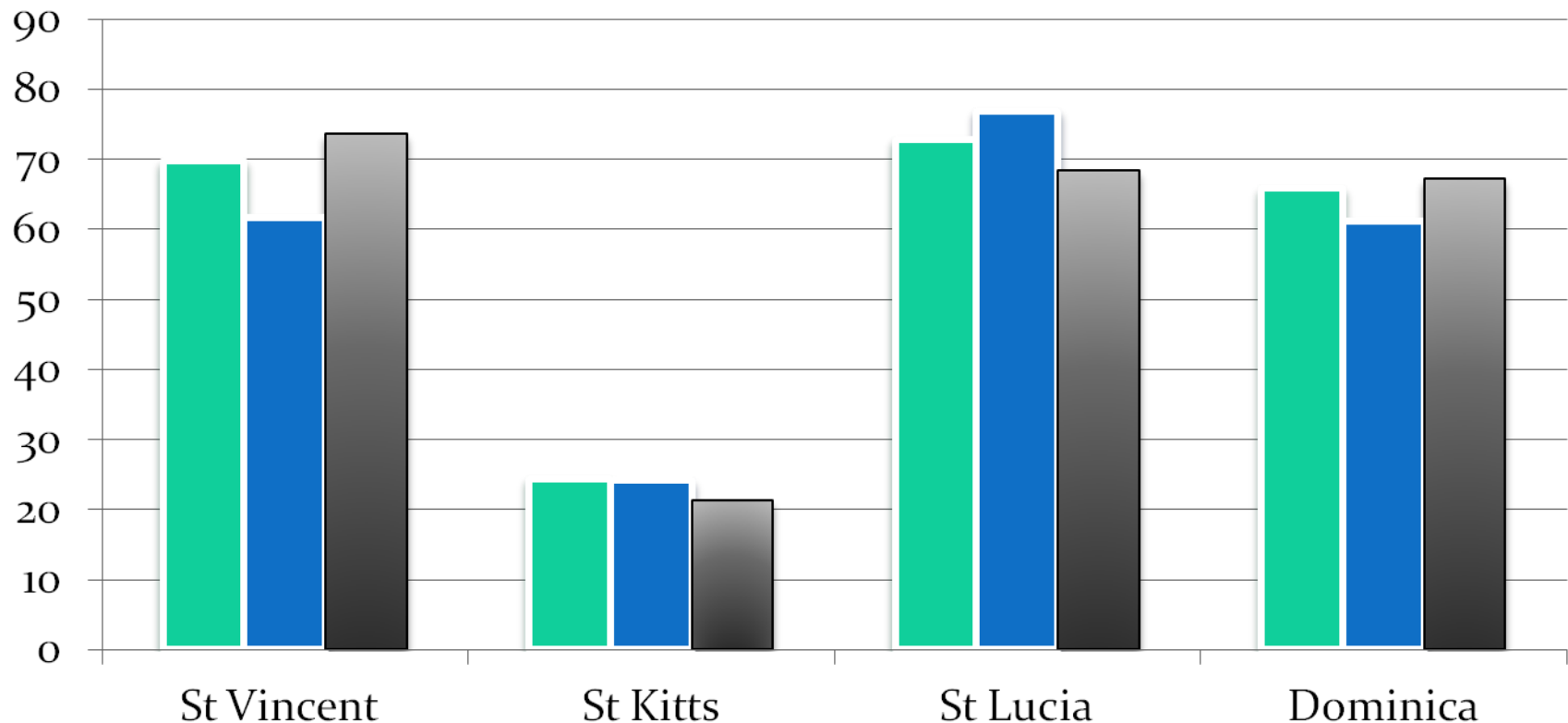
Reported age of first use (mean age)





Drug consumption while incarcerated

■ used while in prison ■ on remand ■ convicted





Drugs and offending

*Did the crime have some relationship
with drugs?*

Dominica
41%

St.
Vincent
44%

St. Lucia
22%

St. Kitts
15%

Survey Average - 30%



Relationship with drugs and crime

Items	SKN	DOM	STV	SLU
<i>When you committed the crime for which you are currently imprisoned were you under the influence of a drug or intoxicated?</i>	8%	29%	24%	40%
<i>Did you commit the crime for which you are currently imprisoned in order to get drugs for your own personal use?</i>	33%	24%	16%	23%
<i>Was the crime for which you are currently imprisoned linked to activities that went against drug laws?</i>	26%	23%	19%	71%

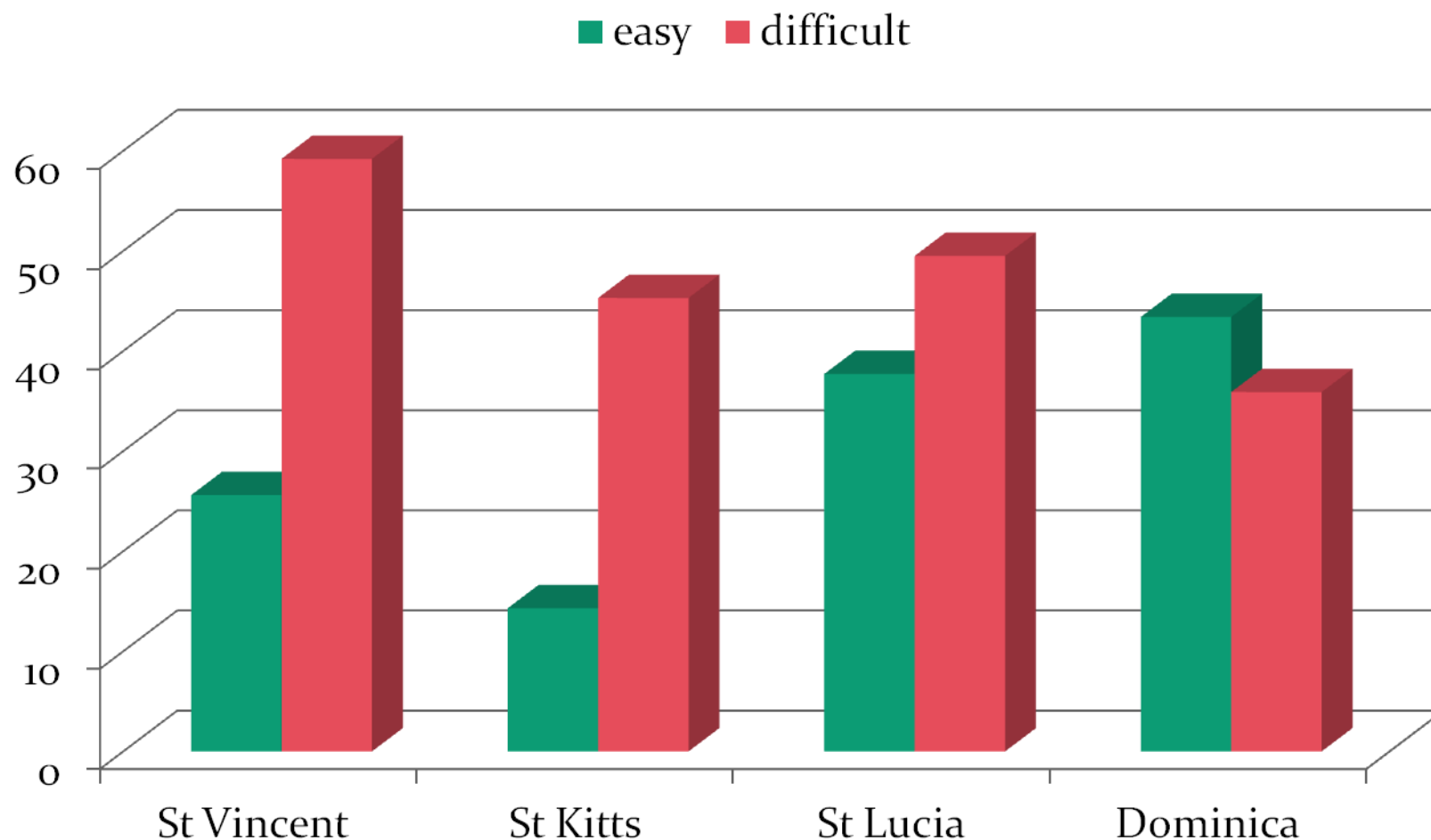


Relationship with drugs and crime

Items	SKN	DOM	STV	SLU
<i>Did you wilfully/intentionally consume a substance in order to boost your courage to commit the crime for which you are currently in prison?</i>	19%	10%	3%	23%
<i>Was (were) the victim(s) of your crime under the influence of alcohol or other drugs?</i>	25%	24%	6%	24%



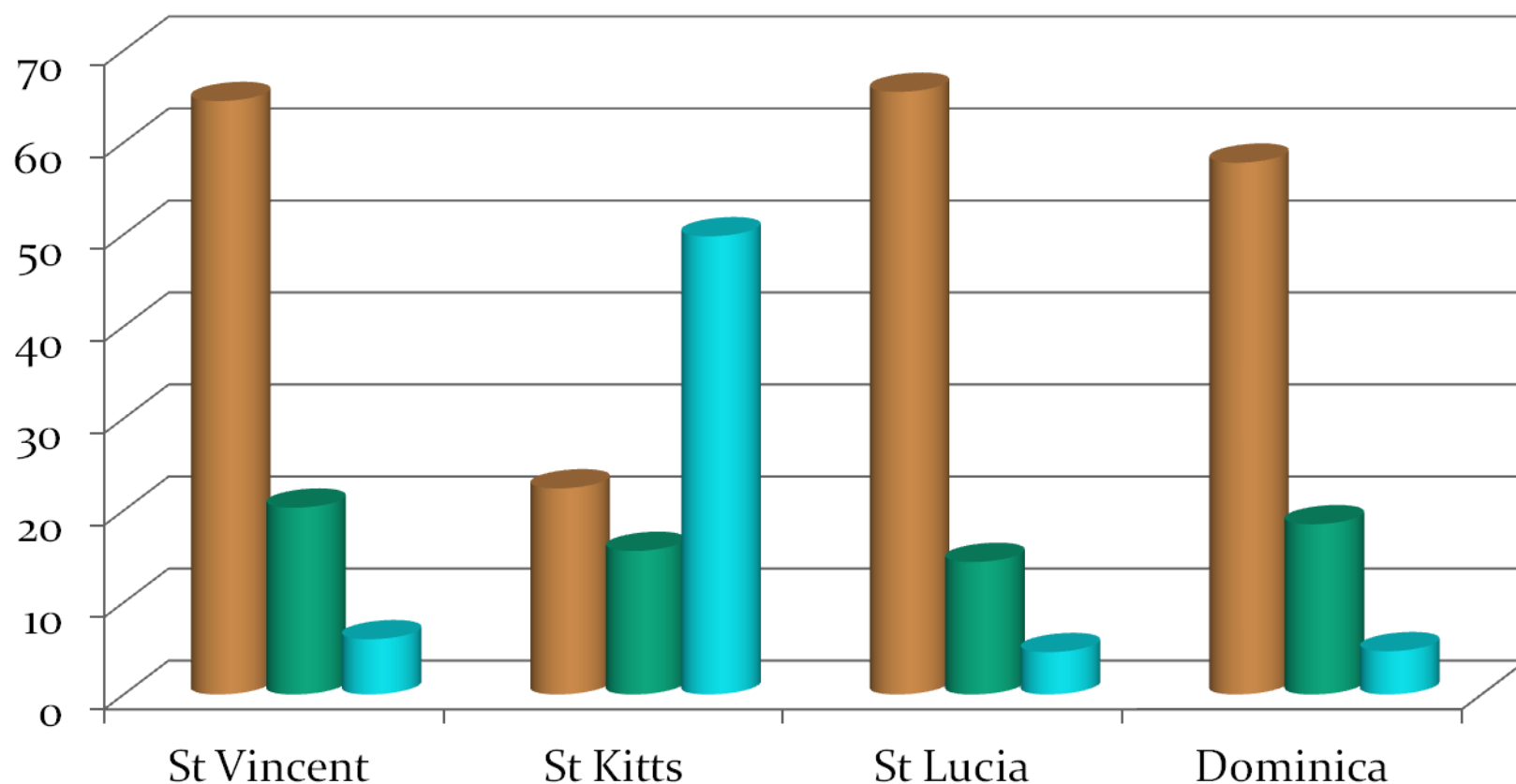
Perception of Accessibility of Drugs in Prison





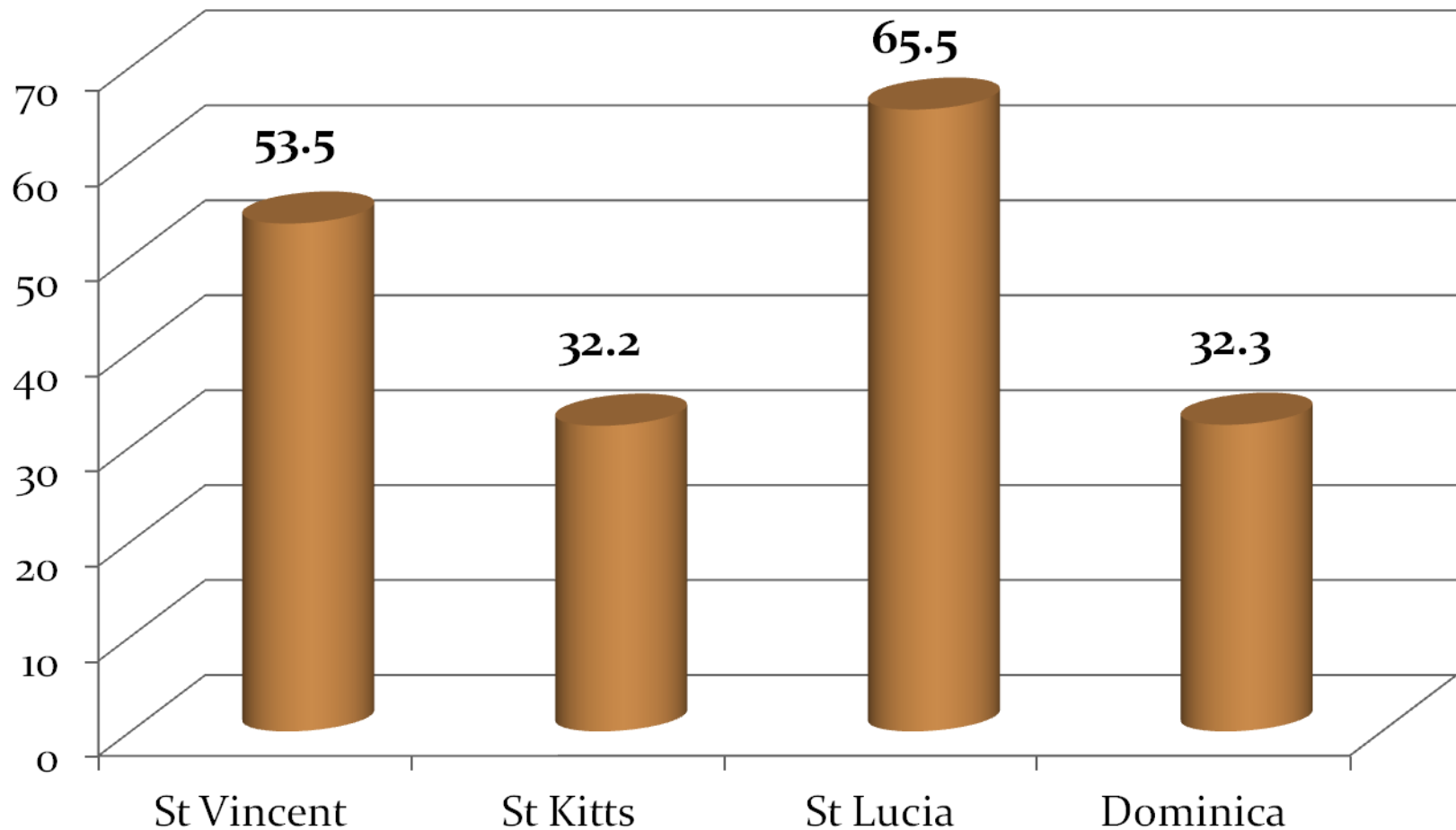
Perception of Drug Use in Prison

■ many inmates using drugs ■ few inmates using ■ no inmate using





Violence in Prison related to Drugs





History of Gang Involvement

Are you in or have you ever been in a gang?

Dominica

23%

St.
Vincent

30%

St. Lucia

40%

St. Kitts

14%

Survey Average - 26.9%



History of Gang Involvement

Items	SKN	DOM	STV	SLU
<i>Were you a member of a gang immediately before your imprisonment?</i>	65.5	68.5	54.9	52.9
	61%			
<i>Was the crime related in any way to your involvement /membership of the gang?</i>	20.7	24.1	37.4	29.9
	28%			
<i>Were you ever imprisoned in the past for gang related activities?</i>	24.1	29.6	24.0	15.6
	23%			



History of Gang Involvement

Items	SKN	DOM	STV	SLU
<i>Was drug-use a part of your gang activities before imprisonment?</i>	46.6	77.8	68.3	52.6
<i>Was trafficking in drugs a part of your gang activities before imprisonment?</i>	55.5	57.4	68.4	67.1
<i>Upon release, how likely are you to readily get back into gang activities? very likely or likely</i>	13.7	16.7	14.3	13.3



History of Gang Involvement

Items	SKN	DOM	STV	SLU
<i>Are you aware of any gangs in prison, either now or in the past?</i>	60.4 44%	20.3	43.0	50.8
<i>Since imprisonment, have you been approached to be a member of a prison-based or outside gang?</i>	11.7 12%	7.0	9.8	18.9
<i>Are you aware of any gang related activity which supports the drug trade?</i>	13.7 25%	25.2	32.9	29.0



Conclusions - This study has revealed some key issues in the four countries studied:

- Prisoners overall reported that they began to use marijuana at an early age (mean age of 14). Marijuana was, in many cases, the substance used first, even before alcohol and tobacco. Use of marijuana was prevalent among all inmates and across all categories of offense.
- Repeat offenders reported generally higher rates of drug use overall than first-time offenders, and also reported seeing more drug use inside the prison than first offenders.
- Alcohol appeared to play a significant role in crimes of physical assault, while cocaine and crack use was associated more frequently with acquisitive crimes (stealing and robbery).



Conclusions

- The research does confirm that a number of links can be established between drugs and crime
- There is sufficient evidence from the findings of this study to engage policymakers in a discussion about the clear (statistical) relationships between:
 - cocaine/crack cocaine use and repeat offending;
 - cocaine/crack use and stealing and robbery;
 - alcohol use and physical assault;
 - early initiation of drug use (especially marijuana use) and its role in criminal offending;
 - as well as the relatively high rate of criminal recidivism reported in all countries.



Policy implications

- This study does not establish a causal relationship between drug use and crime.
- However, the study does highlight certain key issues that warrant the attention of policy-makers in the four countries involved, and perhaps beyond.
- Prisoners are heavy users of marijuana, and according to this study, typically began their marijuana use at around the age of fourteen, which is below the median age of first use of any other legal or illegal substance.
- Prisoners responding to the surveys were overwhelmingly male and single, and over one fifth had committed their first offense by the age of 23-25.



Policy implications

- A significant proportion were repeat offenders, but few reported that they had ever received any treatment in prison or outside for their drug use or mental health problems.
- It appears that certain crimes are associated with the use of particular substances: for example, alcohol use appears to have a strong correlation with physical assault, and cocaine/crack use with acquisitive crime (theft and robbery in order to buy drugs).



Recommendation

- A significant proportion of prisoners reported that family members were involved in either drug use or criminal offending. Therefore, treatment and rehabilitation programs should necessarily include the offenders' families in an effort to break the cycle of re-offending.
- Again, such programs need to treat all the factors that contribute to drug use and crime, as detailed in this report, and should not focus exclusively on drug use.



Recommendation

- In light of offender reports that many of them started to use marijuana and alcohol while still adolescents, it is highly recommended that substance abuse prevention programs be stepped up in primary and secondary schools, and in community and religious groups.
- Life skills programs that teach anger and stress management, resilience and coping skills, and capacity to resist peer pressure can help young people resist drug use and criminal behavior.



Thank you for your attention

Comments on the report can be sent to:

The Inter-American Observatory on Drugs

Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission

Organization of American States

1889, F Street, N.W.

Washington D.C. 20006

U.S.A

Tel: (202) 458 3000

Email: oid_oas@oas.org or pclarke@oas.org

Website: www.cicad.oas.org