



Summary of Illicit Drug Prevalence - 2004

Summary

In the year 2004 in Western Australia (WA) it was estimated there was a total of 273,000 persons aged 14 years and older who had used any illicit drug, of whom 220,200 (80.7%) had used cannabis and 103,231 (37.8%) had used any illicit drug excluding cannabis (Table 2, page 2).

The 2004 National Drug Strategy Household Survey (NDSHS) found four groups of illicit drugs were most widely used in WA as follows (Table 1):

- cannabis (the most widely used illicit drug) had been used by nearly one in eight (13.7%) and nearly four

out of 10 (39.6%) persons in the last year and their lifetime respectively;

- methylamphetamine/amphetamine had been used by one in 20 (4.5%) and one in eight (12.2%) persons in the last year and their lifetime respectively;
- ecstasy had been used by nearly one in 20 (4.1%) and one in 10 (10.1%) persons in the last year and their lifetime respectively; and
- hallucinogens had been used by 0.6% and one in 10 (9.5%) persons in the last year and their lifetime respectively.

Table 1
Illicit annual drug prevalence (%) of persons aged 14 years & older, WA, 1995-2004

	1995	1998	2001	2004	
Cannabis	16.7	22.3	17.5	13.7	#
Meth/amphetamine	2.9	6.0	5.8	4.5	
Hallucinogens	2.6	3.9	2.0	0.6	#
Ecstasy	2.7	5.1	4.0	4.1	
Cocaine	0.6	1.3	1.5	1.2	
Heroin	0.4	1.5	0.3	0.2	
Inhalants	0.2	1.3	0.6	0.5	
Analgesics	6.0	4.4	3.9	2.7	#
Tranquillisers	0.6	3.1	1.7	1.3	
Barbiturates	-	0.3	0.2	0.3	
Methadone	-	0.2	0.1	0.1	
Steroids	-	0.1	0.1	-	
Any illicit drug	22.0	25.4	22.1	17.3	#
Any illicit drug excluding cannabis	na	13.0	7.5	6.4	
Injecting drug use	0.4	1.8	1.3	0.9	

Source: 1998 *National Drug Strategy Household Survey. Western Australia results*. Canberra, Australian Institute of Health & Welfare, 2000; 2001 *National Drug Strategy Household Survey. First results for Western Australia*. Perth, Drug & Alcohol Office, 2003; 2004 *National Drug Strategy Household Survey. Western Australia results*. Perth, Epidemiology Branch, Department of Health and Drug & Alcohol Office, 2006.

Note: Data cannot be aggregated as each row is based on separate estimates of each drug.

2004 result significantly different from 2001 result.

Rates shaded to indicate relative standard error greater than 50%. (Not available for 1995.)

Cannabis

The estimates for the use of 'any illicit drug' and the use of 'any illicit drug excluding cannabis' suggests the majority of illicit drug use involves cannabis. (See Table 2, page 2 and Table 3, page 3.)

The 2004 NDSHS found that in WA a total of:

- 220,200 persons (13.7%) had used cannabis in the last year;
- 127,290 persons (7.9%) had used in the last month; and
- 638,063 persons (39.6%) had used cannabis at least once in their lifetime.

Over the four NDSHS from 1995 to 2004 the annual rate decreased from 16.7% to 13.7%, with a significant fall from 17.5% in 2001 to 13.7% in 2004 (Table 1).

A breakdown of cannabis use by age group shows a consistent pattern of higher rates of male compared to female use across all age groups. The highest rates for both males and females occurred in the 20 to 29 year age group in relation to both annual (38.7% vs 24.6%) and weekly (22.9% vs 12.0%) use of cannabis.

Written by Greg Swensen (June 2006)

Illicit drugs (excluding cannabis)

A breakdown by age group, sex and frequency of use of illicit drugs excluding cannabis is presented in Table 3 (page 3). This data indicates that from the 1998 to the 2004 NDSHS there was a decrease in the annual prevalence from 13.0% to 6.4% and in the monthly prevalence from 3.2% to 2.6%.

Any illicit drug

Over the four NDSHS from 1995 to 2004 the annual rate of the use of any illicit drug decreased from 22.0% to 17.3%, with a significant fall from 22.1% in 2001 to 17.3% in 2004 (Table 1, page 1).

Meth/amphetamine

The 2004 NDSHS found that in WA of those aged 14 years and older a total of:

- 72,200 persons (4.5%) had used meth/amphetamine in the last year;
- 30,614 persons (1.9%) had used meth/amphetamine in the last month; and
- 196,575 persons (12.2%) had used meth/amphetamine at least once in their lifetime.

Over the four NDSHS from 1995 to 2004 the annual rate of meth/amphetamine use increased from 2.9% to 4.5%, with the rate peaking in 1998 (6.0%) and then declining to 4.5% in 2004 (Table 1, page 1).

There was a peak in male use in the 20 to 29 age group for lifetime, annual and monthly prevalence, with rates of 33.8%, 18.9% and 9.3% respectively. Female use

peaked in the 20 to 29 age group for lifetime, annual and monthly prevalence, with rates of 25.8%, 11.8% and 5.1% respectively.

A breakdown of use by age group shows a pattern of higher rates of male compared to female use across all age groups.

Ecstasy

The 2004 NDSHS found that in WA of those aged 14 years and older a total of:

- 65,800 persons (4.1%) had used ecstasy in the last year;
- 27,392 persons (1.7%) had used ecstasy in the last month; and
- 162,738 persons (10.1%) had used ecstasy at least once in their lifetime.

Over the four NDSHS from 1995 to 2004 the annual rate of ecstasy use in WA increased from 2.7% to 4.1%, with the rate peaking in 1998 (5.1%) and then declining to 4.1% in 2004 (Table 1, page 1).

There was a peak in male use in the 20 to 29 age group for annual and monthly prevalence rates, with rates of 17.7% and 9.5% respectively. Female use peaked in the 20 to 29 age group for annual and monthly prevalence, with rates of 10.9% and 4.3% respectively. There are higher rates of male compared to female use of ecstasy across all age groups.

Table 2
Annual estimates of number of illicit drug users aged 14 years & older
WA, 1995-2004

	1995	1998	2001	2004
Cannabis	228,788	326,080	267,400	220,200
Inhalants	2,740	19,009	9,100	8,000
Heroin	5,480	21,934	4,600	3,200
Meth/amphetamine	39,730	87,734	88,500	72,200
Cocaine	8,220	19,009	22,900	19,200
Hallucinogens	35,620	54,103	28,900	9,600
Ecstasy	36,990	74,574	60,900	65,800
Any illicit drug	301,397	371,409	327,000	273,000
Any illicit drug excluding cannabis	na	127,215	114,581	103,231
Injecting drug use	4,986	25,491	19,700	14,500

Hallucinogens

The 2004 NDSHS found that in WA of those aged 14 years and older a total of:

- 9,600 persons (0.6%) had used hallucinogens in the last year; and
- 153,071 persons (9.5%) had used hallucinogens at least once in their lifetime.

Over the four NDSHS from 1995 to 2004 the annual rate of use of hallucinogens decreased from 2.6% to 0.6%, with a significant fall from 2.0% in 2001 to 0.6% in 2004 (Table 1, page 1).

Cocaine

The 2004 NDSHS found that in WA of those aged 14 years and older a total of:

- 19,200 persons (1.2%) had used cocaine in the last year; and
- 74,118 persons (4.6%) had used cocaine at least once in their lifetime.

Over the four NDSHS from 1995 to 2004 the annual rate of cocaine use increased from 0.6% to 1.2% (Table 1, page 1). There was a peak in annual prevalence in the 20 to 29 age group for both males (6.2%) and females (2.5%) respectively.

Heroin

The 2004 NDSHS found that in WA of those aged 14 years and older a total of:

- 3,200 persons (0.2%) had used heroin in the last year; and
- 27,392 persons (1.7%) had used heroin at least once in their lifetime.

Table 3
Annual & monthly prevalence (%) of any illicit drug excluding cannabis use by sex & age group, WA, 1998-2004

	Last 12 months			Last month		
	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons
1998						
14-19	18.1	16.0	17.1	2.0	3.8	2.9
20-29	50.2	12.8	31.8	5.7	6.3	6.0
30-39	7.8	11.5	9.7	1.1	2.6	1.9
40+	5.1	5.6	5.3	2.1	3.1	2.6
All ages	16.6	9.4	13.0	2.6	3.7	3.2
2001						
14-19	14.0	15.4	14.7	10.5	7.6	9.2
20-29	25.2	19.0	22.2	16.0	8.8	12.4
30-39	10.3	5.3	7.6	3.0	3.4	3.2
40-49	3.1	1.8	2.5	2.7	1.0	1.9
50-59	-	0.2	0.1	-	0.2	0.1
60+	-	-	-	-	-	-
All ages	8.6	6.4	7.5	5.1	3.2	4.2
2004						
14-19	11.4	9.9	10.7	5.0	2.5	3.8
20-29	23.9	16.6	20.3	12.7	6.2	9.5
30-39	9.3	5.6	7.4	1.8	3.0	2.4
40-49	2.2	0.7	1.4	0.5	0.3	0.4
50-59	-	-	-	-	-	-
60+	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.3
All ages	7.7	5.1	6.4	3.3	2.0	2.6

Note: Rates shaded to indicate relative standard error greater than 50%.
Use of any illicit drug (excluding cannabis) in 2001 and 2004 surveys refers to use of any of the 5 drugs: heroin, amphetamines, cocaine, hallucinogens and/or ecstasy. Use of any illicit drug in the 1998 survey refers to any illicit drug, drugs and volatile substances used illicitly and pharmaceuticals used for non-medical purposes.

Australia: 2004

A breakdown of annual prevalence by Australian jurisdiction for illicit drugs and licit drugs used for non medical purposes from the 2004 NDSHS is presented in Table 4.

This data shows that in Australia in 2004 the most frequent illicit drug used by those aged 14 years and older was cannabis, which had been used by 11.3% of Australians in the last year.

The 2004 NDSHS also shows there were three drugs which had similar rates of annual prevalence - ecstasy (3.4%), meth/amphetamine (3.2%) and painkillers/analgesics (3.1%).

Comparative annual prevalence data for each jurisdiction shows that in relation to cannabis:

- the Northern Territory (NT) had the highest rate of 20.9%;
- the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and WA had similar rates of 14.0% and 13.7% respectively;
- Queensland (Qld) and South Australia (SA) had similar rates of 12.1% and 11.7% respectively; and
- in the remaining States of Tasmania (Tas), New South Wales (NSW) and Victoria (Vic) about one in 10 had used cannabis.

In relation to the use of meth/amphetamine, commonly known as 'speed', there were four jurisdictions with annual rates just above the national average of 3.2% - WA (4.5%), ACT (4.3%), SA (4.1%) and the NT (3.9%), with the remaining States having rates close to the national average, with the exception of Tasmania, which had a rate of 1.8% (Table 4).

To view or download detailed data tables and figures and a description of the methodology associated with this report go to the Drug and Alcohol Office website here.

Table 4
Annual prevalence (%) of illicit drug use of persons aged 14 years & older by Australian jurisdiction, 2004

	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT	AUS
Marijuana/cannabis	10.7	9.8	12.1	13.7	11.7	10.9	14.0	20.9	11.3
Pain killers/analgesics ^(a)	2.8	3.3	3.4	2.7	2.9	3.9	2.7	5.2	3.1
Tranquillisers/sleeping pills ^(a)	1.1	1.0	1.0	1.3	0.7	0.7	0.7	1.3	1.0
Steroids ^(a)	<0.1	0.1	-	<0.1	<0.1	-	-	0.4	<0.1
Barbiturates ^(a)	<0.1	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	-	0.3	0.4	0.2
Inhalants	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.9	0.2	0.4
Heroin	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.2	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1	0.2
Methadone ^(b)	<0.1	0.1	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1	0.2	0.4	<0.1	0.1
Other opiates/opioids ^(a)	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.6	0.2	0.8	0.2
Meth/amphetamine ^(a)	3.1	2.8	3.0	4.5	4.1	1.8	4.3	3.9	3.2
Cocaine	1.2	1.2	0.7	1.2	0.7	0.2	1.6	1.0	1.0
Hallucinogens	0.6	0.7	0.9	0.6	0.7	0.6	1.0	0.6	0.7
Ecstasy ^(c)	3.5	3.1	3.4	4.1	2.8	1.6	6.0	3.7	3.4
Ketamine	0.3	0.3	0.3	<0.1	0.1	-	0.2	0.6	0.3
GHB	0.1	0.2	0.2	<0.1	0.1	-	0.1	0.3	0.1
Injected drugs	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.9	0.6	0.5	0.3	0.6	0.4
Any illicit drug	14.6	14.3	15.9	17.3	15.4	15.4	17.6	26.0	15.3

Source: 2004 National Drug Strategy Household Survey, State and Territory Supplement. Canberra, Australian Institute of Health & Welfare, 2005.

Note: Rates shaded to indicate relative standard error greater than 50%.

(a) for non medical purposes, (b) non maintenance, (c) in previous surveys this included 'designer drugs'.

<0.1 = non zero results less than 0.1%.

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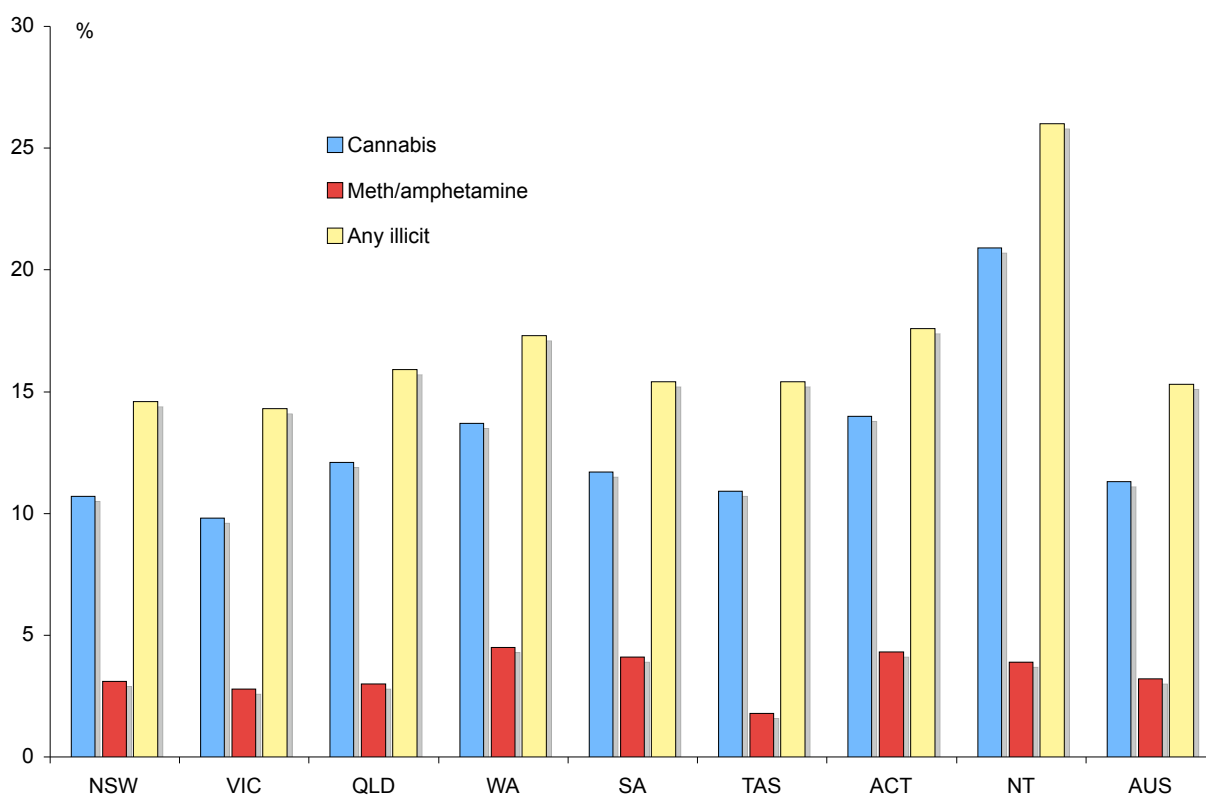


Summary of Illicit Drug Prevalence - 2004

Data Tables & Figures: Australia

Figure A-1

Annual prevalence (%) of cannabis, meth/amphetamine & any illicit drug use by jurisdiction, 2004



Data Tables & Figures: Cannabis - WA

Table A-1
Prevalence (%) of cannabis use by sex & age group, WA, 2004

ERP 2004		Lifetime		Last 12 months		Last month	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
Males							
14-19	88,788	29,122	32.8	21,309	24.0	12,164	13.7
20-29	139,937	94,318	67.4	54,156	38.7	32,046	22.9
30-39	147,620	100,086	67.8	37,938	25.7	22,881	15.5
40-49	150,336	85,391	56.8	22,099	14.7	13,380	8.9
50-59	127,612	34,455	27.0	4,594	3.6	1,659	1.3
60+	148,183	11,410	7.7	1,482	1.0	1,482	1.0
All ages	802,476	355,497	44.3	142,038	17.7	83,458	10.4
Females							
14-19	84,581	24,528	29.0	15,225	18.0	8,966	10.6
20-29	134,456	80,943	60.2	33,076	24.6	16,135	12.0
30-39	146,628	86,511	59.0	18,768	12.8	12,170	8.3
40-49	151,004	62,214	41.2	8,758	5.8	5,587	3.7
50-59	123,945	18,964	15.3	1,363	1.1	248	0.2
60+	168,181	8,409	5.0	336	0.2	-	-
All ages	808,795	283,078	35.0	78,453	9.7	43,675	5.4
Persons							
14-19	173,369	53,571	30.9	36,581	21.1	21,151	12.2
20-29	274,393	175,063	63.8	86,983	31.7	48,019	17.5
30-39	294,248	186,553	63.4	56,790	19.3	35,016	11.9
40-49	301,340	147,355	48.9	30,737	10.2	18,984	6.3
50-59	251,557	53,330	21.2	6,037	2.4	2,012	0.8
60+	316,364	19,931	6.3	1,582	0.5	1,582	0.5
All ages	1,611,271	638,063	39.6	220,744	13.7	127,290	7.9

Source: 2004 National Drug Strategy Household Survey. Western Australia results. Perth, Epidemiology Branch, Department of Health & Drug & Alcohol Office, 2006.

Note: Rates shaded to indicate relative standard error greater than 50%.
ERP = Estimated resident population 2004 from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Figure A-2
Estimated lifetime prevalence (%) of cannabis use, 2004

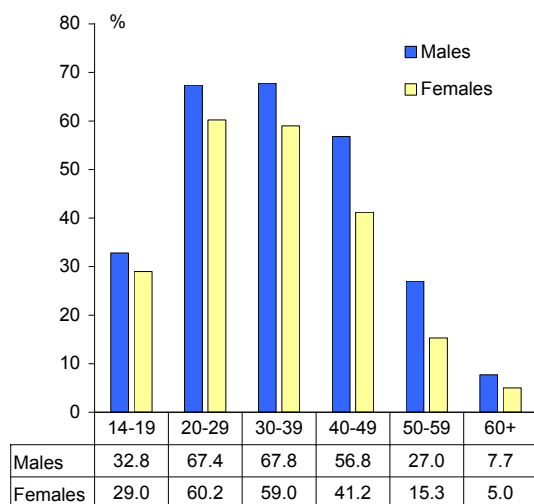
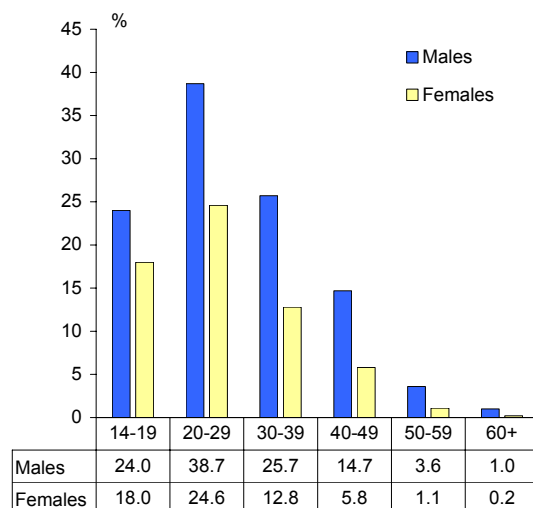


Figure A-3
Estimated annual prevalence (%) of cannabis use, 2004



Data Tables & Figures: Meth/Amphetamines - WA

Table A-2

Estimated meth/amphetamine use by sex, age group & frequency of use, WA, 2004

	Lifetime		Last 12 months		Last month	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Males						
14-19	10,832	12.2	4,795	5.4	3,196	3.6
20-29	47,299	33.8	26,448	18.9	13,014	9.3
30-39	38,234	25.9	9,595	6.5	1,624	1.1
40+	24,289	5.7	2,557	0.6	852	0.2
All ages	121,174	15.1	44,136	5.5	19,259	2.4
Females						
14-19	7,359	8.7	5,075	6.0	1,438	1.7
20-29	34,690	25.8	15,866	11.8	6,857	5.1
30-39	22,141	15.1	6,305	4.3	3,372	2.3
40+	10,192	2.3	886	0.2	443	0.1
All ages	75,218	9.3	28,308	3.5	12,132	1.5
Total						
14-19	18,204	10.5	9,882	5.7	4,681	2.7
20-29	82,044	29.9	42,257	15.4	19,756	7.2
30-39	60,321	20.5	15,889	5.4	5,002	1.7
40+	34,770	4.0	3,477	0.4	1,734	0.2
All ages	196,575	12.2	72,507	4.5	30,614	1.9

Source: 2004 National Drug Strategy Household Survey. Western Australia results. Perth, Epidemiology Branch, Department of Health & Drug & Alcohol Office, 2006.

Note: Rates shaded to indicate relative standard error greater than 50%.

Figure A-4

Estimated lifetime prevalence (%) of meth/amphetamine use, 2004

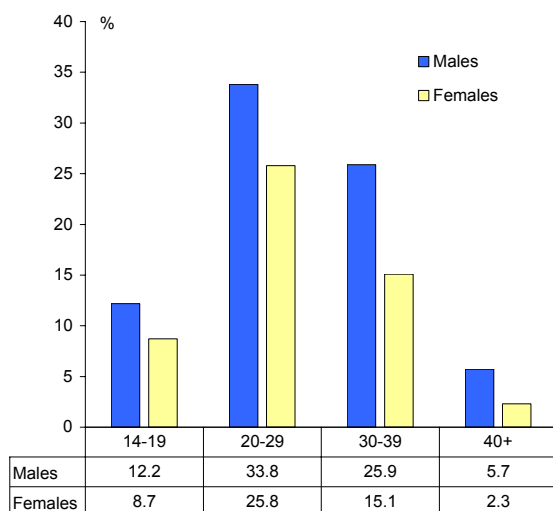
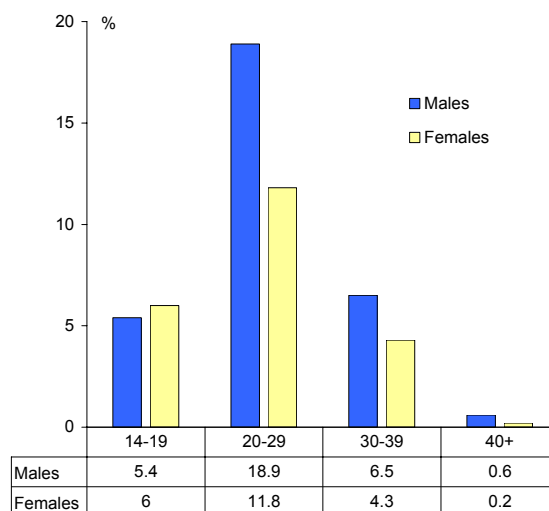


Figure A-5

Estimated annual prevalence (%) of meth/amphetamine use, 2004



Data Tables & Figures: Ecstasy - WA

Table A-3

Estimated ecstasy use by sex, age group & frequency of use, WA, 2004

	Lifetime		Last 12 months		Last month	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Males						
14-19	11,365	12.8	7,547	8.5	1,953	2.2
20-29	47,579	34.0	24,769	17.7	13,294	9.5
30-39	27,457	18.6	7,233	4.9	1,624	1.1
40+	11,506	2.7	1,705	0.4	-	-
All ages	98,705	12.3	41,729	5.2	16,852	2.1
Females						
14-19	6,005	7.1	3,975	4.7	2,030	2.4
20-29	34,286	25.5	14,656	10.9	5,782	4.3
30-39	18,475	12.6	5,279	3.6	2,639	1.8
40+	3,988	0.9	886	0.2	443	0.1
All ages	63,895	7.9	25,073	3.1	11,323	1.4
Total						
14-19	17,337	10.0	11,616	6.7	3,987	2.3
20-29	81,769	29.8	39,238	14.3	18,933	6.9
30-39	45,903	15.6	12,258	4.2	4,119	1.4
40+	15,647	1.8	2,608	0.3	869	0.1
All ages	162,738	10.1	66,062	4.1	27,392	1.7

Source: 2004 National Drug Strategy Household Survey. Western Australia results. Perth, Epidemiology Branch, Department of Health & Drug & Alcohol Office, 2006.

Note: Rates shaded to indicate relative standard error greater than 50%.

Figure A-6

Estimated lifetime prevalence (%) of ecstasy use, 2004

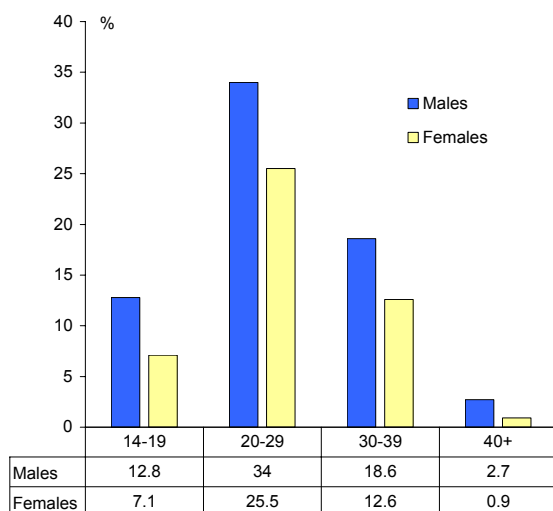
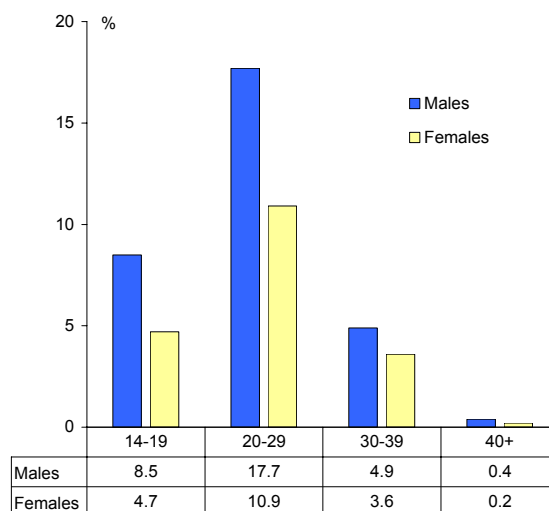


Figure A-7

Estimated annual prevalence (%) of ecstasy use, 2004



Data Tables & Figures: Hallucinogens - WA

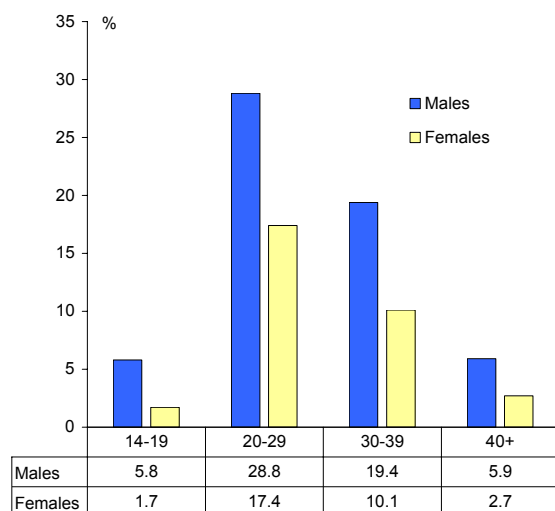
Table A-4
Estimated hallucinogen use by sex, age group & frequency of use, WA, 2004

	Lifetime		Last 12 months	
	n	%	n	%
Males				
14-19	5,150	5.8	1,421	1.6
20-29	40,302	28.8	6,577	4.7
30-39	28,638	19.4	1,476	1.0
40+	25,142	5.9	-	-
All ages	100,310	12.5	9,630	1.2
Females				
14-19	1,438	1.7	85	0.1
20-29	23,395	17.4	672	0.5
30-39	14,809	10.1	-	-
40+	11,965	2.7	-	-
All ages	52,572	6.5	809	0.1
Total				
14-19	6,588	3.8	1,560	0.9
20-29	63,659	23.2	7,134	2.6
30-39	43,549	14.8	1,471	0.5
40+	37,378	4.3	-	-
All ages	153,071	9.5	9,668	0.6

Source: 2004 National Drug Strategy Household Survey. Western Australia results. Perth, Epidemiology Branch, Department of Health & Drug & Alcohol Office, 2006.

Note: Rates shaded to indicate relative standard error greater than 50%.

Figure A-8
Estimated lifetime prevalence (%) of hallucinogen use, 2004



Data Tables & Figures: Cocaine & Heroin - WA

Table A-5
Estimated prevalence of cocaine use by sex & frequency of use, WA, 2004

	Lifetime		Last 12 months	
	n	%	n	%
Males				
14-19	3,108	3.5	888	1.0
20-29	16,513	11.8	8,676	6.2
30-39	15,759	10.7	1,919	1.3
40+	9,375	2.2	-	-
All ages	44,939	5.6	12,037	1.5
Females				
14-19	1,353	1.6	1,100	1.3
20-29	11,429	8.5	3,361	2.5
30-39	11,437	7.8	2,346	1.6
40+	3,988	0.9	886	0.2
All ages	28,308	3.5	7,279	0.9
Total				
14-19	4,508	2.6	1,907	1.1
20-29	27,988	10.2	12,073	4.4
30-39	27,365	9.3	4,414	1.5
40+	13,039	1.5	869	0.1
All ages	74,118	4.6	19,335	1.2

Source: 2004 National Drug Strategy Household Survey. Western Australia results. Perth, Epidemiology Branch, Department of Health & Drug & Alcohol Office, 2006.

Note: Rates shaded to indicate relative standard error greater than 50%.

Table A-6
Estimated prevalence of heroin use by frequency of use, WA, 2004

	Lifetime		Last 12 months	
	n	%	n	%
14-19	1,040	0.6	347	0.2
20-29	9,055	3.3	1,921	0.7
30-39	6,473	2.2	-	-
40+	10,431	1.2	-	-
All ages	27,392	1.7	3,223	0.2

Source: 2004 National Drug Strategy Household Survey. Western Australia results. Perth, Epidemiology Branch, Department of Health & Drug & Alcohol Office, 2006.

Note: Rates shaded to indicate relative standard error greater than 50%.

Methodology

There have been a total of 8 National Drug Strategy Household Surveys (NDSHS) conducted between 1985 and 2004. The NDSHS involves random household selection from a national sample plus a mixture of random and targeted respondent selection. All surveys have involved personal interviews, since 1988 self completion booklets and from 2001 computer assisted telephone interviews (CATI).

Sample coverage and methodology has varied over the surveys. The 1985 survey used a quota sampling technique whereas later surveys have used random samples. The 1985, 1988 and 1991 surveys were of urban centres with populations of 5,000 or more, while subsequent surveys were stratified by Census Collector Districts.

The size of national samples for surveys has varied, with samples of 2,791 in 1985, 2,255 in 1988, 2,850 in 1991, 3,500 in 1993, 3,850 in 1995, 10,030 in 1998, 26,744 in 2001 and 28,582 in 2004.

Small sample sizes in earlier surveys mean that a breakdown is not available for some WA data for the surveys between 1985 and 1993, whereas since the 1995 survey more comprehensive analyses at the State level have been possible due to improved sampling.

Estimates used in this report are subject to sampling variability and are considered reliable if the relative standard error (RSE) is less than 25%, whereas estimates between 25% and 50% should be interpreted with caution and estimates with RSEs over 50% should be considered unreliable. Accordingly, for some of the drugs reported in this publication, a breakdown of estimates by age group and sex has not been undertaken.

A detailed discussion of these issues is contained in the explanatory notes that accompany the report of the 2004 NDSHS, *2004 National Drug Strategy Household Survey: First results*. AIHW Cat. No PHE 57. Canberra, Australian Institute of Health & Welfare, 2005.

The definition of an 'illicit' drug refers to drugs such as cannabis, heroin, cocaine, hallucinogens and ecstasy, as well as methadone, where this drug has not been provided as part of a maintenance program. The definition of injecting drug use refers to injecting for non-medical purposes.

The inclusion of data about the use of a number of licit (ie prescription drugs), refers to the non-medical use of drugs such as painkillers/analgesics, tranquillisers/sleeping pills, steroids, barbiturates, other opiates/opioids and meth/amphetamine.

The number of persons who have used illicit drugs has been calculated according to estimates by age group and sex of the WA estimated resident population (ERP) from Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) population survey data.

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