



Drugs & young people

Extracted from 2010 National Drug Household Survey report
Released July 2011

The interesting bits...

- The population group least likely to have ever used an illicit drug were teenagers aged 14–17 years (19%).
- In 2010, of the 2.7 million people in Australia who had used an illicit drug in the previous 12 months, 1.5 million were male, and 1.1 million were female.
- The source of supply for most users was a friend or acquaintance.

What ages are using...

- The age groups most likely to have used drugs in the previous 12 months were those aged 20–29 years (28%) and 18–19-year-olds (25%).
- Illicit drug use was highest among people aged 20–29 years for both males (31%) and females (24%).

Male vs female...

- For most age groups, males were more likely than females to have recently used an illicit drug, except among 14–17-year-olds (16% for females compared with 13% for males).

State vs state...

- Similar to the Australia-wide pattern, the age groups most commonly reporting having used illicit drugs in the previous 12 months in most jurisdictions were those aged 18–19 years and 20–29 years.
- People aged 14–19 years in Western Australia (26%) and South Australia (23%) had higher proportions of recent illicit drug use than the national average for that age group (18%).

The health factor...

- The diagnosis or treatment of a mental illness was much more common in those who had used an illicit drug in the last 12 months (19%) or in the last month (20%) than in those who had not used in the last 12 months (11%).

Cannabis

- Since 1998, recent cannabis use has generally decreased in the younger age groups.
- The highest proportion of males who had used cannabis in the last 12 months was for those aged 20–29 years (25%) and for females for those aged 18–19 years (19%).
- Indigenous Australians were 1.6 times more likely than non-Indigenous Australians to have recently used cannabis.

What ages are using...

- Fewer than 1 in 10 (9%) teenagers aged 12–17 years had used cannabis in the previous 12 months, but this proportion more than doubled to 1 in 5 (21%) among those aged 18–29 years.

Male vs female...

- Males were twice as likely as females to have smoked cannabis in the previous week (5% for males compared with 3% for females).



State vs state...

- The Northern Territory has consistently had the highest proportion of recent cannabis users (17%), since 1998, except for those aged under 20 years.
- Male cannabis use was highest in the Northern Territory (19%) and lowest in Tasmania (11%)
- Female cannabis use was also highest in the Northern Territory (14%), but was lowest in the Australian Capital Territory (7%).

Ecstasy

- There was a significant decline between 2007 (5%) and 2010 (3%) for recent ecstasy users for those aged between 14–19 years.
- The most common place to use ecstasy was at raves/dance parties (62%), with large proportions also using it at public establishments (55%) and private parties (53%).

What ages are using...

- Ecstasy use was highest among those aged 20–29 years, with about 1 in 4 (24%) ever using ecstasy, and 1 in 10 (10%) using it in the previous 12 months.
- People aged 20–29 years were more than twice as likely to have used ecstasy recently than those aged 30–39 years (10% and 4%, respectively).
- Less than 1% of teenagers aged 12–17 years had used ecstasy in the previous 12 months.
- 45% of people aged 18–19 years used the drug at least monthly, which was more than any other age group.

Who is giving up...

- The proportion of ex-ecstasy users increased from 5% in 2007 to 7% in 2010.
- In particular, students who stopped using ecstasy increased from 3% in 2007 to 4% in 2010.

Male vs female...

- The proportion of males who had used ecstasy in the last 12 months was slightly higher than females (4% and 2%, respectively), but there was little difference in more recent use, by month or week.

State vs state...

- Overall, ecstasy use was highest among people in Western Australia (4%), particularly among males in that state (5%) for males.
- Ecstasy use was highest among 20–29-year-olds years in South Australia.

Note: % has been rounded to the nearest whole number. For more precise figures please refer to the report.

Note : This survey was the 10th in a series which began in 1985. More than 26,000 people aged 12 years or older participated in the survey, in which they were asked about their knowledge of and attitudes towards drugs, their drug consumption histories, and related behaviours.