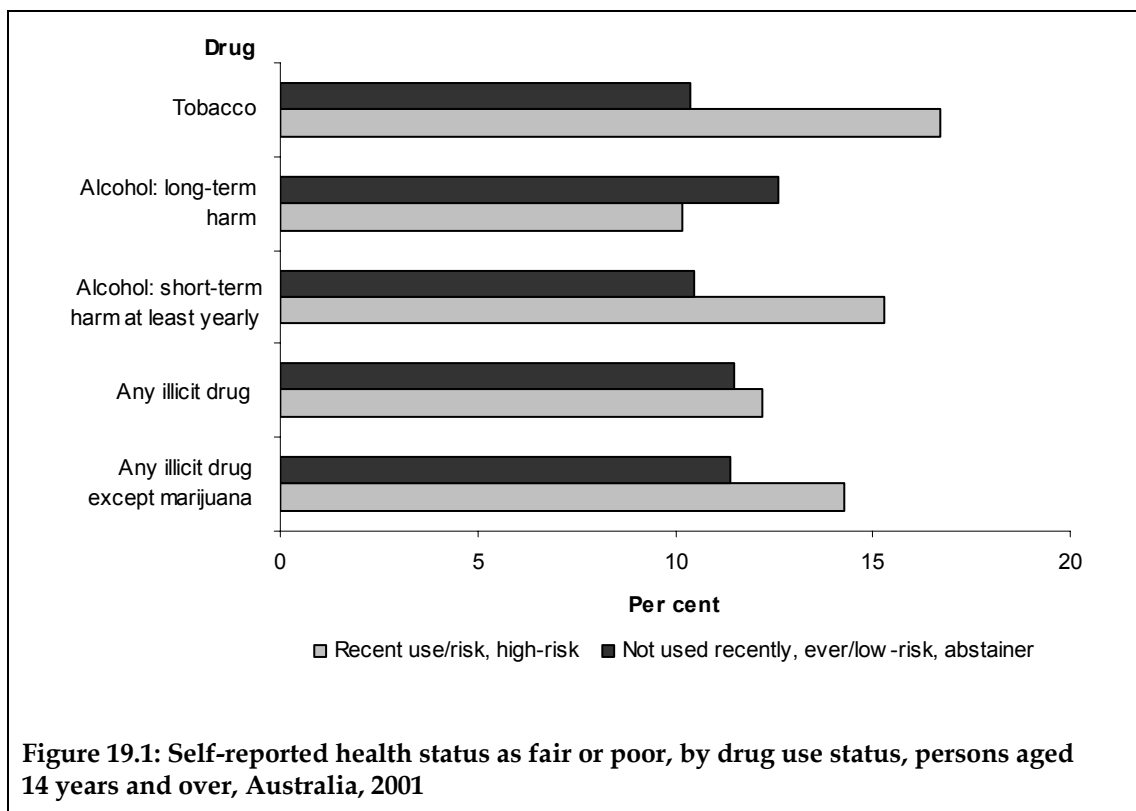


19 Drugs and health

Self-assessed health status

Respondents were asked to self-report their general health status. Just over one in eight (11.8%) Australians aged 14 years and over reported their health as fair or poor. However, the proportions varied by history of recent drug use (Figure 19.1):

- One in six smokers (16.6%) reported their health as fair or poor, compared with one in 10 (10.2%) non-smokers.
- Drinkers at risk of alcohol-related harm in the long term were more likely than abstainers or low-risk drinkers to report their health as fair or poor (15.3% and 10.2% respectively).
- In contrast, those who drank at risky or high-risk levels for harm in the short term at least once in the last 12 months were less likely than those who drank at low-risk levels or abstainers, to rate their health as fair or poor (10.2% and 12.6% respectively).



Use of someone else's prescribed medication

Respondents were asked if, when they were feeling unwell, they had ever used medication prescribed or recommended for another person (Table 19.1):

- Of the population aged 14 years and over, 15.8% of males and 15.1% of females (when feeling unwell) had used medication prescribed or recommended for another person.
- The type of medication most commonly used was pain-killers/analgesics.

Table 19.1: Type of medication used, by those who had used medication prescribed or recommended for another person, by sex, persons aged 14 years and over, Australia, 2001

Drug	Males	Females	Persons
	(per cent)		
Pain-killers/analgesics	51.4	53.3	52.3
Antibiotics	22.5	20.1	21.3
Anti-depressants	3.2	2.8	3.0
Tranquillisers/sleeping pills	9.3	10.8	10.0
Asthma medication	13.0	17.4	15.1
Herbal and alternative medicines	20.6	24.2	22.4
Others	14.9	12.6	13.8
Any of the above	15.8	15.1	15.4

Notes

1. Base equals those who had used medication prescribed or recommended for another person.
2. Respondents could select more than one response.

Environmental tobacco smoke

Respondents were asked to indicate if they avoided places where they may be exposed to other people's cigarette smoke. In 2001, never/ex-smokers indicated that they always avoided places where they might be exposed to other people's tobacco smoke (37.6%) at a rate 11 times greater than that of recent smokers (3.4%) (Table 19.2). It was also found that for Australians aged 14 years and over:

- two-thirds of recent smokers (66.4%) never avoided exposure to other people's tobacco smoke compared to 13.2% of never/ex-smokers; and
- a greater proportion of female never/ex-smokers (40.8%) than males (34.2%) avoided environmental tobacco smoke all the time.

Table 19.2: Avoidance of places where respondents may be exposed to other people's tobacco smoke, recent smokers and never/ex-smokers, aged 14 years and over, by sex, Australia, 2001

Frequency	Recent smokers			Never/ex-smokers		
	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons
	(per cent)					
Yes, always	4.1	2.4	3.4	34.2	40.8	37.6
Yes, sometimes	31.2	29.2	30.3	50.5	47.9	49.2
No, never	64.7	68.4	66.4	15.2	11.3	13.2

Non-smokers were asked if, in the last 12 months, any member of their household had smoked at least one cigarette, cigar or pipe per day in the home (Table 19.2):

- One in 10 (10.6%) non-smokers lived in households where someone smoked at least one cigarette, cigar or pipe inside every day.
- Similar proportions of male (73.7%) and female (72.7%) non-smokers lived in households where no-one at home smoked regularly.

Table 19.3: Exposure to environmental tobacco smoke in the home at least daily, non-smokers aged 14 years and over, by sex, Australia, 2001

Proportion	Male	Female	Persons
	(per cent)		
Yes, inside the home	10.8	10.3	10.6
No, only smokes outside the home	15.4	17.0	16.3
No-one at home regularly smokes	73.7	72.7	73.2