

# 13 Cocaine

## Introduction

Approximately 700,000 Australians aged 14 years and over had used cocaine in their lifetime.

The average age at which Australians used cocaine for the first time was 22.6 years.

## Use of cocaine

In 2001, about 207,000 (1.3%) Australians aged 14 years and over had used cocaine in the last 12 months (Table 13.1). Other aspects of overall use include:

- Males were more likely than females to have used in their lifetime, in the last 12 months and in the last month.
- When comparing age groups, use of cocaine was highest among Australians aged 20–29 years.

**Table 13.1: Cocaine use, persons aged 14 years and over, by age, by sex, Australia, 2001**

Period	Age group				Sex		Persons
	14–19	20–29	30–39	40+	Males	Females	
	(per cent)						
In lifetime	2.6	10.0	6.5	2.2	5.3	3.5	4.4
In the last 12 months	1.5	4.3	1.5	0.3	1.6	1.0	1.3
In the last month	0.3	1.3	0.5	0.1	0.5	0.3	0.4
In the last week	0.1 *	0.4	0.2	–	0.1	0.1	0.1
	(number)						
In lifetime	40,300	306,400	188,300	182,100	414,500	278,500	692,500
In the last 12 months	22,900	130,800	42,000	22,700	125,700	81,100	206,600
In the last month	4,500	41,000	13,200	6,300	38,800	22,200	60,900
In the last week	2,000 *	13,200	4,700	–	10,400	10,100	20,500

Note: Totals may not equal sum due to rounding.

## Frequency of use of cocaine

The frequency at which the 206,600 recent users of cocaine used this drug varied by age group and sex (Table 13.2):

- One in six (15.9%) used cocaine at least once a month and one in five (19.2%) used every few months.
- Females used cocaine more frequently than males.
- Compared with the other age groups, a higher proportion of recent users aged 20–29 years used cocaine at least once a month.

**Table 13.2: Frequency of cocaine use, recent users aged 14 years and over, by age, by sex, Australia, 2001**

Frequency	Age group				Sex		
	14–19	20–29	30–39	40+	Males	Females	Persons
				(per cent)			
Daily, weekly, once a month	9.6 *	18.8	16.1	3.3 *	14.6	18.0	15.9
Every few months	28.5	15.1	23.0	24.8	19.4	18.8	19.2
Once or twice a year	62.0	66.1	60.8	71.9	66.0	63.2	64.9

Note: Base equals recent users.

## Form, quantity and method of use of cocaine

Recent users of cocaine were asked what form of cocaine they used. Recent users were also asked on average how many hits or lines they normally had on a day they used this drug, and how they had used it:

- Powdered cocaine was the form typically used by recent cocaine users.
- On a day they used cocaine, the majority of recent users of cocaine normally used an average of one or two hits or lines.
- The most common method of cocaine use was snorting.

## Source of supply of cocaine

Recent users of cocaine were asked where they usually obtained this drug (Table 13.3):

- Among recent users, cocaine was usually obtained from a friend or acquaintance (76.4%).
- One in five (20.2%) recent users of cocaine obtained this drug from a dealer.

**Table 13.3: Usual source for obtaining cocaine, recent users aged 14 years and over, by sex, Australia, 2001**

Source	Males	Females	Persons
		(per cent)	
Friend or acquaintance	74.3	79.9	76.4
Relative	2.0 *	4.8	3.0
Dealer	23.8	14.4	20.2
Other	–	1.0 *	0.4 *

*Notes*

1. Base equals recent users.
2. Respondents were asked to select one response only.

## Usual place of use of cocaine

Recent users of cocaine were asked to indicate the locations they usually used cocaine (Table 13.4):

- About three in five (62.7%) recent users of cocaine nominated in their own home or at a friend's house as one of the locations they usually used this drug.
- Private parties were the second most common location for recent users of cocaine to use this drug (51.9%).

**Table 13.4: Usual place of use of cocaine, recent users aged 14 years and over, by sex, Australia, 2001**

Location	Males	Females	Persons
		(per cent)	
In a home	57.9	70.4	62.7
At private parties	49.1	56.2	51.9
At raves/dance parties	40.9	29.3	36.4
At public establishments	41.6	27.9	36.3
At work or school/TAFE/university, etc.	4.4	6.0	5.0
In public places (e.g. parks)	3.5 *	8.2	5.3
In a car or other vehicle	8.5	8.5	8.5
Somewhere else	4.4	3.9 *	4.2

*Notes*

1. Base equals recent users.
2. Respondents could select more than one response.

## Concurrent drug use with cocaine

Recent users of cocaine were asked if any other drugs were used (on at least one occasion) at the same time as this drug (Table 13.5):

- Recent users of cocaine had most commonly used alcohol with cocaine on at least one occasion (85.7%).
- Just over half (53.8%) had used marijuana/cannabis at the same time as cocaine, on at least one occasion.

**Table 13.5: Other drugs used with cocaine, recent users aged 14 years and over, by sex, Australia, 2001**

Drug	Males	Females	Persons
		(per cent)	
Alcohol	88.4	81.4	85.7
Marijuana/cannabis	59.2	44.9	53.8
Heroin	3.4 *	6.0	4.4
Tranquillisers/sleeping pills <sup>(a)</sup>	6.8	7.4	7.0
Anti-depressants <sup>(a)</sup>	2.8 *	4.6	3.4
Pain-killers/analgesics <sup>(a)</sup>	4.1	5.9	4.8
Barbiturates <sup>(a)</sup>	1.3 *	2.3 *	1.7 *
Amphetamines/speed <sup>(a)</sup>	37.7	31.0	35.1
Ecstasy/designer drugs	53.0	37.4	47.1
Other	1.7 *	2.8 *	2.1 *
None of the above	1.0 *	2.9 *	1.7 *

(a) Used for non-medical purposes.

### Notes

1. Base equals recent users.
2. Respondents could select more than one response.

## Substitution of other drugs for cocaine

Recent users of cocaine were asked if they had used another drug when cocaine was not available (Table 13.6):

- When cocaine was not available 42.2% of recent users substituted alcohol for cocaine.
- About one-quarter (27.6%) of recent users of cocaine substituted amphetamines for cocaine when the latter drug was not available.
- Fewer than one in 10 (8.3%) did not use another drug when cocaine was not available.

**Table 13.6: Other drugs used to substitute for cocaine when cocaine not available, recent users aged 14 years and over, by sex, Australia, 2001**

Drug	Males	Females	Persons
		(per cent)	
Alcohol	45.6	36.1	42.2
Marijuana/cannabis	7.5	16.7	10.8
Heroin	1.6 *	3.4 *	2.2 *
Tranquillisers/sleeping pills <sup>(a)</sup>	0.3 *	0.7 *	0.5 *
Anti-depressants <sup>(a)</sup>	–	–	–
Pain-killers/analgesics <sup>(a)</sup>	1.8 *	–	1.2 *
Barbiturates <sup>(a)</sup>	–	–	–
Amphetamines/speed <sup>(a)</sup>	27.9	27.0	27.6
Ecstasy	6.3	9.2	7.3
Other	–	–	–
None	9.0	7.0	8.3

(a) Used for non-medical purposes.

**Notes**

1. Base equals recent users.
2. Respondents were asked to select one response only.

## Cocaine use by friends and acquaintances

All respondents were asked what proportion of their friends and acquaintances used cocaine. The proportions varied with the respondent's history of use (Table 13.7):

- Typically, those who had never used cocaine had no friends and acquaintances who had used cocaine (94.0%). In comparison, among those who had used in their lifetime, 31.6% had no friends and acquaintances who used cocaine.
- Two-thirds (64.8%) of those who had used cocaine in their lifetime reported that up to half of their friends and acquaintances used cocaine.
- Among recent users, 10.5% reported that all or most of their friends and acquaintances used cocaine.

**Table 13.7: Cocaine use by friends and acquaintances, persons aged 14 years and over, by use status, Australia, 2001**

Proportion of friends	Use status		
	Never use	Ever use (per cent)	Recent use
All or most	–	3.6	10.5
About half or less	6.0	64.8	79.0
None	94.0	31.6	10.5