

# **Statistics on drug use in Australia 2004**

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare is Australia's national health and welfare statistics and information agency. The Institute's mission is *better health and wellbeing for Australians through better health and welfare statistics and information.*

Please note that as with all statistical reports there is the potential for minor revisions of data in this report over its life. Please refer to the online version at <[www.aihw.gov.au](http://www.aihw.gov.au)>.

DRUG STATISTICS SERIES

Number 15

# **Statistics on drug use in Australia 2004**

**July 2005**

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare  
Canberra

AIHW Cat. No. PHE 62

© Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2005

This work is copyright. Apart from any use as permitted under the *Copyright Act 1968*, no part may be reproduced without prior written permission from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Requests and enquiries concerning reproduction and rights should be directed to the Head, Business Promotion and Media Unit, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, GPO Box 570, Canberra ACT 2601.

This publication is part of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's Drug Statistics Series. A complete list of the Institute's publications is available from the Information Services and Publishing Unit, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, GPO Box 570, Canberra ACT 2601, or via the Institute's web site <[www.aihw.gov.au](http://www.aihw.gov.au)>.

ISSN 1442-7230

ISBN 1 74024 486 9

### **Suggested citation**

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2005. Statistics on drug use in Australia 2004. AIHW Cat. No. PHE 62. Canberra: AIHW (Drug Statistics Series No. 15).

### **Australian Institute of Health and Welfare**

Board Chair  
Hon. Peter Collins, QC, AM

Director  
Dr Richard Madden

Any enquiries about or comments on this publication should be directed to:

Priscilla Dowling  
Australian Institute of Health and Welfare  
GPO Box 570  
Canberra ACT 2601  
Phone: (02) 6289 5675

Published by Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

Printed by Elect Printing

# Contents

List of tables .....	viii
List of figures .....	xiii
Preface.....	xiv
Summary .....	xv
Acknowledgments.....	xx
Abbreviations.....	xxi
Symbols.....	xxii
<b>1 Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
National Drug Strategy .....	1
About this report.....	1
Data sources.....	2
<b>2 Tobacco .....</b>	<b>3</b>
Introduction.....	3
Reported consumption trends .....	3
Consumption by age and sex .....	5
Apparent consumption trends.....	6
Government revenue.....	7
<b>3 Alcohol.....</b>	<b>10</b>
Introduction.....	10
Reported consumption trends .....	10
Apparent consumption trends.....	14
Government revenue.....	16
<b>4 Illicit drug use .....</b>	<b>18</b>
Introduction.....	18
Measures of illicit drug use .....	18
Marijuana/cannabis use .....	21
Ecstasy and related drugs (ERDs) use .....	22
<b>5 Pharmaceutical products .....</b>	<b>26</b>
Introduction.....	26

Top 10 prescription medicines .....	26
Community prescriptions for other major drug groups .....	28
Use of someone else’s prescribed medication .....	29
<b>6 International comparisons .....</b>	<b>31</b>
Introduction.....	31
Tobacco.....	31
Alcohol .....	33
Illicit drugs.....	35
<b>7 Drugs and health .....</b>	<b>37</b>
Introduction.....	37
Mental health.....	37
Injecting drug use and communicable disease.....	41
Injecting drug use and risky behaviour.....	45
Overdoses .....	47
Mortality and morbidity .....	50
<b>8 Special population groups .....</b>	<b>53</b>
Introduction.....	53
Young people .....	53
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people .....	60
Pregnant and/or breastfeeding women.....	62
Homeless people.....	63
Injecting drug users .....	65
Other selected population groups.....	66
<b>9 Treatment services .....</b>	<b>69</b>
Introduction.....	69
Alcohol and other drug treatment services.....	69
National pharmacotherapy statistics .....	73
Sydney medically supervised injecting centre .....	75
<b>10 Crime and law enforcement.....</b>	<b>76</b>
Introduction.....	76
Illicit drug offences .....	76
Drug use and criminal offending .....	79
Self-reported crime by injecting drug users.....	85

Illicit drug detections .....	85
<b>11 Polydrug use .....</b>	<b>89</b>
Introduction.....	89
Polydrug use and tobacco .....	89
Polydrug use and alcohol.....	89
Polydrug use and marijuana/cannabis .....	90
Polydrug use and amphetamine-type substances .....	91
Polydrug use and heroin .....	93
<b>12 Drug avoidance and moderation .....</b>	<b>96</b>
Introduction.....	96
Avoidance of cigarette smoke.....	96
Smoking moderation behaviours .....	97
Alcohol reduction behaviours.....	98
Alcohol moderation behaviours .....	99
Participation in drug treatment programs .....	100
<b>Appendix A: Confidence intervals.....</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>References .....</b>	<b>103</b>

# List of tables

Table 2.1:	Tobacco smoking status: proportion of the population aged 14 years and over, by sex, Australia, 1991 to 2004 .....	4
Table 2.2:	Tobacco smoking status: proportion of the population aged 14 years and over, by age group and sex, Australia, 2004 .....	6
Table 2.3:	Volume of tobacco cleared through excise and customs, Australia, 1995-96 to 2003-04.....	8
Table 2.4:	Government revenue from excise, customs clearances, and state business franchise fees related to the sale of tobacco, Australia, 1995-96 to 2003-04.....	9
Table 3.1:	Alcohol drinking status: proportion of the population aged 14 years and over, Australia, 1991 to 2004.....	11
Table 3.2:	Alcohol drinking status: proportion of the population aged 14 years and over, by age group and sex, Australia, 2004 .....	12
Table 3.3:	Risk of harm in the long term: proportion of the population aged 14 years and over, by age group and sex, Australia, 2004.....	13
Table 3.4:	Risk of harm in the short term: proportion of the population aged 14 years and over, by age group and sex, Australia, 2004.....	14
Table 3.5:	Alcohol available for consumption and apparent per person consumption by persons aged 15 years and over, in litres of alcohol, Australia, 1996-97 to 2002-03.....	16
Table 3.6:	Government revenue from duty paid and state business franchise fees related to the sale of alcohol, Australia, 1996-97 to 2003-04 .....	17
Table 4.1:	Summary of illicit drug use: proportion of the population aged 14 years and over, Australia, 2004 .....	19
Table 4.2:	Summary of recent illicit drug use: proportion of the population aged 14 years and over, by drug type, Australia, 1991 to 2004.....	21
Table 4.3:	Frequency of marijuana/cannabis use: proportion of recent users aged 12 years and over, by age group and sex, Australia, 2004 .....	22
Table 4.4:	ERDs use, by age group and selected drug type, persons aged 12-24 years, Australia, 2004.....	23
Table 4.5:	Regular ecstasy users: patterns of ecstasy use, by age group and sex, persons aged 16 years and over, Australia, 2004 .....	25
Table 4.6:	Regular ecstasy users: patterns of ecstasy use, by use location, 2004.....	25
Table 5.1:	Top 10 prescription medicines distributed through community pharmacies, Australia, 2003.....	27

Table 5.2:	Top 10 prescription drugs by cost to the Australian Government (PBS and RPBS), Australia, 2003 .....	27
Table 5.3:	Top 10 prescription medicines issued through community pharmacies by defined daily dose, Australia, 2003 .....	28
Table 5.4:	Number of community prescriptions issued for selected ATC groups, Australia, 2001 to 2003 .....	29
Table 5.5:	Use of someone else's prescribed medication, by sex, persons aged 14 years and over, 2004.....	30
Table 6.1:	Prevalence of daily smoking, population aged 15 years and over, selected countries, 1973 to 2003.....	32
Table 6.2:	Tobacco consumption, grams per capita, population aged 15 years and over, selected countries, 1973 to 2003 .....	33
Table 6.3:	Per capita consumption of alcoholic beverages, selected countries, 2002 .....	34
Table 6.4:	Alcohol consumption, litres of pure alcohol per capita, population aged 15 years and over, selected countries, 1963 to 2003 .....	35
Table 6.5:	Annual prevalence of substance use as a percentage of the population aged 15-64 years, selected countries, selected years from 1996 to 2003 .....	36
Table 7.1:	Psychological distress by selected drug use patterns, persons aged 18 years and over, by sex, Australia, 2004 .....	38
Table 7.2:	Recent and lifetime drug use: diagnosis and/or treatment for selected mental health disorders, persons aged 18 years and over, Australia, 2004.....	40
Table 7.3:	Injecting drug users attending a health professional for a mental health problem other than drug dependence, by type of mental health problem, 2004 .....	41
Table 7.4:	Self-reported prevalence of hepatitis B and prevalence of hepatitis C among injecting drug users, by duration of injecting drug use, 2003 .....	42
Table 7.5:	Number of AIDS diagnoses, by HIV exposure category, Australia, 1993 to 2003.....	44
Table 7.6:	Number of deaths following AIDS, by HIV exposure category, Australia, 1993 to 2003.....	45
Table 7.7:	Injecting drug users who reported using a needle and syringe after someone else in the last month, by year, sex and history of injecting drug use, Australia, 1997 to 2003 .....	46
Table 7.8:	Proportion of injecting drug users who had shared needles or other injecting equipment in last month, by state/territory, Australia, 2002 and 2003 .....	47
Table 7.9:	Proportion of injecting drug users reporting non-fatal heroin overdose, selected risk behaviours and protective factors for overdose, Australia, 2004.....	48

Table 7.10:	Number of accidental deaths due to opioids among persons aged 15–54 years, by sex and state/territory, 2002 and 2003 .....	49
Table 7.11:	Deaths attributable to tobacco use, by cause of death, and hospital episodes attributable to tobacco use, by principal diagnosis, 1998.....	51
Table 7.12:	Deaths and hospital episodes attributable to risky and high-risk alcohol consumption patterns, by sex, Australia, 2001 .....	52
Table 7.13:	Deaths attributable to illicit drug use, by cause of death, and hospital episodes attributable to illicit drug use, by principal diagnosis, Australia, 1998.....	52
Table 8.1:	Tobacco smoking status and risk of long-term alcohol-related harm: proportion of the population aged 12–19 years, by age, Australia, 2004.....	54
Table 8.2:	Consumption of alcohol and alcohol risk in the short term, persons aged 12–19 years, by age group and sex, Australia, 2004.....	55
Table 8.3:	Alcohol consumption among secondary students aged 12–17 years, by age group and sex, Australia, 1999 and 2002 .....	57
Table 8.4:	Summary of lifetime and recent use of illicit drugs, persons aged 12–19 years, Australia, 2004 .....	58
Table 8.5:	Lifetime and recent use of illicit drugs by secondary students aged 12–17 years, Australia, 1999 and 2002.....	59
Table 8.6:	Summary of drug use by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians aged 12 years and over, Australia, 2004.....	61
Table 8.7:	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: use of tobacco, alcohol and other substances, persons aged 15 years and over, 2002.....	62
Table 8.8:	Drug use in the last 12 months, pregnant and/or breastfeeding women and all other women, women aged 14–49 years, Australia, 2004.....	63
Table 8.9:	Change in alcohol consumption among women who were pregnant or who were breastfeeding in the last 12 months, aged 14–49 years, Australia, 2004.....	63
Table 8.10:	Demographic characteristics of injecting drug users, by jurisdiction, Australia, 2003.....	66
Table 8.11:	Summary of drug use in selected population groups, persons aged 12 years and over, Australia, 2004 .....	68
Table 9.1:	Closed treatment episodes by principal drug of concern and sex, Australia, 2002–03.....	70
Table 9.2:	Closed treatment episodes by main treatment type, by state and territory, Australia, 2002–03.....	73
Table 9.3:	Methadone maintenance therapy clients, by state and territory, Australia, as at 30 June 2003.....	74

Table 9.4:	Buprenorphine maintenance therapy clients, by state and territory, Australia, as at 30 June 2003 .....	75
Table 9.5:	Changes in injecting technique since using the medically supervised injecting centre, 2001 and 2002.....	75
Table 10.1:	Illicit drug arrests, by type of drug and consumer status, Australia, 1996-97 to 2003-04.....	77
Table 10.2:	Sentenced prisoners where the most serious offence was drug-related, by type of offence, by state and territory, Australia, 1995 to 2004 .....	78
Table 10.3:	Marijuana/cannabis arrests and offence notices issued per 100,000 population, by state and territory, 1996-97 to 2003-04 .....	79
Table 10.4:	Proportion of adult detainees testing positive to illicit drugs in the last 12 months, by age group, sex and type of illicit drug, Australia, 2003 .....	80
Table 10.5:	Proportion of female prisoners who used illicit drugs in the 6 months before arrest, by age group and type of illicit drug, Australia, 2003 .....	81
Table 10.6:	Proportion of female prisoners who were classified as drug-dependent, by age group, Australia, 2003 .....	82
Table 10.7:	Proportion of female prisoners who were classified as drug-dependent, by age group and type of offence for current incarceration, Australia, 2003 .....	82
Table 10.8:	Proportion of female prisoners who self-reported being under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs at the time of the offence, by age group, type of offence and type of drug used at the time of offence, Australia, 2003 .....	83
Table 10.9:	Mental health conditions affecting female prisoners who were classified as drug-dependent, Australia, 2003 .....	84
Table 10.10:	Female prisoners who were classified as drug-dependent: receipt of drug treatment services in lifetime, 2003 .....	84
Table 10.11:	Self-reported crime among injecting drug users and proportion arrested in the last year, by type of crime, Australia, 2004.....	85
Table 10.12:	Median purity of heroin seizures analysed in Australia, by state and territory, 1999-00 to 2003-04 .....	86
Table 11.1:	Recent use of other drugs by smokers and non-smokers: proportion of the population aged 14 years and over by sex, Australia, 2004.....	89
Table 11.2:	Recent use of other drugs by drinkers and non-drinkers: proportion of the population aged 14 years and over by sex, Australia, 2004.....	90
Table 11.3:	Recent use of other drugs by users and non-users of marijuana/cannabis: proportion of the population aged 14 years and over by sex, Australia, 2004.....	91
Table 11.4:	Recent use of other drugs by users and non-users of amphetamine-type substances: proportion of the population aged 14 years and over, by sex, Australia, 2004.....	92

Table 11.5:	Recent use of other ERDs: proportion of regular ecstasy users, by age group and sex, persons aged 16 years and over, Australia, 2004 .....	93
Table 11.6:	Recent use of other drugs by users and non-users of heroin: proportion of the population aged 14 years and over, by sex, Australia, 2004.....	94
Table 11.7:	Heroin users: use of other drugs in lifetime, last 6 months and day before interview, 2004 .....	95
Table 12.1:	Non-smokers' avoidance of places where they might be exposed to other people's cigarette smoke: non-smokers aged 14 years and over, by age group and sex, Australia, 2004.....	97
Table 12.2:	Attempted change in smoking behaviour: proportion of recent smokers aged 14 years and over, by sex, Australia, 2004.....	98
Table 12.3:	Alcohol reduction behaviours: proportion of recent drinkers aged 14 years and over, by risk classification and sex, Australia, 2004 .....	99
Table 12.4:	Alcohol moderation behaviours: proportion of recent drinkers aged 14 years and over, by risk classification and sex, Australia, 2004.....	100
Table 12.5:	Participation in alcohol and other drug treatment programs in the last 12 months: proportion of the population aged 14 years and over, by sex, 2004.....	101

# List of figures

Figure 2.1: Daily smokers: proportion of people aged 14 years and over, 1985 to 2004.....	5
Figure 3.1: Indices of alcohol consumption: Australia, 1964–65 to 2001–02 (1964–65=100).....	15
Figure 4.1: Prevalence and 95% confidence intervals of drug use in the last 12 months, selected illicit drugs, persons aged 12 years and over, by age group, Australia, 2004 .....	20
Figure 7.1: Hepatitis C prevalence among people attending needle and syringe programs, by sex, Australia, 1997 to 2003.....	43
Figure 7.2: Opioid overdose deaths: rate per million persons aged 15–54 years, Australia, 1988 to 2003 .....	49
Figure 8.1: Trends in tobacco smoking among secondary students aged 12–17 years, Australia, 1984 to 2002 .....	56
Figure 8.2: Proportion of SAAP support periods where reason for seeking assistance and/or support to the client was for substance use, by age group and sex, Australia, 2003–04 .....	64
Figure 8.3: Proportion of SAAP support periods where reason for seeking assistance and/or support to the client was for substance use, by sex, Australia, 1998–99 to 2003–04 .....	65
Figure 9.1: Closed treatment episodes by selected principal drug of concern and age group, Australia, 2002–03.....	71
Figure 9.2: Closed treatment episodes by injecting drug use and age group, Australia, 2002–03 .....	72
Figure 10.1: Customs border detections of heroin, by number and total weight, Australia, 1994–95 to 2003–04 .....	87
Figure 10.2: Customs border detections of ecstasy (MDMA), by number and total weight, Australia, 1994–95 to 2003–04 .....	87
Figure 10.3: Clandestine laboratory detections, Australia, 1996–97 to 2003–04.....	88

# Preface

*Statistics on Drug Use in Australia 2004* is the eleventh in a series originally titled *Statistics on Drug Abuse in Australia*, which was produced by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing. This publication is the fourth produced by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW). This edition includes additional material, including more in-depth information on substance use amongst young people, and ecstasy and related drugs use. This publication also intends to act as a summary of major drug-use statistical collections, which leads interested readers to the sources of more detailed information.

This report includes data from the 2004 National Drug Strategy Household Survey, findings of which have been published in the AIHW publications *2004 National Drug Strategy Household Survey: First Results*, and *2004 National Drug Strategy Household Survey: State and Territory Supplement*. Additional findings will be published in *2004 National Drug Strategy Household Survey: Detailed Findings*, scheduled for release in October 2005.

# Summary

## Tobacco

Based on the results of the 2004 National Drug Strategy Household Survey (NDSHS), 17% of the Australian population aged 14 years and over were daily smokers. Approximately one in four Australians (26%) were ex-smokers and just over half the population (53%) had never smoked.

Overall, men were more likely than women to be smokers. In 2004, 19% of males were daily smokers, while 16% of females were daily smokers. People aged 20–29 years of age had the highest smoking rates, with 24% of this age group smoking daily.

Smoking rates declined over the period 1991 to 2004.

During the 2003–04 financial year, the Australian Government collected over \$5.6 billion in revenue from the importation and sale of tobacco products in Australia.

## Alcohol

In 2004, around 84% of the population aged 14 years and over had consumed at least one full serve of alcohol in the last 12 months. People were most likely to drink either weekly (41%) or less than weekly (34%), and 9% of Australians consumed alcohol on a daily basis. People aged 60 years and over recorded the highest prevalence of daily drinking (17%).

Overall, males were more likely to consume alcohol daily (12%) or weekly (48%) compared with females (6% and 35%).

The pattern of alcohol consumption by the Australian population has remained relatively unchanged over the period 1991 to 2004.

Around one in three people (35%) aged 14 years and over consumed alcohol in a way that put themselves at increased risk of alcohol-related harm in the short term on at least one occasion in the last 12 months. One in ten Australians consumed alcohol at levels that are considered risky or high risk for alcohol-related harm in the long term.

Consistent with the trends in reported consumption, the apparent consumption of alcohol by Australians measured in litres per capita has remained stable during the past decade.

## Illicit drugs

Based on responses to the 2004 NDSHS, 38% of Australians aged 14 years and over had used any illicit drug at least once in their lifetime, and 15% had used any illicit drug at least once in the last 12 months.

Marijuana/cannabis was the most common illicit drug used, with one in three persons having used it least once in their lifetime and 11% of the population having used it in the previous 12 months.

Recent illicit drug use was most prevalent among persons aged between 18 and 29 years in 2004, with almost one in three people (31%) in this age bracket having used at least one illicit drug in the last 12 months.

The proportion of the population who had used any illicit drug in the last 12 months fluctuated between 1991 and 2004, reaching a similar level in 2004 (15%) to the prevalence in 1993 (14%). While the proportion of people who had recently used marijuana/cannabis (11%) was the lowest seen in the 13-year period, the proportion using ecstasy (3%) was the highest prevalence for that substance in the same period.

Ecstasy and related drugs were commonly used by 12-24-year-old Australians in 2004. The most prevalent drugs from this group were ecstasy and meth/amphetamines, with 7% of persons in this age group having used each substance in the last 12 months. In particular, the highest recent use of ecstasy (13%) and meth/amphetamines (11%) were reported by 20-24-year-olds.

## **Pharmaceuticals**

Of the 220 million prescription medicines dispensed in 2003, 81% were subsidised by the Australian Government. The two most common prescription medicines distributed through community pharmacies, by cost to the government, and by defined daily dose per 1,000 population, were both medications prescribed for lipid reduction (lowering of blood cholesterol).

In 2004, around 13% of Australians aged 14 years and over had ever used someone else's prescribed or recommended medication when they were feeling unwell.

## **International comparisons**

The decline in smoking rates in Australia over the past three decades has resulted in Australia being ranked lowest of all countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in terms of the prevalence of daily smoking.

In 2002, Australia ranked 23rd highest in the world in terms of per capita consumption of alcohol, with approximately 7 litres equivalent of pure alcohol consumed per person. This corresponded to an annual per capita consumption of approximately 92 litres of beer, 21 litres of wine and 1 litre of pure alcohol from spirits.

## **Drugs and health**

According to results from the 2004 NDSHS, smokers were more likely than non-smokers to have experienced high or very high levels of psychological distress and more likely to have been diagnosed with and/or treated for any mental health disorder in the previous 12 months. This was also true for males and females who consumed alcohol at risky and high-risk levels for long-term harm, compared with low-risk drinkers and those who abstained from drinking alcohol.

Compared with those who had not used an illicit drug other than marijuana/cannabis, persons who had used any illicit drug other than marijuana/cannabis, either at least once in their lifetime or in the last 12 months, were approximately twice as likely to have been

diagnosed with and/or treated for a mental health disorder. For example, 17% of persons who had used an illicit drug other than marijuana/cannabis in the last 12 months had been diagnosed and/or treated for a mental health disorder, compared with 9% of non-users.

According to the annual Needle and Syringe Program (NSP) Survey, hepatitis C prevalence among people attending needle and syringe programs remained high over the period 1997 to 2003, with 57% of males and 61% of females testing positive to the hepatitis C virus antibody in 2003.

The death rate from accidental opioid overdose among people aged 15–54 years increased during the late 1990s, peaking at 101.9 deaths per million persons in 1999, before declining sharply to 34.6 deaths per million persons in 2001. Since 2001 the death rate from accidental opioid overdose has declined slightly, to 31.5 deaths per million persons in 2003.

## **Special population groups**

### **Young people aged 12–19 years**

Results from the 2004 NDSHS indicate that the prevalence of smoking increased rapidly with age among young people aged 12–19 years. An estimated one in five people aged 18–19 years were smokers in 2004, with approximately 17% smoking on a daily basis, compared with approximately 2% of 12–15-year-olds.

Based on results from a nationally representative study, smoking prevalence declined amongst secondary students aged 12–17 years between 1999 and 2002. The use of various illicit drugs by this population group either declined or remained stable during this time, and the prevalence of alcohol consumption by secondary students remained stable.

### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people**

In 2004, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who consumed alcohol in the last 12 months (71%) was lower than the proportion for other Australians (82%). However, compared with other Australians, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were more likely to have smoked and/or used illicit drugs in the last 12 months. For example, 19% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people had used marijuana/cannabis in the last 12 months compared with 11% of other Australians.

### **Pregnant and/or breastfeeding women**

The 2004 NDSHS found that women who were pregnant and/or breastfeeding in the previous 12 months were less likely to consume alcohol (47%) and any illicit drug (6%), compared with when they weren't (85% and 17% respectively). Pregnant and/or breastfeeding women appeared less likely to reduce their tobacco consumption, with 22% smoking when they weren't pregnant and/or breastfeeding, and 20% continuing to smoke during pregnancy and/or while breastfeeding.

## **Other selected population groups**

Compared with people of higher socioeconomic status (SES), people of lower SES were more likely to be daily smokers, with almost one-quarter (24%) of people in the lowest quintile and around one in ten (11%) people in the highest quintile smoking daily in 2004. However, people of lower SES seemed less likely to consume alcohol at risky and high-risk levels for harm in the short term, and less likely to have recently used marijuana/cannabis and/or amphetamine-type substances compared with people of higher SES.

## **Treatment services**

In the 2002–03 Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Services National Minimum Data Set (AODTS–NMDS) collection, alcohol was the most common principal drug of concern in treatment episodes (38%), followed by marijuana/cannabis (22%), heroin (18%) and meth/amphetamines (11%). The proportion of treatment episodes where alcohol was the principal drug of concern increased with age, while the proportion of episodes where marijuana/cannabis was the principal drug of concern decreased with age.

Treatment episodes for clients aged 20–29 years were the most diverse in terms of drug type, with roughly similar proportions of episodes for alcohol, marijuana/cannabis, heroin and meth/amphetamines.

In 2002–03, around one-quarter (26%) of treatment episodes involved clients who identified themselves as current injectors.

Excluding clients in South Australia, there were around 25,900 methadone maintenance therapy clients and around 8,600 buprenorphine maintenance therapy clients in Australia at 30 June 2003.

## **Crime and law enforcement**

Marijuana/cannabis accounted for 72% of illicit drug arrests in 2003–04, compared with 12% of arrests related to amphetamine-type stimulants.

In 2004, one in ten sentenced prisoners was imprisoned for drug-related offences. The most common drug-related offence for which people were imprisoned was dealing/trafficking drugs.

Results based on the 2003 Drug Use Careers of Offenders (DUCO) study show that two-thirds of female sentenced prisoners used an illicit drug in the 6 months prior to their arrest, while around 27% were classified in the study as dependent on alcohol and 55% were classified as dependent on drugs. Around two-thirds of female prisoners responding to the 2003 DUCO survey who were classified in the study as alcohol and/or drug dependent reported that they ‘often’ experienced a mental health condition while growing up.

## **Polydrug use**

Polydrug use is defined as ‘the use of more than one drug, simultaneously or at different times’ (MCDS 2004:24). According to the 2004 NDSHS, substance users were more likely than non-users to use other drugs. For example, there was a more than fourfold greater use

of marijuana/cannabis and more than threefold greater use of any illicit drug among tobacco smokers compared with non-smokers. Similar results were observed when users of alcohol, marijuana/cannabis, amphetamine-type substances and heroin were compared with non-users.

In their surveys of user populations, the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre found that polydrug use is common among ecstasy users and injecting drug users who use heroin.

## **Drug avoidance and moderation**

In 2004, approximately 5% of male smokers and 7% of female smokers had participated in anti-smoking programs in the last 12 months. While 40% of smokers unsuccessfully tried to give up smoking, 23% successfully quit for more than one month. Less than 1% of recent drinkers had participated in an alcohol treatment program in the last 12 months.

# Acknowledgments

Priscilla Dowling authored this report on behalf of Population Health Data and Information Services Unit at the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

A number of other staff at the AIHW deserve special mention and their time, assistance and support are greatly appreciated. In particular, Mark Cooper-Stanbury, Amber Summerill, Suraiya Nargis, David Batts and Olivia Lawton made important contributions to the report. Comments and suggestions from Chrysanthe Psychogios, Ros Madden, Fadwa Al-Yaman, Qasim Shah and Rose Lai are also appreciated.

The author also acknowledges the support provided by staff of the AIHW Information Services and Publishing Unit.

Expertise and useful comments provided by referees Fearnley Szuster, from the Public Health Information Development Unit, University of Adelaide, and Jennifer Stafford, from the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, are gratefully acknowledged.

A number of people from other agencies provided assistance during the preparation of this report, and their time and assistance are acknowledged and greatly appreciated. Special thanks go to:

- Jenny Reed and Donna Furniss from the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing
- Maxine Robinson, John Dudley and George Phillips from the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing
- Holly Johnson, Jenny Mouzos and Carmen Schulte from the Australian Institute of Criminology
- Emma Black and Maria Agalotis from the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre
- Victoria White from the Centre for Behavioural Research in Cancer, the Cancer Council Victoria
- Swati Shourie from the National Centre in HIV Epidemiology and Clinical Research
- Peter Malone from the Australian Taxation Office
- Maria Meere, Jo Bell and Richard Lund from the Australian Bureau of Statistics
- Tanya Chikritzhs and Richard Pascal from the National Drug Research Institute.

The financial assistance provided by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing is gratefully acknowledged.

# Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACC	Australian Crime Commission
AIC	Australian Institute of Criminology
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
AODTS-NMDS	Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Services National Minimum Data Set
ASSADS	Australian Secondary Students' Alcohol and Drug Survey
ATC	Anatomical Therapeutic Chemical
ATO	Australian Taxation Office
ATS	Amphetamine-type substance(s)
DUCO	Drug Use Careers of Offenders
DUMA	Drug Use Monitoring in Australia
ERDs	Ecstasy and related drugs
GHB	Gamma-hydroxybutyrate
IDRS	Illicit Drug Reporting System
MCDS	Ministerial Council on Drug Strategy
MDA	3,4 methylenedioxyamphetamine
MDMA	3,4 methylenedioxymethylamphetamine (ecstasy)
NATSISS	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey
NCHECR	National Centre in HIV Epidemiology and Clinical Research
NDARC	National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre
NDRI	National Drug Research Institute
NDS	National Drug Strategy
NDSHS	National Drug Strategy Household Survey
NSP	Needle and Syringe Program
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PDI	Party Drugs Initiative
PBS	Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme
RPBS	Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme
SAAP	Supported Accommodation Assistance Program
SEIFA	Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas
SES	Socioeconomic status
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

# Symbols

n.a.	Not available
n.y.a	Not yet available
–	Nil, or rounded to zero
..	Not applicable
*	Result unreliable as the relative standard error was greater than 50%
kg	Kilogram(s)
m	Million