

1998 National Drug Strategy Household Survey

Queensland results

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DRUG STATISTICS SERIES

Number 4

1998 National Drug Strategy Household Survey

Queensland results

June 2000

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
Canberra

AIHW cat. no. PHE 23

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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 Publications Unit, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, GPO Box 570, Canberra ACT 2601, or via the Institute's web site (<http://www.aihw.gov.au>).

ISSN 1442-7230

ISBN 1 74024 047 5

Suggested citation

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2000. 1998 National Drug Strategy Household Survey: Queensland results. AIHW cat. no. PHE 23. Canberra: AIHW (Drug Statistics Series no. 4).

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Published by Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

Printed by Elect Printing

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Summary

Between June and September 1998 10,030 Australians aged 14 years and older participated in the National Drug Strategy Household Survey. This was the sixth survey in a series which commenced in 1985. Respondents were asked about their knowledge of drugs, their attitudes towards drugs, their drug consumption histories, and related behaviours. This report features results for Queensland, based on responses from 2,647 participants in that State.

General findings

Compared with 1995, there appears to be slightly higher use in Queensland in 1998 across all drug groups included in the survey, both in terms of lifetime use (that is used at any time in one's life) and recent use (used in the last 12 months).

Young females accounted for a large part of the overall increases in use of illicit substances (notably marijuana/cannabis), and it appears that for some substances female use is now on par with use by males.

Tobacco

Tobacco was primarily associated with a drug 'problem' by slightly higher than one in 20 persons living in Queensland; two in five approved of the regular use of tobacco by adults; and two-thirds of respondents approved of measures designed to reduce the harms associated with tobacco use. More than two-thirds of the Queensland population had tried tobacco at some time in their lives, and approximately one in four were current smokers.

One in six Queenslanders indicated that tobacco was their first drug of choice, and the proportion regularly smoking (smokes daily or most days) increased by 1 percentage point between 1995 and 1998 to 24%. The average age at which smokers took up tobacco increased from 15.3 to 15.6 years over the same period. Under-age smokers (persons aged under 18, to whom it is illegal to sell tobacco products) were likely to have been introduced to smoking by friends or/ acquaintances. Subsequently, two in five Queensland under-age smokers obtained their cigarettes from retail outlets.

When compared to the other States and Territories combined, Queensland results were generally consistent. However, the proportions of current smokers—both regular and occasional—were slightly higher in Queensland than in the other States and Territories.

Alcohol

About one in six persons living in Queensland primarily associated alcohol with a drug 'problem'; three in five persons approved of the regular use of alcohol by adults; and three in five persons approved of measures designed to reduce the harms associated with alcohol use. Nine in 10 persons in the Queensland population had tried alcohol at some time in their lives and 80% had recently consumed alcohol.

Two in five persons nominated alcohol as their first drug of choice and the proportion drinking regularly increased from 43% to 48% between 1995 and 1998. One in four persons consumed alcohol daily or on most days in a week, while two in five consumed less often than weekly. Under-age alcohol drinkers (that is persons aged under 18, to whom it is illegal to sell alcohol) were likely to have been introduced to drinking by friends or acquaintances. Subsequently, about 14% of under-age drinkers obtained their alcohol from retail outlets.

One in seven persons admitted to driving a motor vehicle, one in 10 verbally abused someone, and one in 45 persons physically abused someone while under the influence of alcohol. Three in 10 persons had been verbally abused and one in 17 had been physically abused by someone who was affected by alcohol.

Persons aged 14 years and over in the Queensland population were more likely to consume alcohol than persons in the other Australian States and Territories combined. Persons living in Queensland were also more likely to perceive alcohol as a drug problem than were other Australians.

Illicit drugs

More than three in four persons living in Queensland primarily associated an illicit drug with a drug 'problem'; one in four approved the regular use of marijuana/cannabis by adults, and fewer than one in 10 persons approved the regular use of each of the other illicit drugs included in the survey. Almost one in two Queensland respondents had used an illicit drug at some time in their lives and over one in five had used illicit drugs in the previous 12 months. One in two persons supported measures designed to reduce harm associated with illicit drug use.

Around one in 16 persons nominated an illicit drug as their first drug of choice, with one in 20 nominating cannabis/marijuana as first choice. Approximately four in five illicit drug users were introduced to illicit drugs by friends and acquaintances. Subsequently, most illicit drug users continued to obtain their illicit drugs from friends and acquaintances. One in 19 persons drove a motor vehicle, one in 50 verbally abused someone, and one in 200 physically abused someone, while under the influence of illicit drugs. One in 10 persons were verbally abused and one in 40 were physically abused by someone affected by illicit drugs.

For both Queensland and the other States and Territories combined, marijuana/cannabis was the most widely used illicit drug. However, rates of lifetime use were marginally higher in Queensland. This pattern was reversed for recent use.

Acknowledgments

The 1998 National Drug Strategy Household Survey was a complex undertaking, which required the valued input of many individuals and organisations. The Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services (now the Department of Health and Aged Care) Policy Reference Group and the Survey Technical Advisory Committee (refer to Appendix 1) were the primary steering committees.

This report was prepared for Queensland Health by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Principal contributors were Amber Summerill, Mark Cooper-Stanbury and Keiran Faulkner.

Funding

Funding for the survey was provided principally by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care (formerly the Department of Health and Family Services).

Additional funds were provided by the Health Department of New South Wales, Queensland Health, the Victorian Department of Human Services, the Department of Community and Health Services Tasmania, and the ACT Department of Health and Community Care.

Funding for this report was provided by Queensland Health.

General acknowledgment

The participation of over 10,000 Australians in a survey which invited admissions of possibly illegal activities is very much appreciated.