



Pharmaceuticals

Alcohol, tobacco and other drugs in Australia

Most **ambulance attendances** for any **pharmaceutical** drug in 2021 were for **females**, 3 in 5 of total attendances. [6]



In 2019, **pain-killers/opioids** were the **most common pharmaceutical used non-medically** by Australians, followed by tranquilisers/sleeping pills. [2]

2.7%

Pain-killers/ opioids

1.8%

Tranquillisers/sleeping pills

The rate of **opioid scripts dispensed** **increased** between 2012 13 and 2016 17 (from 57,700 to 63,900 scripts per 100,000), **then decreased** to 2020 21 (54,100 scripts per 100,000). [3]



Between 1997 and 2020, the **rate of deaths** where **benzodiazepines** were present **rose** from 1.9 per 100,000 population to 3.2 per 100,000 population. [1]

In 2019, people from **Remote and very remote areas** were **1.5 times as likely** as those from Major cities to have used pharmaceuticals for non-medical reasons. [2]



1 in 25 (4.2%) people reported **recent non medical use** of a pharmaceutical

1 in 9 (11.7%) people **ever used** a pharmaceutical non medically [2]

In 2020 21, **pharmaceuticals** were the **principal drug of concern** in **4.8%** of **treatment episodes** for clients' own alcohol and other drug use. [5]

Between 2015-16 and 2020-21, **rates of hospitalisations decreased** for both opioids and benzodiazepines. [4]





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In 2019, Australians were **more likely to approve** of non medical use of **pain killers/opioids** (12.4%) and tranquilisers /sleeping pills (9.3%) than other illicit drugs except cannabis.[2]



In 2019, **people with mental health conditions** were **2.1x as likely** as those without mental health conditions to have recently used pharmaceuticals for non-medical reasons.[2]

References

National Drug Strategy Household Survey findings relate to people aged 14 or older unless specified. An adult is a person aged 18 or older.[2] Benzodiazepines and other sedatives and hypnotics includes barbiturates, but excludes ethanol.[4]

Ambulance attendance data are for those aged over 15 years, data includes NSW, VIC, QLD, TAS and ACT. [6]

1. AIHW (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare) 2022. AIHW analysis of the National Mortality Database 2020.
2. AIHW 2020. National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2019. Drug statistics series no. 32. Cat. no. PHE 270. Canberra: AIHW. Viewed 3 August 2020.
3. AIHW analysis of Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme data maintained by the Department of Health and sourced from Services Australia and the Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2022.
4. AIHW analysis of the National Hospital Morbidity Database 2020–21.
5. AIHW 2022. Alcohol and other drug treatment services in Australia annual report. Cat. No. HSE 250. AIHW, Australian Government, accessed 27 July 2022.
6. AIHW analysis of the National Ambulance Surveillance System, Monash University, Turning Point.

Source: Alcohol, tobacco and other drugs in Australia

(<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/alcohol/alcohol-tobacco-other-drugs-australia>).

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