

Executive Summary

The 2019 EDRS sample (N=797) were predominantly young, well-educated males, consistent with the sample profile since monitoring began. Ecstasy and cannabis were the most commonly reported drug of choice, whilst cannabis and alcohol were the drugs used most often in the past month.

Ecstasy

Reports of ecstasy pill use continued to decline, with ecstasy capsules being the most commonly used form for the first time since monitoring began. Indeed, 77%, 67%, 63% and 29% of the sample reported past six month use of ecstasy capsules, pills, crystal, and powder, respectively. One in four participants (28%) reported weekly or more frequent ecstasy use. The median number of capsules used in a typical and maximum session were 2 and 4, respectively.

Methamphetamine

Methamphetamine use declined from when monitoring began to 2017, stabilising in the past three years with one in three participants reporting past six month use in 2019. One in five participants (21%) who had recently used methamphetamine reported weekly or more frequent use. While powder has consistently been the main form used, the difference in the per cent reporting use of powder and crystal in 2019 was the smallest observed historically (21% and 18%, respectively). Four in five participants (80%) who had used crystal had recently smoked this form.

Cocaine

Cocaine use increased from 2018 to 2019, with the largest per cent of participants reporting recent use since monitoring began (67%). This was mostly driven by significant increases in use in various jurisdictions, most notably NSW, SA and the NT. Further, 59% of those who commented believed cocaine to be 'easy' or 'very easy' to obtain, the highest per cent observed throughout monitoring. Most consumers reported infrequent use of cocaine (7% weekly or more frequent use) and median price remained stable.

Cannabis

At least three in four participants have reported recent use of cannabis each year since monitoring began, although the per cent reporting use in 2019 (85%) decreased significantly compared to 2018 (90%). One-quarter (27%) reported daily use in the past six months in 2019.

Ketamine & LSD

Recent use of ketamine significantly increased from 2018 to 2019, with 41% of the sample reporting recent use in 2019 (35% in 2018). Recent use of LSD remained stable, with 47% reporting recent use in 2019. Frequency of use for both these drugs was low. Reports of price, perceived purity and availability were mostly consistent with 2018.

New psychoactive substances (NPS) and other drugs

Thirty per cent of the sample reported recent use of at least one form of NPS. DMT and the 2C class were the most commonly used NPS in 2019 (16% and 6%, respectively). Reported recent use of e-cigarettes increased from 2018 to 2019 (34% to 40%); as did the per cent reporting amyl nitrite use (22% to 38%).

Drug-related harms and other risks

Ninety per cent of the sample reported using a combination of depressants, cannabis, or hallucinogens/dissociatives on their last occasion of stimulant use. In the past 12 months, 24% reported a non-fatal overdose following alcohol use, 27% after any depressant, and 22% after a stimulant. Reported past month injecting drug use remained low (3%). Treatment engagement also remained low (6% in the past year). In the sample 57% self-reported experiencing a mental health problem in the preceding six months, and 58% of this group had seen a mental health professional. Thirty-two per cent reported engaging in drug dealing and 21% reported engaging in property crime in the past month. The majority had purchased drugs face-to-face (82%) or via social networking applications (73%) in the past 12 months; one in ten (10%) had purchased drugs on darknet marketplaces.