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Introduction

The Illicit Drug Reporting System (IDRS), conducted since 2000, monitors the price, purity and availability of heroin and other opioids, methamphetamines, cocaine and cannabis. This poster provides a closer look at the health related issues among people who inject drugs (PWID) interviewed in 2012 for the IDRS at a National level.

Method

The system uses data from three sources:

- Interviews with people who inject drugs (n=924)
- Interviews with key experts who work with PWID such as health workers or law enforcement
- Existing databases on drug-related issues (indicator data) such as customs

Results

Demographics (see Table 1)

- 924 participants interviewed for the 2012 IDRS
- Mean age was 39 years (range 17-71 years)
- 66% were male
- 84% were unemployed (significant increase from 79% in 2011; $p < 0.05$)
- 44% were in drug treatment
- 54% reported a prison history

Table 1: Demographic characteristics

National demographics (%)	2011 N=868	2012 N=924
Mean age (years)	38	39
Male	66	66
Unemployed	79	84↑
Currently in treatment	49	44
Prison history	55	54

Source: IDRS interviews

↑ significant increase between 2011 and 2012 ($p < 0.05$)

Recent use

Heroin

- 60% reported recent heroin use on a median of 72 days
- 28% of recent heroin users reported daily heroin use

Methamphetamine

- 68% reported recently using one or more forms of methamphetamine (speed, base, ice/crystal)
- 40% recently used speed on a median of 10 days
- 18% recently used base (significant decrease from 21% in 2011; $p < 0.05$) on a median of six days
- 54% recently used ice/crystal (significant increase from 45% in 2011; $p < 0.05$) on a median of 12 days

Cocaine

- 15% reported recent cocaine use (44% in NSW) on a median of three days in the last six months (7 days in NSW)

Cannabis

- 76% reported recent cannabis use nearly daily (160 days).
- Hydroponic cannabis dominated the

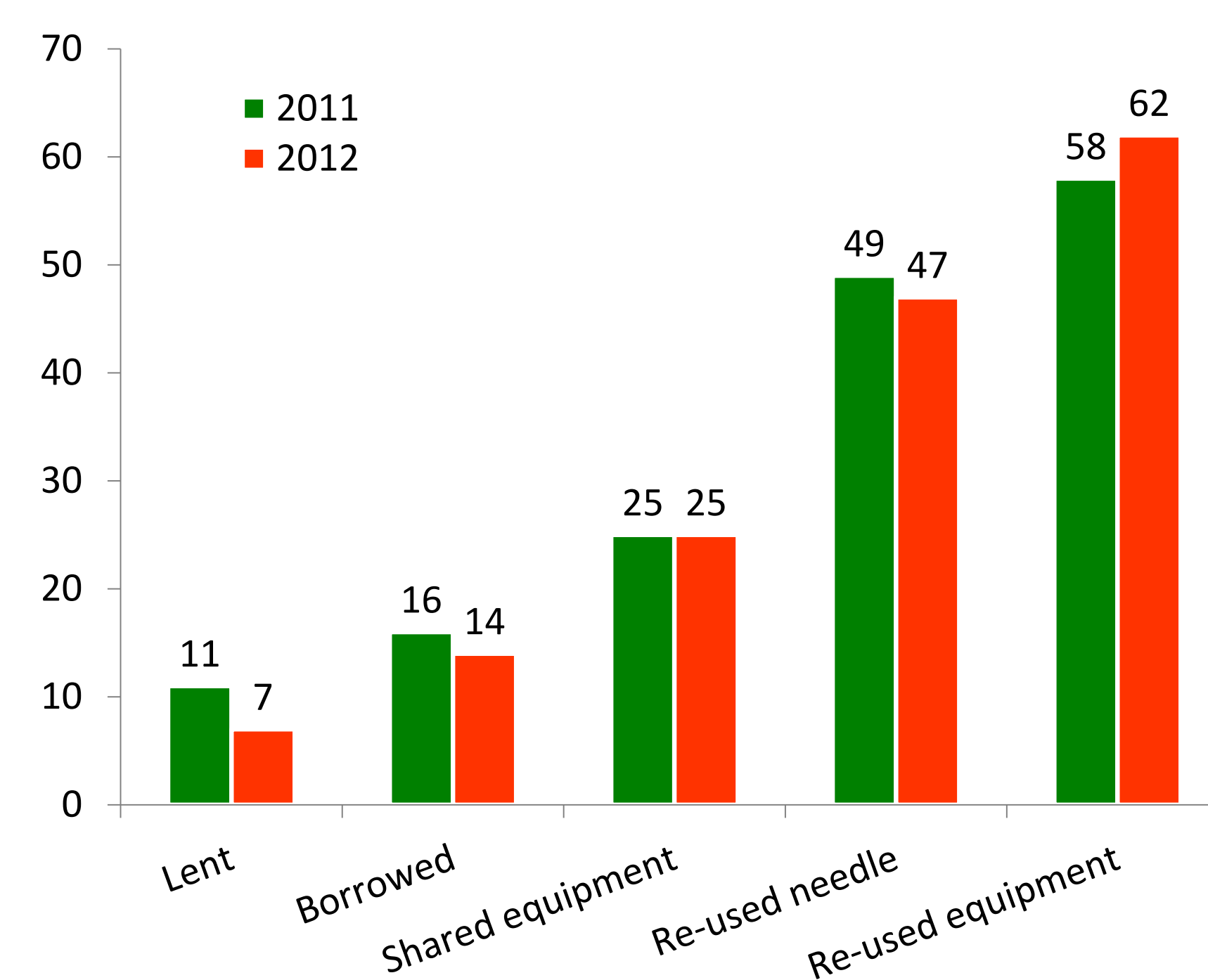
Pharmaceuticals

- 43% recently used morphine (mainly in TAS and the NT) on a median of 28 days
- 40% recently injected morphine
- 39% recently used oxycodone (mainly in TAS) on a median of nine days
- 33% recently injected oxycodone
- 64% recently used any form of benzodiazepine (including Alprazolam)
- 7% recently injected any form of benzodiazepine

Injecting risk behaviours (see Figure 1)

- 7% reported borrowing a needle (after somebody else had used it) in the last month (significant decrease from 11% in 2011; $p < 0.05$)
- 14% reported lending a needle (after using it) in the last month
- 25% reported sharing injecting equipment (mainly spoons) in the last month
- 47% report re-using their own needle and 62% reported re-using their own injecting equipment (mainly spoons) in the last month
- Injecting in the arm was reported by the majority of participants as the last site of injection

Figure 1: Injecting risk behaviours in the last month



Source: IDRS interviews

Injection related health issues

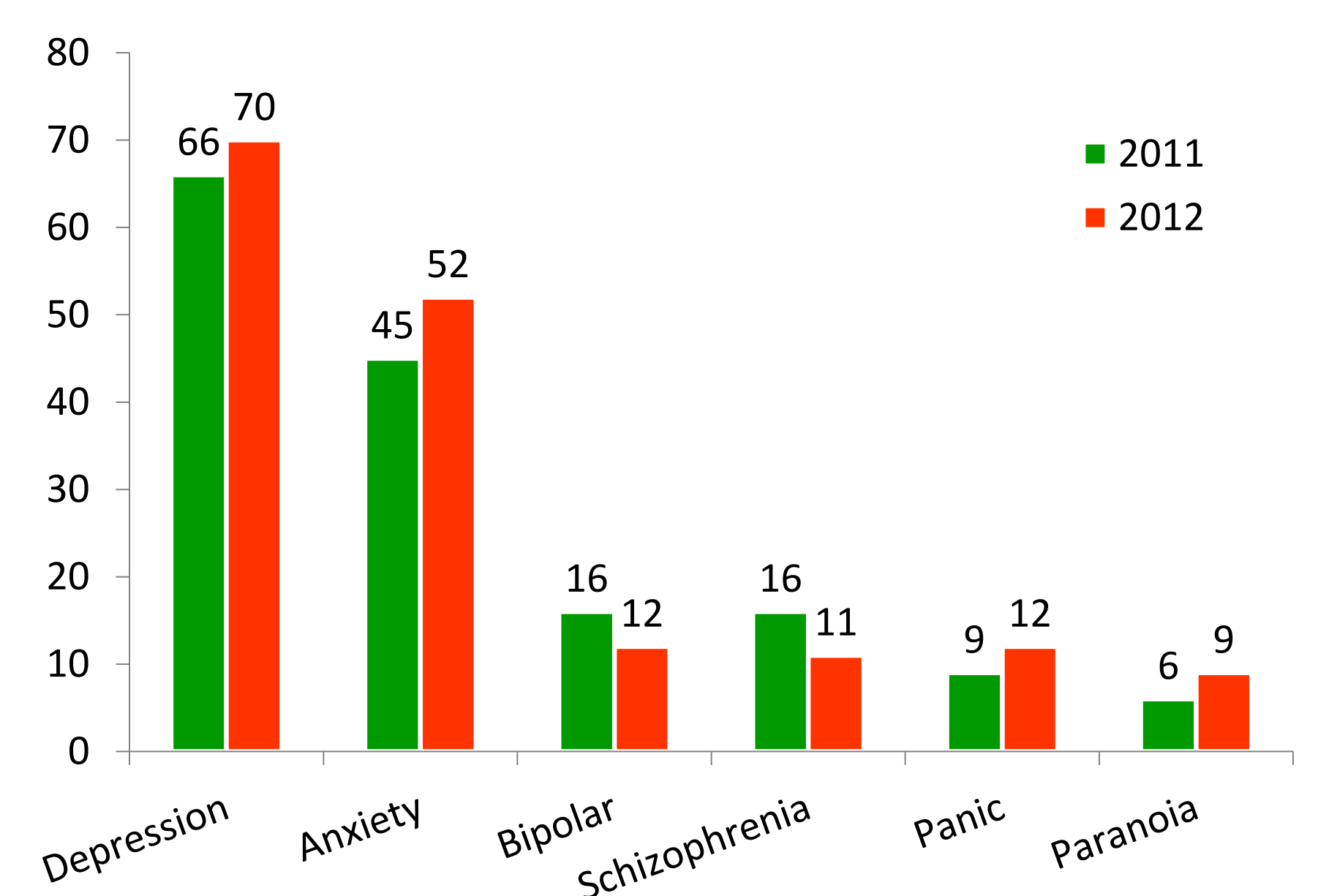
- 39% reported scarring/bruising from injecting in the last month
- 34% reported difficulty injecting in the last month
- 20% reported a dirty hit in the last month
- 8% reported an injection/abscess in the last month
- 5% reported an overdose in the last month



Mental health problems (see Figure 2)

- 43% self-reported a mental health problem in the last six months
- Of those who self-reported a mental health problem the majority reported depression (70%), followed by anxiety (52%)
- 58% of those who self-reported a mental health problem attended a health professional for the problem (significant decrease from 71% in 2011; $p < 0.05$)

Figure 2: Mental health problems among those who self-reported a mental health problem



Source: IDRS interviews

Blood Borne Viral infections (BBVI)

- 26% reported testing for Hepatitis B (Hep B) in the last three months, 29% for Hepatitis C (Hep C) and 28% for HIV/AIDS
- 5% reported a positive result for Hep B, 46% for

Conclusion

In 2012, 924 participants were interviewed for the IDRS. The mean age was 39yrs with the majority being male. A large proportion were unemployed and around half were in drug treatment.

Cannabis was the drug most recently used in the previous six months followed by any methamphetamine, benzodiazepines and heroin. An increase in recent ice/crystal use and a decrease in recent base use was found.

Small numbers reported borrowing needles however nearly half reported re-using their own needle.

Nearly half self-reported a mental health problem in the last six months, mainly depression and anxiety.

Around one-quarter of the sample reported testing for Hep B, Hep C and HIV/AIDS in the last three months. Around half were positive for Hep C.

Further information:

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