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Introduction

The Illicit Drug Reporting System (IDRS) is primarily concerned with monitoring use and markets of illicit drugs such as heroin, pharmaceutical opioids, methamphetamine and cannabis in Australia. It is intended to serve as strategic early warning system to prepare policy makers, and the health and law enforcement sectors for issues likely to be of future concern.

Aims

To investigate drug trends in the ACT, specifically trends of recent use of illicit opioids and methamphetamines.

Method

SPSS v.22 was used to analyse the data.

This poster investigates the rates of use of methamphetamine and illicit opioids among the 2014 ACT IDRS. Surveys conducted with sentinel groups of people who use drugs form the main part of this study. It is therefore important to note that the results are not representative of illicit drug use in the general population but are indicative of emerging issues that warrant further investigation.

Conclusion

The 2014 ACT IDRS sample of people who inject drugs (PWID) continue to report rates of drug use similar to those observed over the past 5 years.

The proportion of PWID reporting use of illicit opioids continues to dominate the market with the use of heroin remaining the most commonly reported illicit opioid. Median days of use of heroin have seen some fluctuation over the past few years but is holding stable at 60 days in 2014. The illicit use of methadone and morphine remains low and stable while the illicit use of oxycodone saw a spike in 2011 but has returned to low levels since.

The proportion of PWID reporting recent use of methamphetamine has remained stable across all forms. There has been some shifting in the preferred form of methamphetamine. However, from year to year, this has not been statistically significant. Crystal continues to be the most frequently reported form used. Median days of use increased significantly between 2012 and 2013 and continues an upward trend in 2014 (although not significantly higher than last year). The use of all forms (combined) also increased in 2013 and remains stable in 2014.

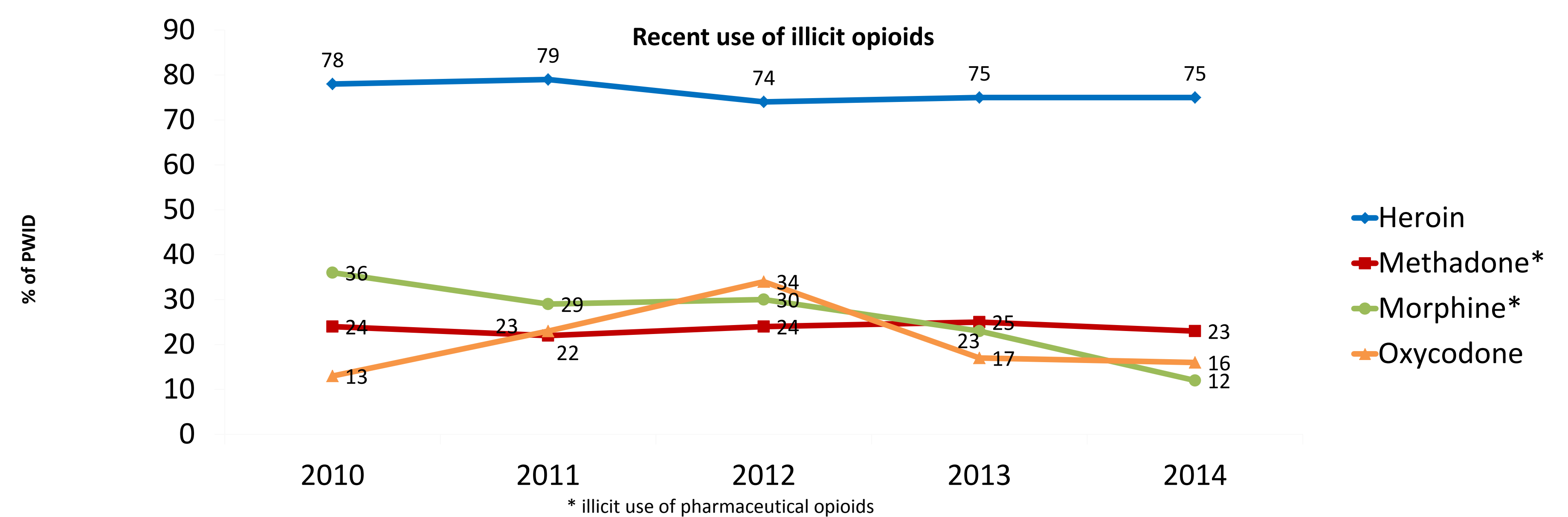
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Results

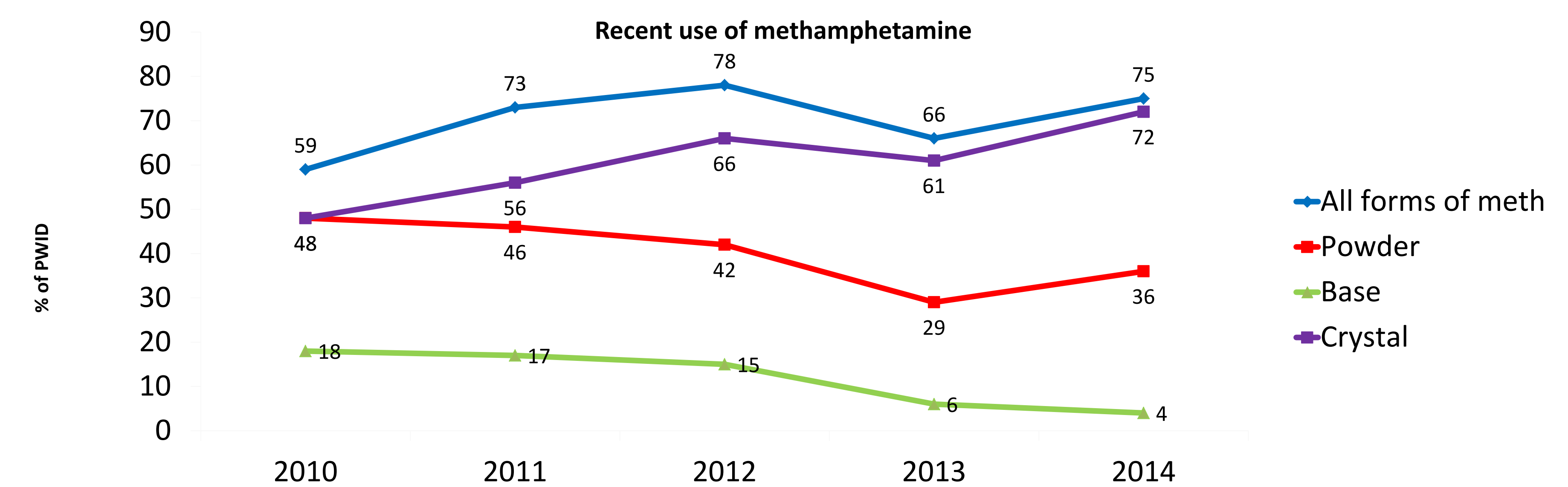
The IDRS sample is mostly a poly-drug using population with the median number of illicit drugs used being four (range 1-15).

The illicit use of opioids (including heroin and illicit pharmaceutical opioids) continues to dominate the drug scene as the market remains relatively stable.

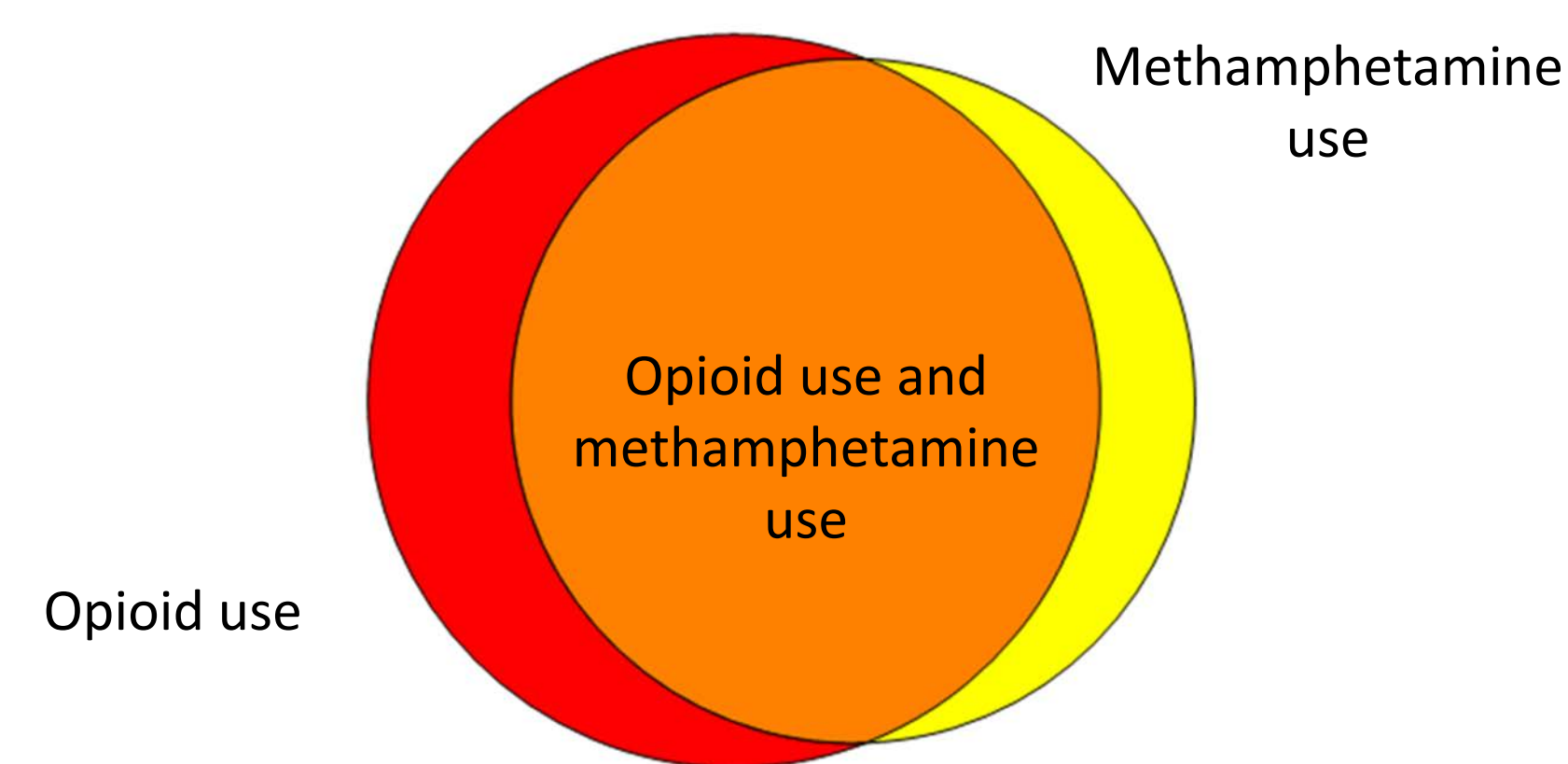
Eighty-six percent of the 2014 ACT IDRS sample reported the recent (past 6 months) use of illicit opioids. The recent use of illicit opioids has remained stable over the past 5 years.



Three-quarters (75%) of the 2014 ACT IDRS sample reported the recent (past 6 months) use of methamphetamine (all forms). The proportion of PWID reporting recent use of methamphetamine (any form) has remained statistically stable from year to year but has steadily trended upwards.



As an example of the diversity of use among PWID in the ACT, two different types of drugs were chosen to explore the overlap in use. Almost all of the sample (99%) had reported the recent use of illicit opioids and/or methamphetamine. Almost two-thirds (63%) reported using both opioids and methamphetamine in the past 6 months. One in four of the sample reported recently using opioids but not methamphetamine and one in ten report recently using methamphetamine but not illicit opioids.



The median days of use remained stable between 2013 and 2014 among the main opioids used and methamphetamine forms.

Median days	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Heroin	60	66	72↑	50↓	60
Illicit methadone	11	2	3	5	5
Illicit oxycodone	2	14^	3	6	5
Illicit morphine	3.5	5	4	6	9
Any methamphetamine	20	24	32	44↑	48
Powder (speed)	11	9.5	14	6	9
Base	5	6.5	5	4^	56^
Crystal	6.5	12	13	32↑	48

^ small number (<10)

Acknowledgements

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