Illicit opioid and methamphetamine use in the ACT

findings from the 2014 ACT Illicit Drug Reporting System (IDRS)

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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 a 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.

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heroin</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Illicit methadone</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illicit oxycodone</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14^</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illicit morphine</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any methamphetamine</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>44^</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powder (speed)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4^</td>
<td>56^</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crystal</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>32^</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* small number (<10)

Acknowledgements
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