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Introduction

The Ecstasy and Related Drugs Reporting System (EDRS) and the Illicit Drug Reporting System (IDRS) are primarily concerned with monitoring use and markets of illicit drugs such as ecstasy, heroin, methamphetamine and cannabis in Australia. They are intended to serve as strategic early warning systems 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
- To report any changes in the price, purity and availability of drugs in the ACT

Method

This poster reports on findings from the EDRS and IDRS Project, focusing specifically on methamphetamine trends. Data collected from the 2009 through to 2013 surveys is included.

EDRS and IDRS surveys are conducted with sentinel groups of people who use drugs. It's 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.

SPSS v 20.0 was used to analyse the data.

IDRS Results

While the recent use of 'any methamphetamine', which includes all forms, remains stable from 2009 to 2013 at approximately three-quarters of the IDRS sample; there continues to be much movement and competition between which form of methamphetamine is most popular amongst people who inject drugs (PWID).

Methamphetamine

Over the past 5 years speed (powder) and ice (crystal) have competed for most popular form of methamphetamine amongst PWID in Canberra (ACT). In 2013 we see a clear and statistically significant increase ($p < 0.05$) in the popularity of ice as nominated by PWID as the drug of choice whilst the proportion of PWID who nominated speed as the drug of choice declined. Similar patterns are observed when participants were asked which drug they injected most often in the proceeding month.

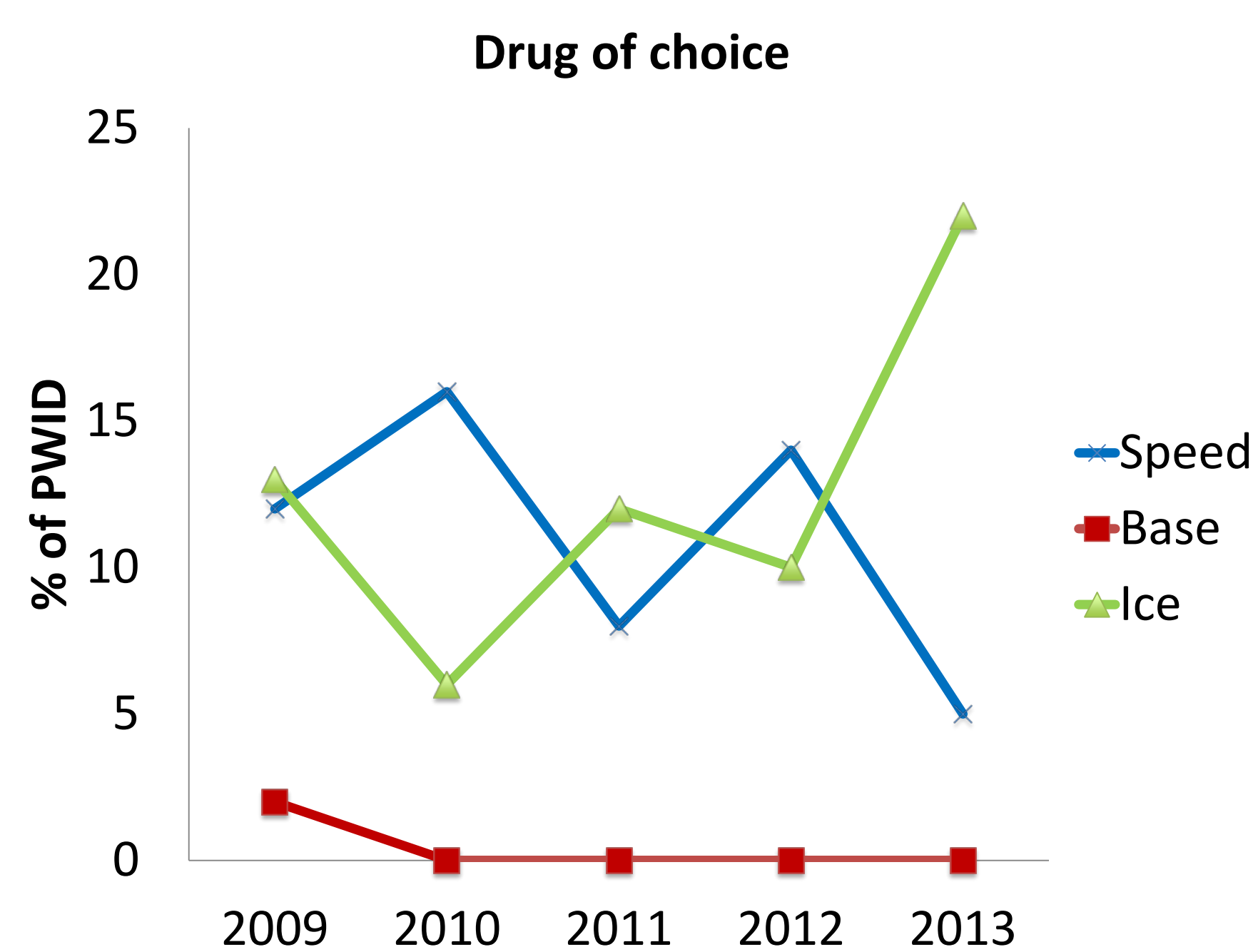


Figure 1. Drug of choice. IDRS sample 2009 - 2013

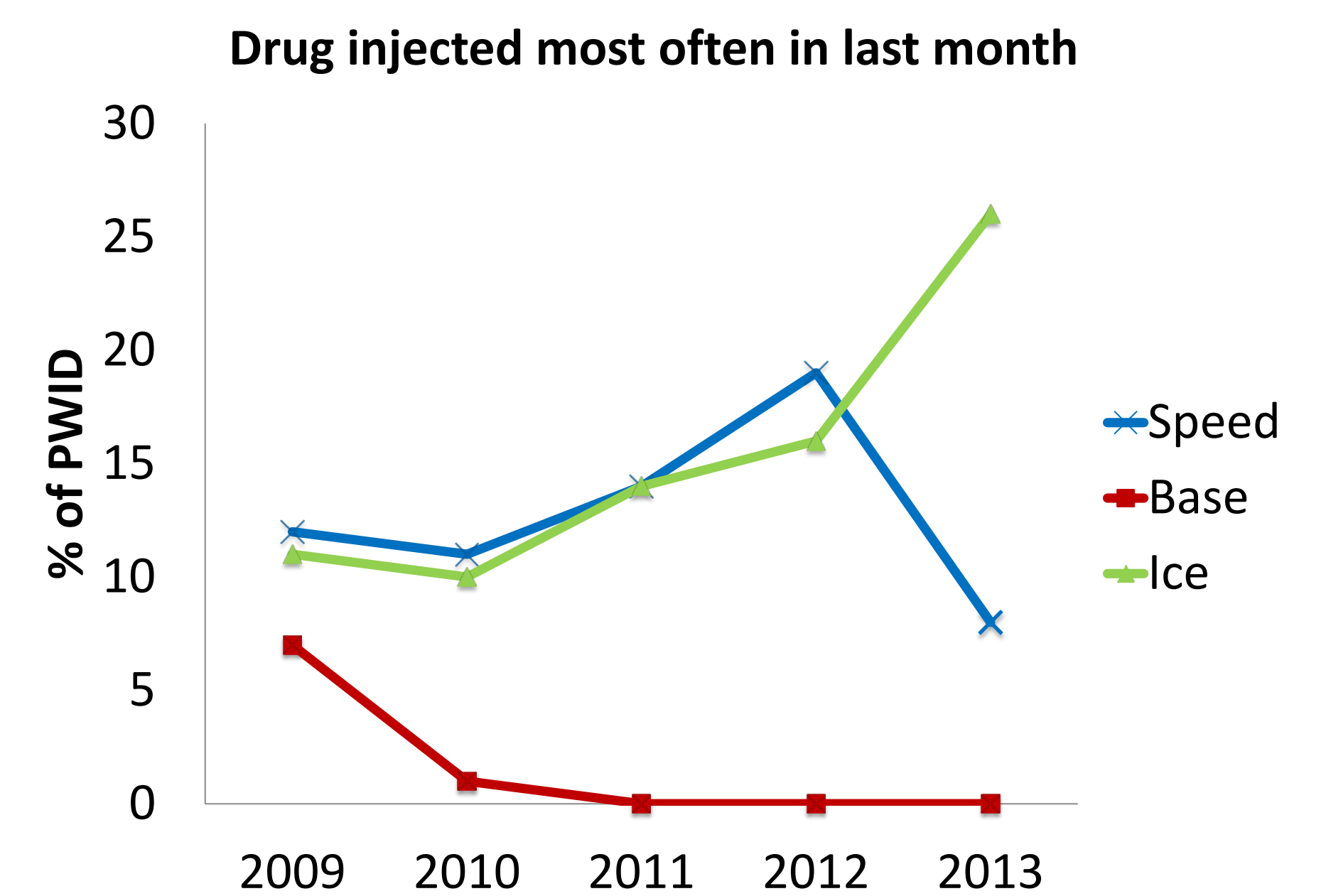


Figure 2. Drug injected most often in the previous month. IDRS sample 2009 - 2012

Frequency of use

Although there has been much movement in the median days of use over the past 5 years these changes have not been statistically significant.

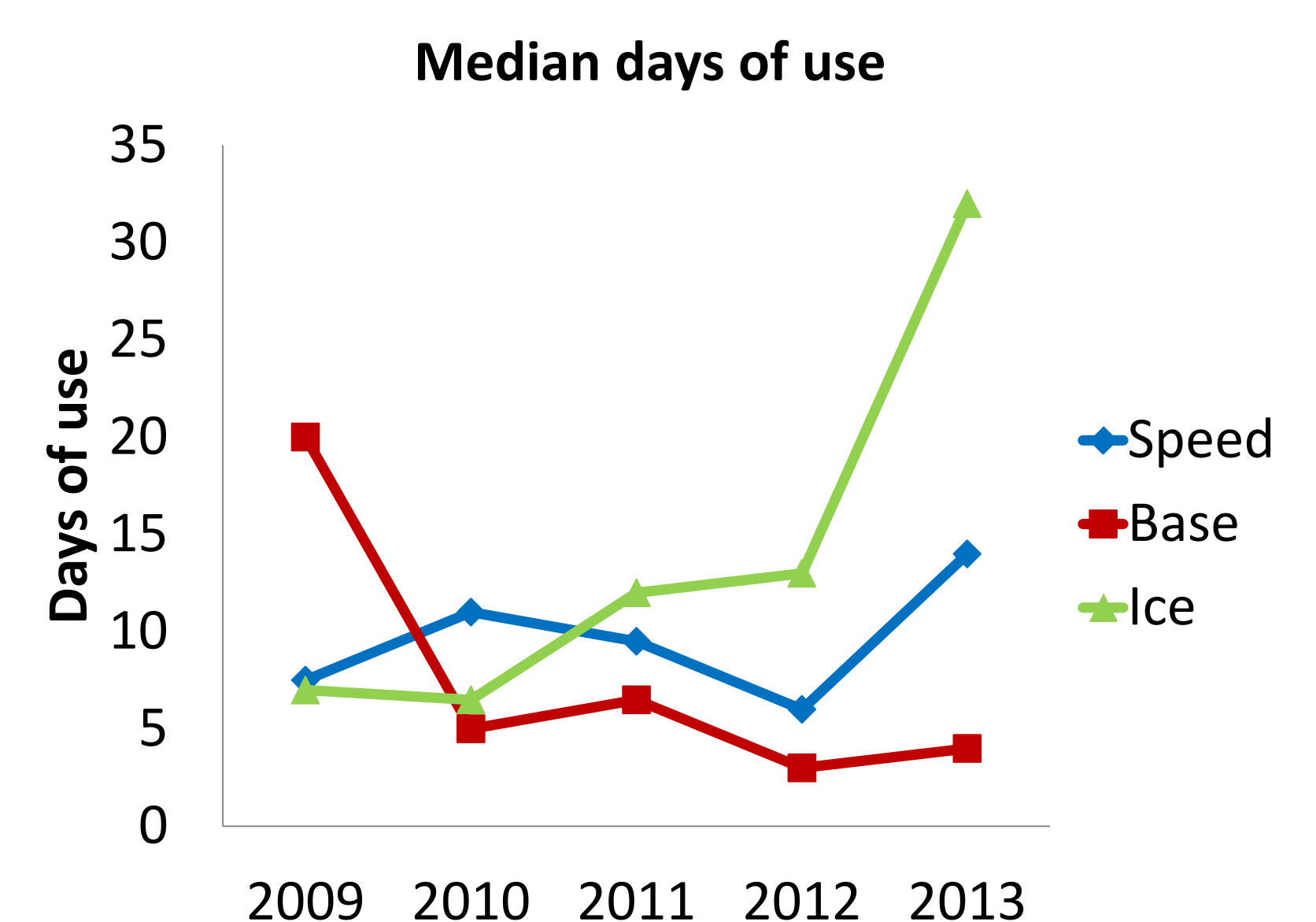


Figure 3. Median days of use in past 6 months. IDRS sample 2009-2013

EDRS Results

Use of 'any' methamphetamine among the EDRS sample remains relatively stable with 65% of the sample reporting recently using some form of methamphetamine in the six months prior to interview.

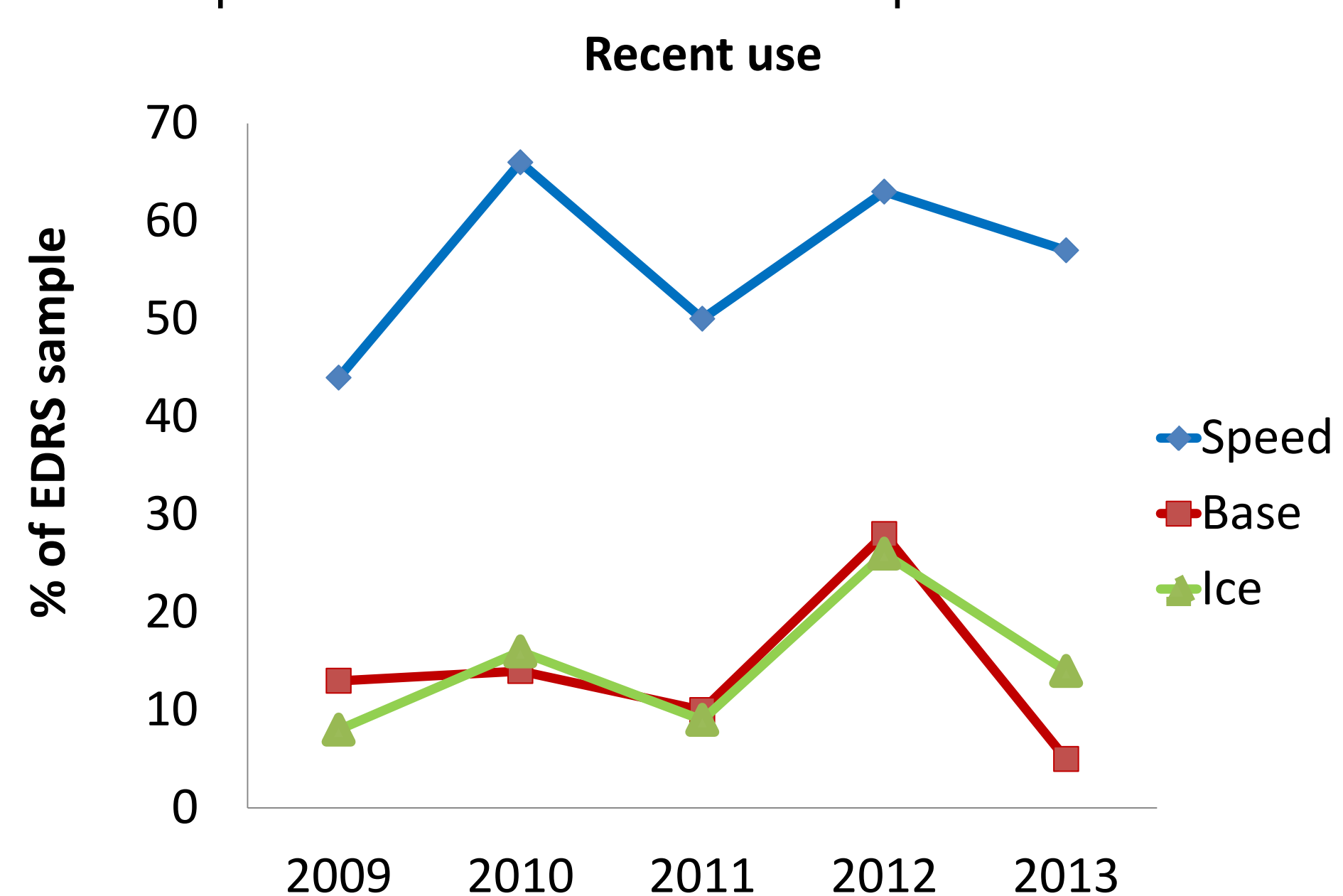


Figure 4. Recent use. EDRS sample 2009 - 2013

While the proportion of the EDRS sample using 'any' form of methamphetamine is similar to the IDRS sample, the choice of form differs significantly.

EDRS participants favour powder form (speed), and ice and base are used by a significantly smaller proportion.

Methamphetamines are not often nominated as the drug of choice for EDRS participants with only 2% of the sample nominating speed as drug of choice.

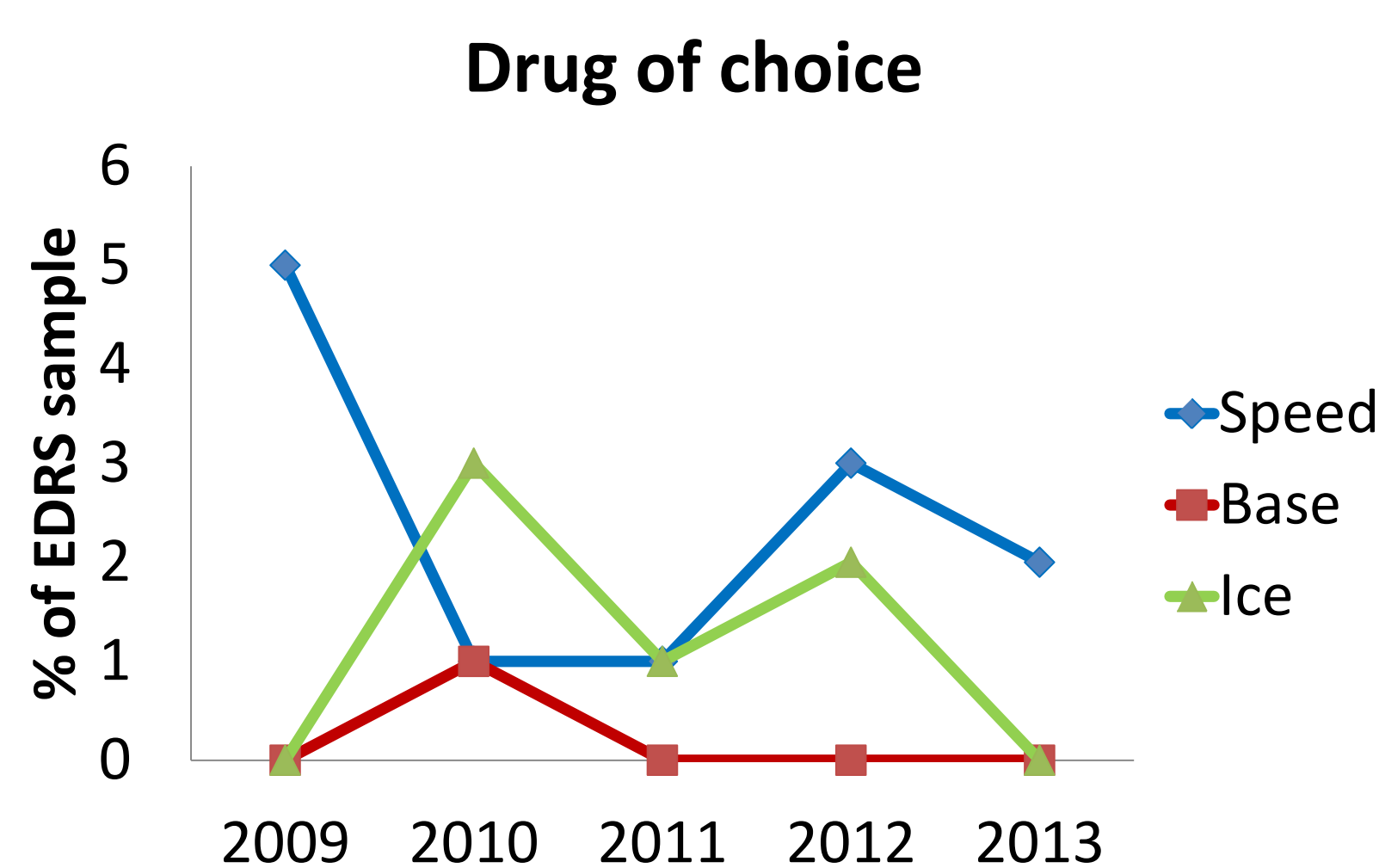


Figure 5. Drug of choice. EDRS sample 2009 - 2013

Frequency of use for all forms of methamphetamine are low among the EDRS sample with speed being used a median of five days in the previous six months.

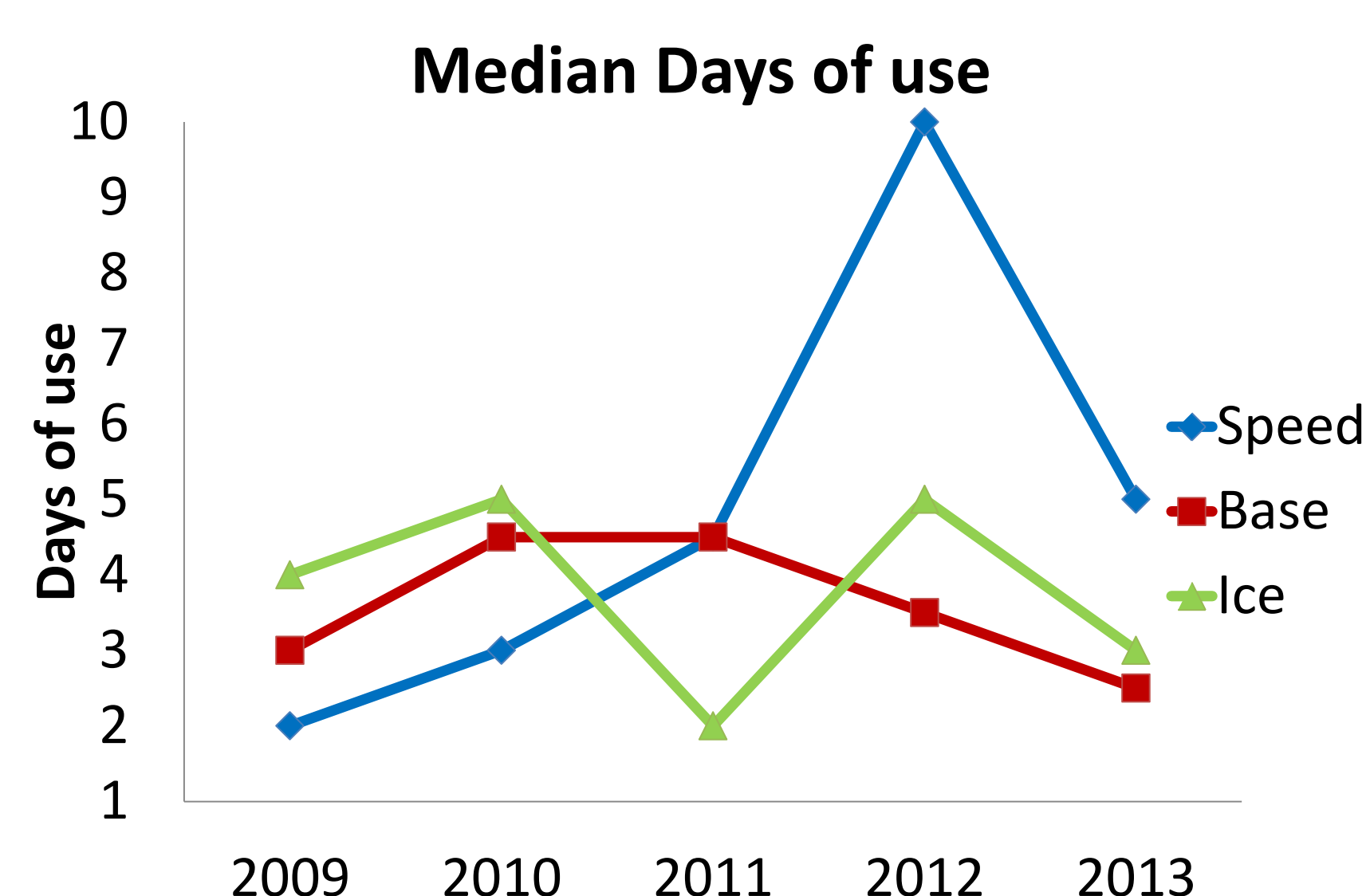


Figure 6. Median days of use in past 6 months. EDRS sample 2009 - 2013

Conclusion

Methamphetamine is used by both samples but in very different ways (both route of administration and the form used. i.e. powder, crystal).

While a similar proportion of both samples report using some form of methamphetamine in the previous six months, that use is significantly different. More than three-quarters of the IDRS sample had used methamphetamine in the preceding six months and more than two-thirds of the EDRS sample reported the same.

Up to 22% of the 2013 IDRS sample reported methamphetamine as a drug of choice and up to 26% reported it being the drug most often injected in the last month. The frequency of use (in the previous 6 months) ranged from weekly for base to three times a week for ice.

In 2013 only two percent of the EDRS sample reported any form of methamphetamine as being a drug of choice (speed). The frequency of use in this sample ranged from once every two months or less for base and ice, to less than monthly for speed.

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