

# The Rest

## Relationship Statistics

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### ILLICIT DRUG USE

- Based on 2004 figures, 38% of Australians aged 14 years and over had used an illicit drug in their lifetime and 15% had done so in the last 12 months.
- By far the most commonly used illicit drug is cannabis which 34% of Australians aged 14 years and over admit to having used in their lifetime and 11% had used it in the last 12 months.
- Methamphetamines had been used by 9% in their lifetime and 3% had used methamphetamines in the last 12 months.
- The third most commonly used illicit substance was ecstasy – used by 8% ever and 3% in the last 12 months.
- Heroin use was relatively rare with only 1.4% having ever used this drug and 0.2% having used it in the last 12 months.
- Use of illicit drugs within the last 12 months among the general population is at the same level as in 1991 (15%), although this figure reached a high of 22% in 1998.
- Recent cannabis use (previous 12 months) decreased from 13% in 1991 to 11% in 2004 whereas recent use of ecstasy increased from 1% in 1991 to 3% in 2004.
- Among the 18-29 age bracket, as many as 31% had used an illicit drug in the last 12 months and one in four had used cannabis in the last 12 months.
- In addition, about one in eight Australians aged 20-29 years had used ecstasy and one in ten had used methamphetamines in the last 12 months.
- Illicit drug use was also higher among Indigenous Australians of whom, in 2004-05, 28% had used an illicit drug in the previous 12 months.
- Among the prison population, as many as 59% had a history of injecting illicit drugs in 2004. Among juvenile detainees in 2003-04, 88% had used an illicit substance within six months prior to their arrest.
- One in ten Australian sentenced prisoners in 2004 were imprisoned for drug-related offences.
- In 2003, an estimated 2% of the burden of disease in Australia was attributable to the use of illicit drugs. This is the same net percentage as alcohol but significantly less than the estimated 8% of the burden of disease attributable to tobacco use.
- The death rate from overdose of opiates among persons aged 15-54 years increased from 36.6 deaths per million persons in 1988 to 101.9 in 1999 before falling rapidly again to 34.6 deaths per million persons in 2001. It subsequently declined to 31.3 deaths per million persons in 2004.
- More than 40,000 children aged 12 years and under (or about 2.3%) live in a house where an adult uses cannabis daily.
- More than 14,000 children aged 12 and under (0.8%) live in a household with an adult using methamphetamines at least monthly and reports doing so in their home.
- According to the Australian National Council on Drugs report, evaluated levels of substance use are also linked to other risk factors such as exposure to violence, mental health issues and criminality.

#### SOURCE

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2007). *Statistics on drug use in Australia 2006*, Drug Statistics Series Number 18, Canberra: AIHW.

Dawe, Sharon. (2006). *Drug use in the family: impacts and implications for children*. ANCD Research Paper 13. Canberra: Australian National Council on Drugs.