

> Cannabis Trends in Western Australia: Australian School Students Alcohol and Drug Survey 2011

Downward trend in use over past 15 years

In 2011, fewer than one in five (17.6%) Western Australian school students had ever tried cannabis (as shown in Figure 1). This is a significant decline from almost two in five (39.7%) students in 1996.

This downward trend since 1996 can also be seen across all other frequencies of use, with significant declines in use in the past year (15.4% compared to 36.1%), past month (8.5% compared to 23.6%) and past week (4.9% compared to 15.9%).

No significant differences since 2008

Lifetime use of cannabis declined by 0.2% in 2011 compared to 2008. Use in the past year, month and week increased for the first time since 1996, by 0.6%, 0.7% and 0.4% respectively.

Further analysis of these changes did not indicate that any of these differences were statistically significant.

Where do the data come from?

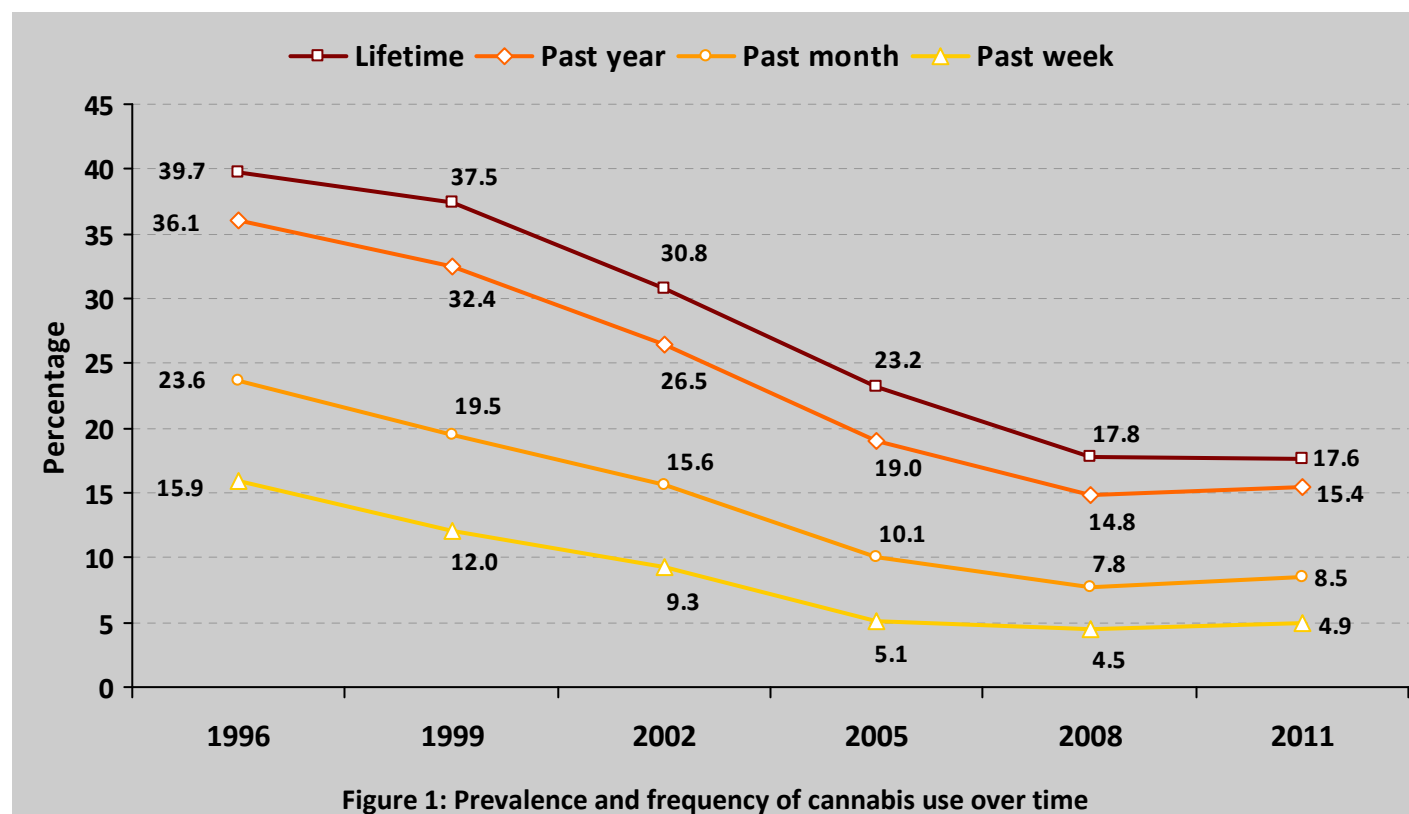
Every 3 years, school students in Western Australia are surveyed to find out about their drug use in the Australian School Students Alcohol and Drug Survey.

They are asked about how often they consume alcohol, tobacco, other illicit and licit drugs. They are also asked about how much they use, how they use and their attitudes to alcohol and other drug use.

This survey has been collected since 1984, with additional drug related questions added since 1996.

The most recent survey included 3,771 young people aged from 12 to 17 years from randomly selected government, Catholic and independent schools across the State.

More information on these surveys is available at: www.dao.wa.gov.au.



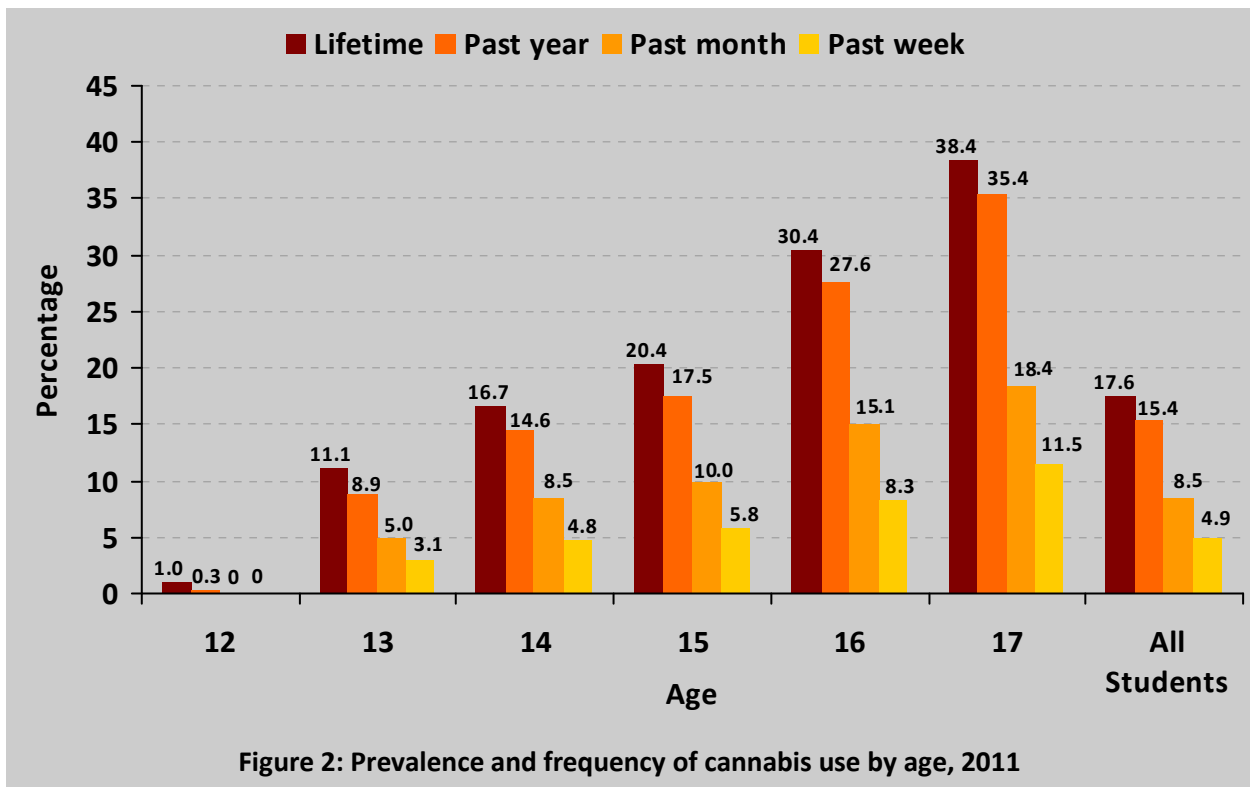


Figure 2: Prevalence and frequency of cannabis use by age, 2011

Use increases with age

Only 1% of 12 year-old students have ever tried cannabis and none had used in the past week or month (as shown by Figure 2).

Use increases steadily with age across every frequency of use. By age 17, 38.4% of students had ever tried cannabis and 35.4% had tried within the last year.

Use is higher for males

Males typically use cannabis more than females across all ages and all frequencies of use (as shown by Table 1).

This difference is most evident at age 17. Male use in the past year is almost double that of females, almost triple for use last month and seven times for use last week.

Table 1: Prevalence and frequency of cannabis use by age and gender, 2011

	12 yrs	13 yrs	14 yrs	15 yrs	16 yrs	17 yrs	All Students
Used in lifetime %							
Males	0	11.9	20.5	21.5	32.7	49.5	19.4
Females	2.2	10.3	12.8	19.2	28.3	28.1	15.7
Persons	1.0	11.1	16.7	20.4	30.4	38.4	17.6
Used last year %							
Males	0	9.2	17.9	18.6	28.2	45.2	16.8
Females	0.7	8.7	11.3	16.3	27.1	26.2	13.9
Persons	0.3	8.9	14.6	17.5	27.6	35.4	15.4
Used last month %							
Males	0	4.8	10.0	11.6	16.9	27.0	9.9
Females	0	5.2	6.9	8.4	13.4	10.3	7.0
Persons	0	5.0	8.5	10.0	15.1	18.4	8.5
Used last week %							
Males	0	3.2	5.9	6.9	9.9	20.9	6.3
Females	0	2.9	3.8	4.6	6.9	3.0	3.5
Persons	0	3.1	4.8	5.8	8.3	11.5	4.9