



Illicit drug trends in Western Australia: Australian school students alcohol and drug survey

Downward trend in use

In 2014, fewer than one in five Western Australian school students (19.5%) had ever used at least one illicit drug (Figure 1). This is a significant decrease, with the proportion more than halving from 41.4% in 1996.

Between 1996 and 2014, analysis also indicates significant decreases, with almost a halving in the proportion who had used illicit drugs in the past year (37.1% to 17.0%), past month (24.7% to 10.0%) and past week (16.7% to 6.3%).

The proportion of students reporting use of at least one illicit drug in 2014 was not significantly different to 2011.

As shown in Figure 2, cannabis was the most commonly used illicit drug among all students in the past year (16.4%), followed by tranquilisers (13.4%) and inhalants (10.4%).

How are the data collected?

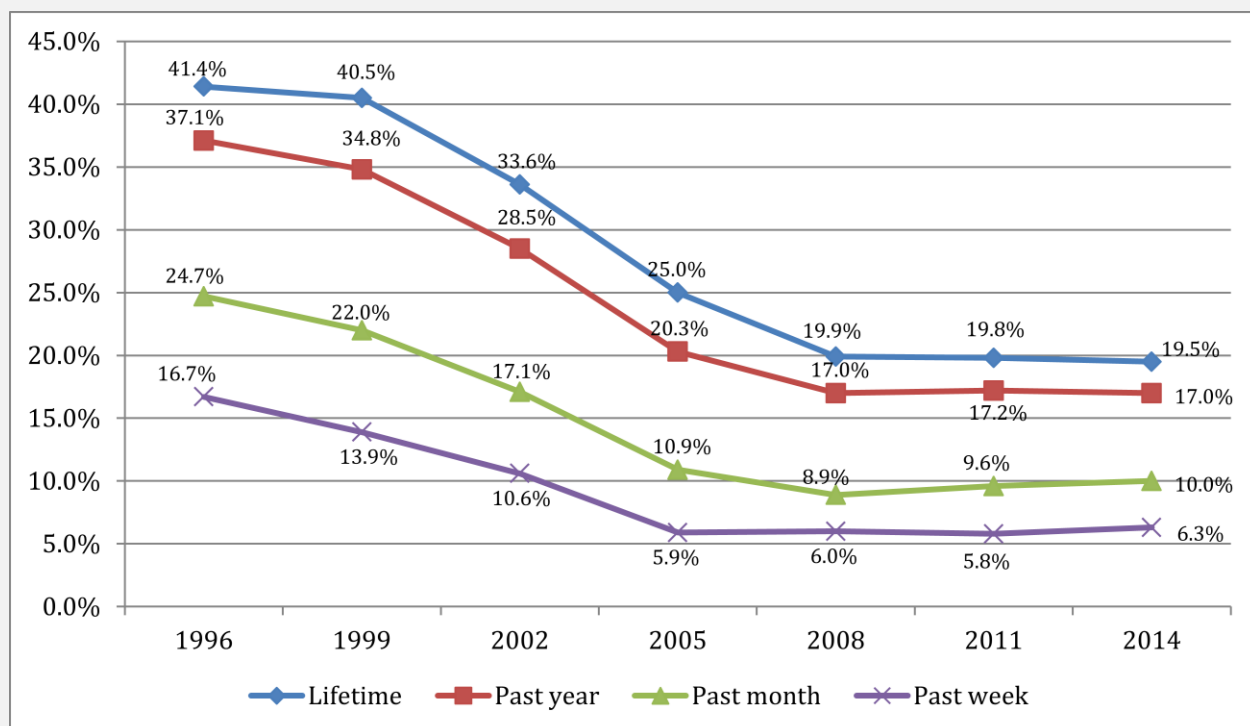
Every three years, school students in Western Australia are surveyed to find out about their drug use in the Australian School Students Alcohol and Drug Survey.

They are asked about alcohol, tobacco, other illicit and licit drug use, 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.

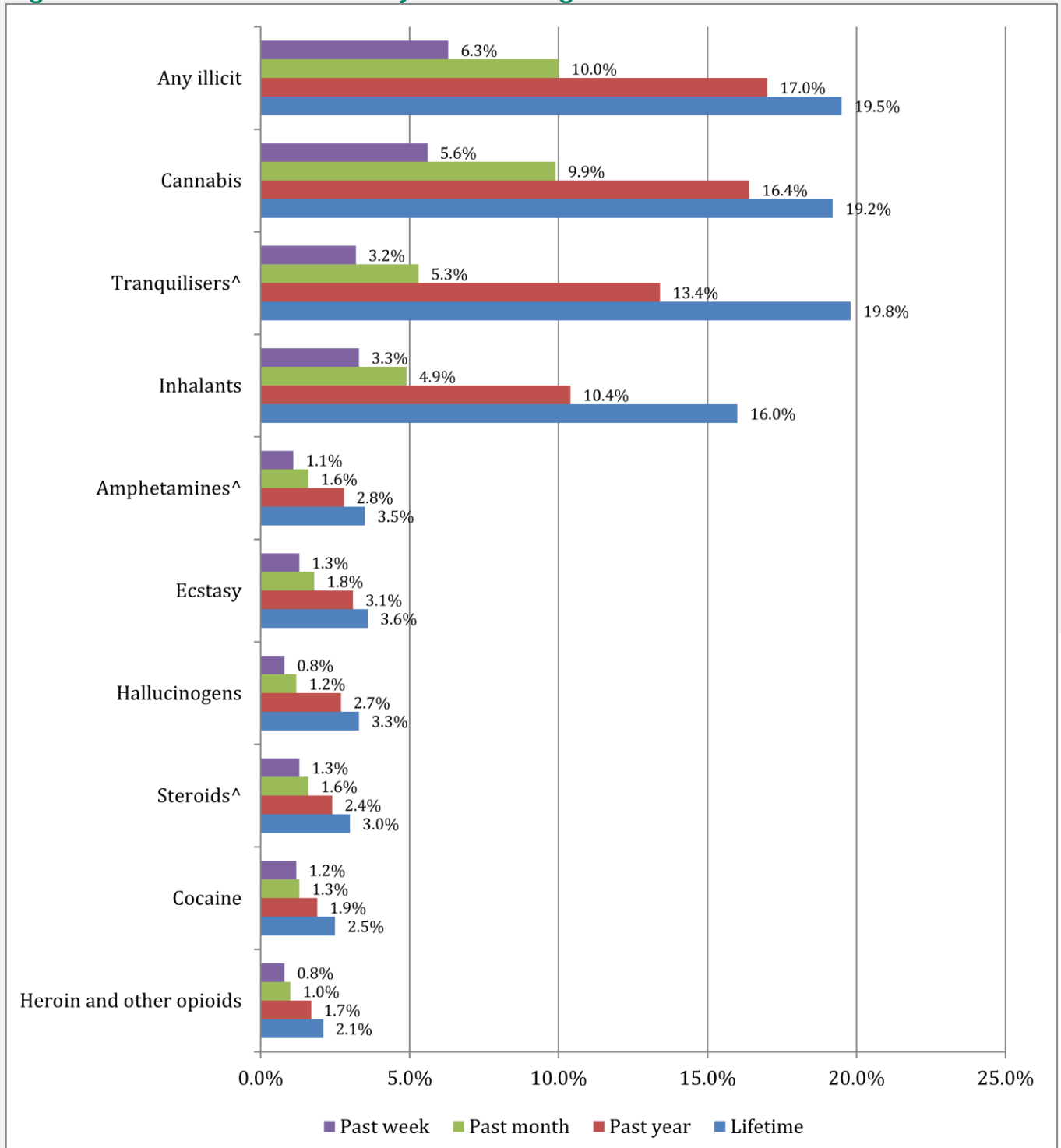
The most recent survey included 3,305 young people aged from 12 to 17 years from 46 randomly selected government, Catholic and independent schools across the State.

Figure 1: Trends in the use of at least one illicit drug, 1996 - 2014



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

Figure 2: Prevalence and recency of illicit drug use for students, 2014



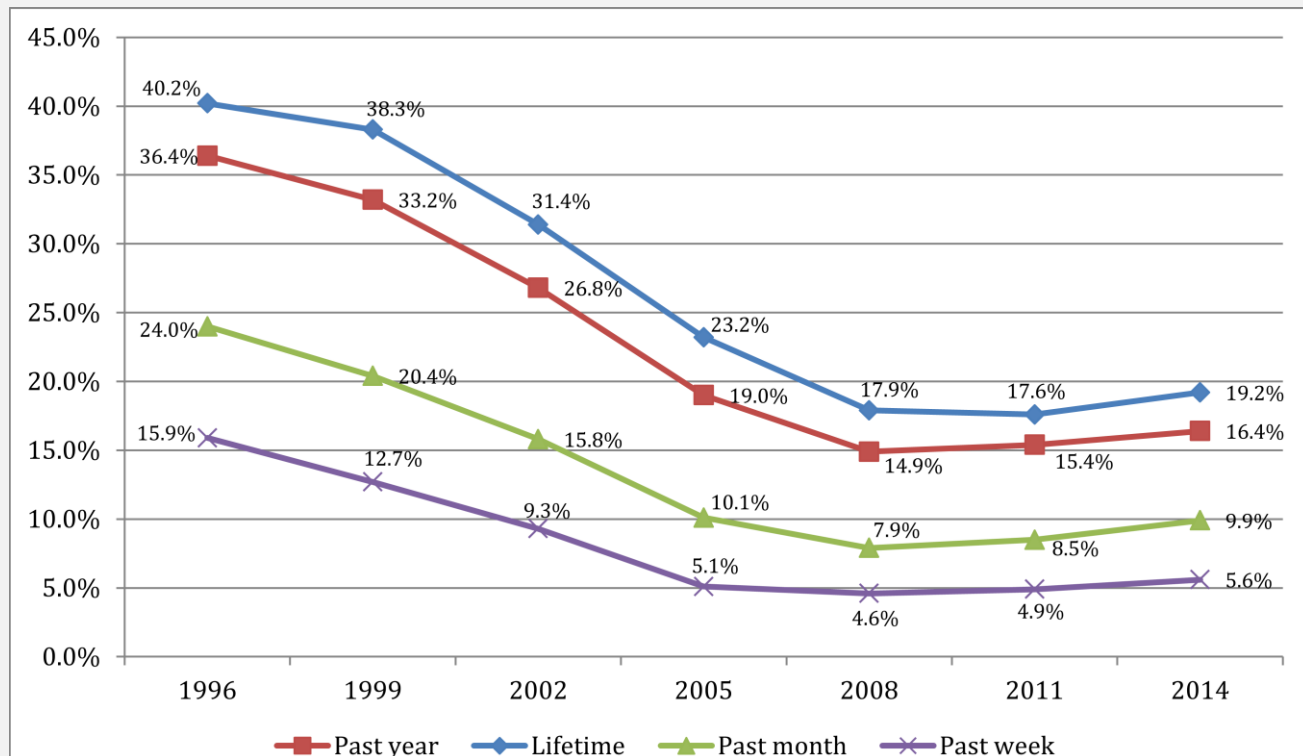
^Non-medical use

Downward trend in cannabis use over the past decade

In 2014, around one in five (19.2%) Western Australian school students reported ever trying cannabis (as shown in Figure 3). This was a significant decline from two in five (40.2%) students who reported its use in 1996. While there has been a slight increase in 2014 compared to 2011, it was not significantly different.

This downward trend in cannabis use since 1996 can also be seen across all other frequencies of use, with significant declines in use in the past year (36.4% to 16.4%), past month (24.0% to 9.9%) and past week (15.9% to 5.6%).

Figure 3: Prevalence and recency of cannabis use for students aged 12 to 17 years, 1996 to 2014

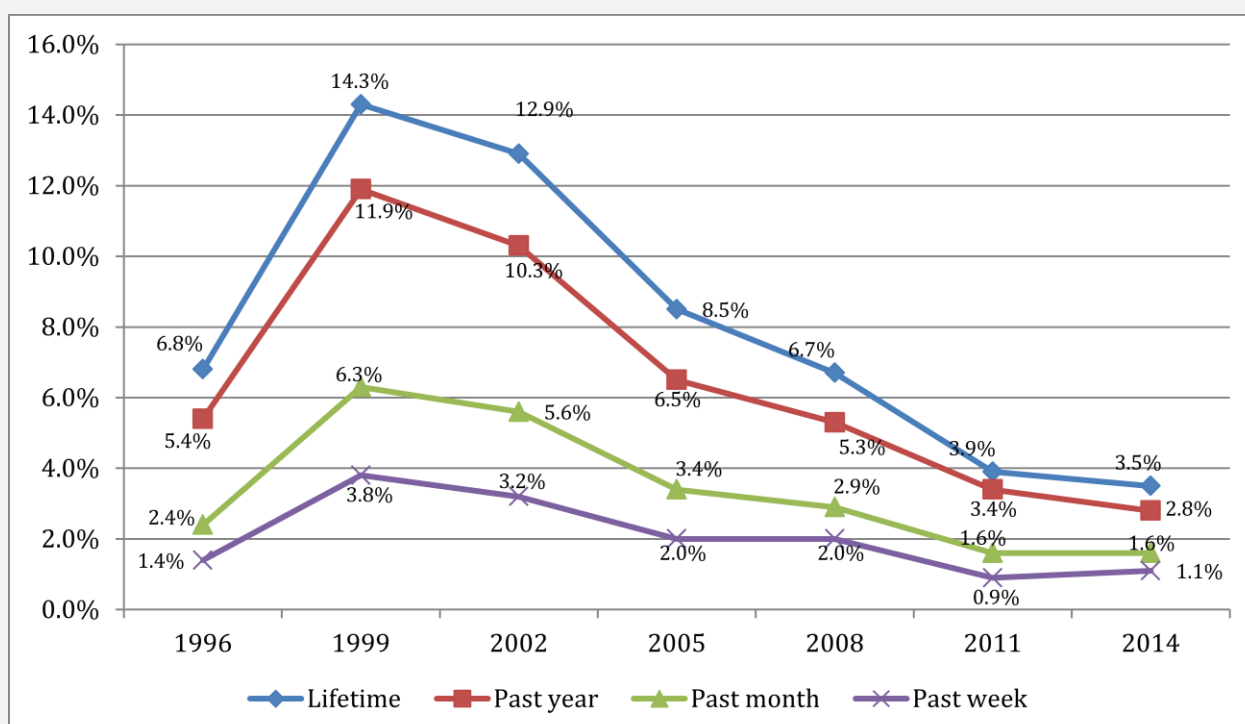


Downward trend in amphetamine use over the past decade

In 2014, around one in twenty-five (3.5%) Western Australian school students had ever tried amphetamines (as shown in Figure 4). This was a significant decline from one in fifteen (6.8%) students in 1996, and one in seven (14.3%) students in 1999.

This downward trend in amphetamine use since 1999 can also be seen across all other frequencies of use, with significant declines in use in the past year (11.9% to 2.8%), past month (6.3% to 1.6%) and past week (3.8% to 1.1%).

Figure 4: Prevalence and recency of amphetamine use for students aged 12 to 17 years, 1996 to 2014



Definitions

At least one illicit drug: At least one of cannabis, ecstasy, cocaine, amphetamines, opiates and hallucinogens.

Illicit drugs: Illegal drugs, drugs and volatile substances used illicitly, and pharmaceuticals used for non-medical purposes.

Non-medical use: Taking of prescription drugs, other than in the manner or for the reasons or time period prescribed, or by a person for whom the drug was not prescribed.