PSYC1022: Psychology of Addiction

Population entry & exit from drug use (I)

Dr Helena Pacitti

Outline:

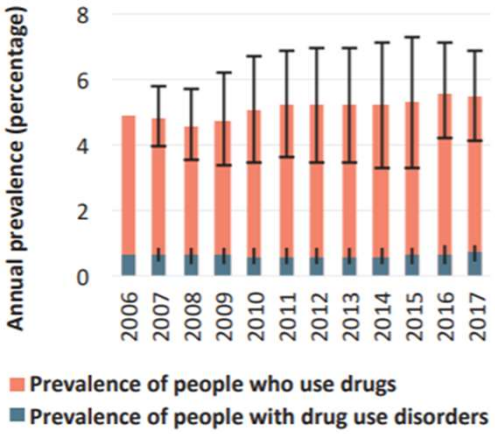
- Prevalence
  - Global
  - National
- Onset of drug use
  - Illicit drugs
  - Alcohol
  - Tobacco
- Demographic predictors

Prevalence: Worldwide

2017: 5.5% have used an illicit drug in the past year (UNODC, 2019)

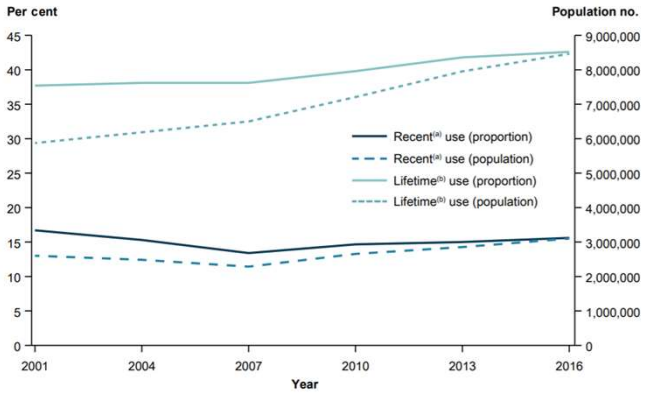
- 0.71% are considered problem drug users
- stable since 2006
- Only a small proportion of people who have used drugs in the past year are problem users.

FIG. 2 Global trends in the estimated prevalence of drug use and drug use disorders, 2006–2017



Prevalence: National

AIHW, Household Drug Survey 2017



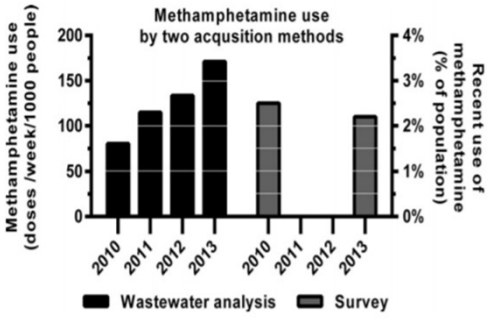
2016: 43%% of Australian population have used illicit drugs once in their lifetime

- 15.6% used recently
- 8.6% used within last month
- 5.6% used within the last week

- Only a small proportion of people who ever try drugs become frequent users

Prevalence: Waste Water Analysis

- Alleviates some of the validity issues with self-reported drug use.
- Meth was used to a much greater extent than suggested in surveys.
- Self-report surveys and waste water studies can together give a comprehensive view of drug use.



Tscharke et. al., 2015

Prevalence

US National Comorbidity Survey 1990-1992:

- % of respondents who reported ever meeting criteria for drug dependence is < the number who ever-used.
  - **Only a proportion of people who ever try drugs become dependent**
  - estimated 13.4% risk that trying a drug will lead to dependence (Anthony et al. 1994).
- It is commonly assumed that there is approx. 20% risk of drug experimentation leading to dependence.

	% who ever-used	% with a history of dependence	% of ever-users who became dependent
Tobacco	75.6	24.1	31.9
Alcohol	91.5	14.1	15.4
Other drugs	51.0	7.5	14.7
Cannabis	46.3	4.2	9.1
Cocaine	16.2	2.7	16.7
Stimulant	15.3	1.7	11.2
Anxiolytics	12.7	1.2	9.2
Analgesics	9.7	0.7	7.5
Psychedelics	10.6	0.5	4.9
Heroin	1.5	0.4	23.1
Inhalants	6.8	0.3	3.7

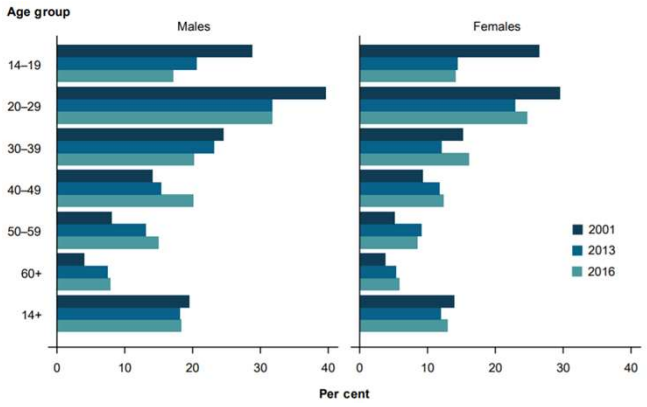
Adolescent onset: Illicit drugs

Age of first use: 19.8

Use in the past year:

- peak between age 20-29 (32% of users)
- Decline to only 9% in 14-19 age group
- Increased number of rgular users in the 50-59 (11.5%) and 60+ (10.9%) age groups

Household Drug Survey Report 2017



Adolescent onset: Alcohol

Age of first use: 17.3

Daily use is more likely as we age:
- peak age 70+ (13.6%)

Overall, daily use 5.9%
- declining since 2004

Household Drug Survey Report 2017

Daily drinking, people aged 12+		
Age	**2013**	**2016**
12–17	n.p.	n.p.
18–24	*1.1	*0.6
25–29	2.2	1.8
30–39	3.0	3.1
40–49	6.3	5.4
50–59	9.0	8.4
60-69	12.3	10.2#
70+	14.6	13.6
14+	6.5	5.9#
18+	6.9	6.3#

Adolescent onset: Tobacco

Age of first use: 16.3

Current smokers: 14.9%
Daily smokers: 12.2%
Ex-smokers: 23%

Household Drug Survey Report 2017

	Males				Females			
Age group	2001	2013	2016	% change since 2001	2001	2013	2016	% change since 2001
12–17	n.a.	*4.0	*1.6	n.a.	n.a.	2.8	*1.3	n.a.
18–24	24.5	14.0	12.3	–50%	23.5	12.7	10.8	–54%
25–29	30.9	17.3	19.3	–38%	23.0	15.0	12.2	–47%
30–39	26.9	17.1	17.0	–37%	24.2	10.3	11.1	–54%
40–49	23.4	17.9	19.1	–18%	20.6	14.5	14.8	–28%
50–59	20.1	16.7	14.4	–28%	16.0	13.4	14.1	–12%
60–69	12.7	12.9	11.5	–9.4%	10.1	10.3	9.2	–8.9%
70+	7.0	6.6	7.3	4.2%	4.6	5.2	4.9	6.5%
14+	20.9	14.5	13.8	–34%	17.9	11.2	10.7	–40%
18+	21.8	15.1	14.6	–33%	18.3	11.6	11.2	–39%

Demographic risk factors

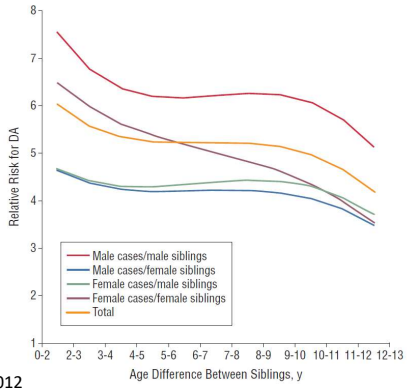
- Family: Association with drug using peer group, parent or sibling; accepting drug attitudes among peers, parents or siblings; criminality in the family; extreme parental poverty; poor parenting style/broken home (abuse, negative communication, authoritativeness, inconsistency); Psychiatric illness in the parents; low parent-child attachment; and failure at school or low commitment to school.
- Community: drug availability, neighbourhood disorganisation (density, permanence, crime rate), prevalence of drug use in community.
- Society: level of law enforcement; tax levels; regulation; price; criminal law.

Hawkins et al. 1992

Demographic risk factors of drug abuse

- Relative risk is the probability of initiating drug use i you have a drug using sibling compared to if you do not
- score of 7 indicates that you have a 7 times higher probability if you have a drug using sibling.
- risk is increased if sibling is within 0-4 years, remains stable between 4-10 years & decreases with an age gap > 10 years.
- Risk is also higher with same sex compared to different sex siblings.
  1. transfer of knowledge between siblings
  2. siblings' shared experience of a common risky environment.

Kendler et al. 2012



Demographic risk factors

Risk of DA is higher if you have an older drug using sibling, compared to a younger drug using sibling, suggests that shared experience of a common risky environment is less important

- the data fit with an age dependent transfer of knowledge

Vygotsky: 'zone of proximal development':

- a child learns most from older children who are operating within the upper limit of the child's intellectual ability.