



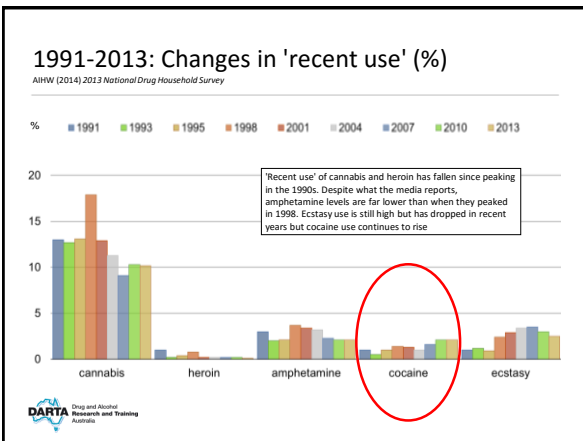
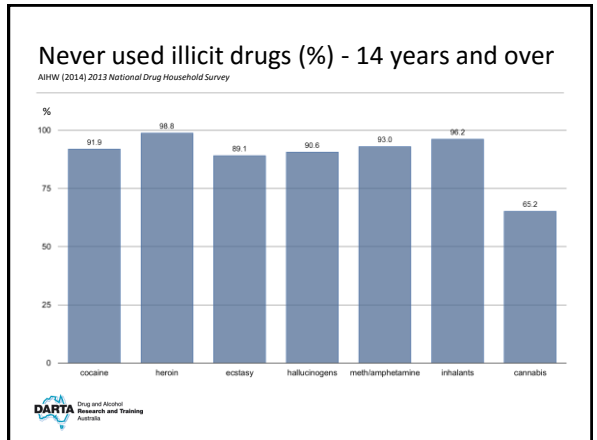
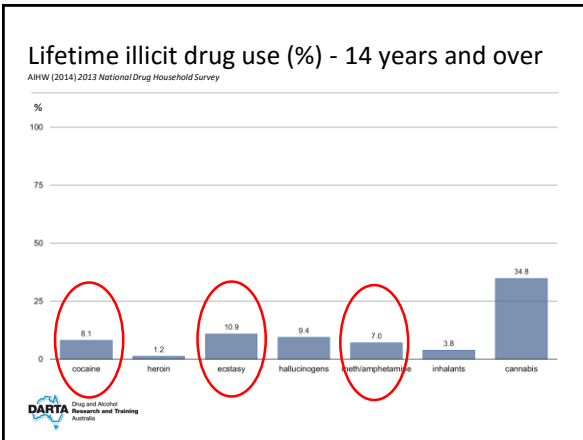
'Flying high' – Australia's love affair with stimulants: Methamphetamine, ecstasy and cocaine trends 2016
Presentation to Generation Next 2016

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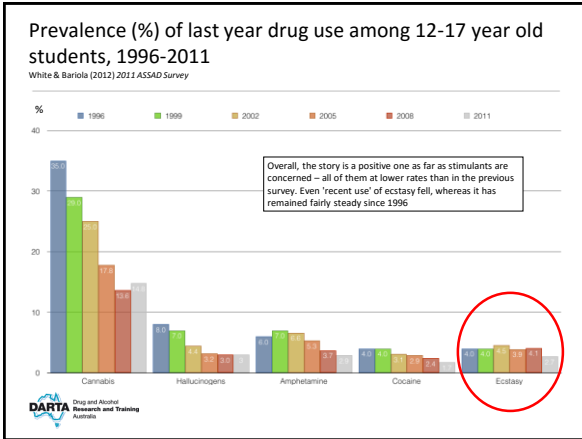
Australian drug use

Are we using more illicit drugs, particularly stimulants, now than in the past?



What about young people?

Are we seeing the same trends amongst school-based young people?



'Cycles of drug use'

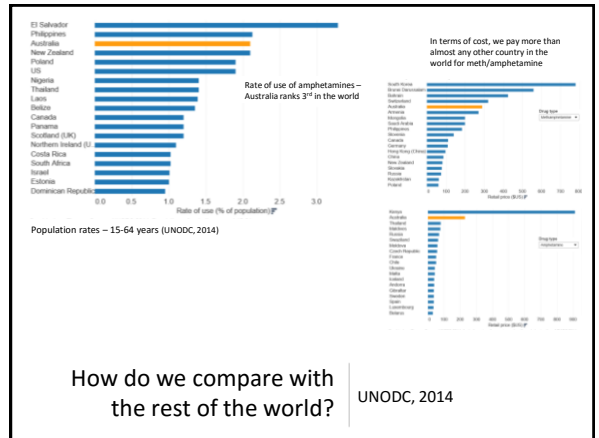
Golub, Johnson & Dunlap, 2015, A socio-cultural view of trends in drug use indicators, *Addiction* 5, 740-741

Research shows popularity of a particular drug tends to grow and then wane across time – 'cycles of drug use' or 'drug epidemics' with four phases:

- incubation, expansion, plateau and decline
- 1945-mid 50s – 'methamphetamine epidemic' in Japan
- 1960s – rise of LSD and other hallucinogens in US and parts of Europe
- mid 70s and early 80s – cocaine in US
- late 80s and early 90s – 'crack epidemic' in the US
- early 1990s – 'heroin epidemic' in Australia
- 2000s-present day – so-called 'ice epidemic' in Australia

Meth/amphetamine

Is there really an 'ice epidemic' at the moment? If not, what's all the fuss about?



What is methamphetamine?

Sindich, Brem & Burns (2015) 2015 Ecstasy and Related Drug Survey (EDRS), Australian Crime Commission (2015) *Misc Drug Data Report 2013-14*

Amphetamines - laevoamphetamine, dextroamphetamine and methamphetamine – each varies in strength as a CNS stimulant

Three forms of methamphetamine – powder, base and 'ice' (or crystal)

- different forms – different prices, related to quality
- speed powder – \$250-\$260 per gram
- ice – much higher purity, much more expensive
- 'point' (0.1 gram) - \$50-\$150
- \$300-\$1600 per gram

Methamphetamine manufacture

How is it made and why is there so much of it around?

Myths and facts around ice

Many statements made around ice, some based on an element of truth, but have been sensationalized ...

- Ice is cheap
- Ice makes people age and rots their teeth
- One try of ice and you're addicted
- It's almost impossible to get off ice once you're addicted
- Ice gives you 'superhuman strength'

10 Years of Meth Use

Ice disguised as lollies
Primary pupils offered 'chocolate' drugs

No. 66. Tell when offered sweets

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Meth/amphetamine psychosis

The main reason this drug gets so much attention ...

Methamphetamine psychosis

Use too much, too quickly - can cause 'speed psychosis'

- caused by toxic levels of drug – relates to purity of the drug and route of administration
- people with a pre-existing psychotic disorder risk triggering problems

Symptoms can be mild through to extreme

- feeling overly suspicious of other people
- having strange beliefs that are not plausible
- hearing or seeing things that aren't there

Extremely difficult to deal with and manage – also unpredictable and dangerous. Cause frontline workers huge problems and attract great attention

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Methamphetamine – in brief

Ice is a major issue – but needs to be given a context

- ED workers, paramedics and police greatly affected
- users often difficult to deal with and potentially violent
- also closely linked to crime – due to price

Greater issue amongst particular populations

- lower socio-economic, range of other social problems – areas with poverty, high levels of youth unemployment
- also in remote or regional areas where drug markets can be more easily manipulated

High profitability drug and 'easy' to make – lots around but prices remain high. Also regarded as a 'gutter drug' – barriers to use for many

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Ecstasy

What is in ecstasy and why do some people die? New trends in manufacturing could be contributing to recent deaths

How do we compare with the rest of the world?

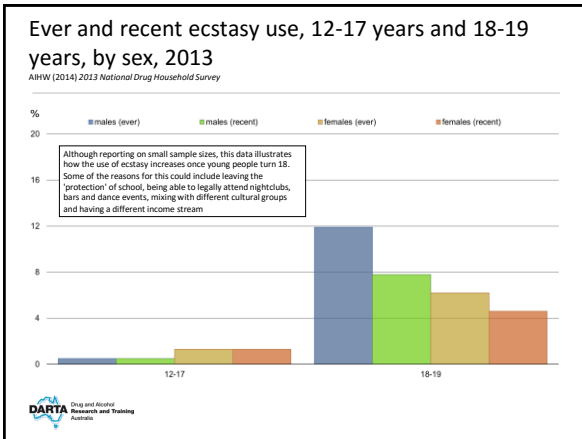
UNODC, 2014



We continue to be the world's largest consumers of ecstasy

Ecstasy prices have dropped dramatically since the 1990s but we still pay more for the drug than many other countries

Population refers to those aged 15-64 years (UNODC, 2014)

Drug type: Ecstasy



What is ecstasy?

Sindlich, Breen & Burns (2015) 2015 Ecstasy and Related Drug Survey (EDRS)

Ecstasy - street term for a substance known as MDMA

- pills, tablets and powder form, now also in crystal form
- different forms – different prices
 - pills – average price \$25 (\$20-\$40), capsules - \$30
 - powder – \$250 per gram (up to \$400)
 - crystal (often sold in capsules) - \$250 per gram (up to \$450), \$30 a capsule (up to \$50)

'Quality' is variable - can contain a range of substances, some far more dangerous than others - PMA is an extremely dangerous adulterant

- different forms – different perceived quality (e.g., capsules better than pills)




Ecstasy deaths

Deaths from ecstasy are rare but they do occur - when they do - they get a great deal of media attention

- 1995 - Anna Wood
- 2007 - Annabel Catt
- 2009 - Gemma Thoms

Not simply poisoning –water intoxication, adulterants and MDMA overdose

2015 saw a number of tragic deaths, most of which we still don't have official cause of deaths for ...




Ecstasy – in brief

Ecstasy continues to be popular

- **poor quality but now improving** - new manufacturing process (average purity of MDMA in UK now 80%)
- users prefer capsules and powder –perceived quality
- crystal - a relatively new form – very high purity

Regarded as 'low-risk' and cheap (particularly when compared to alcohol)

- still not major issue amongst school-based young people
- use increases dramatically once they leave school

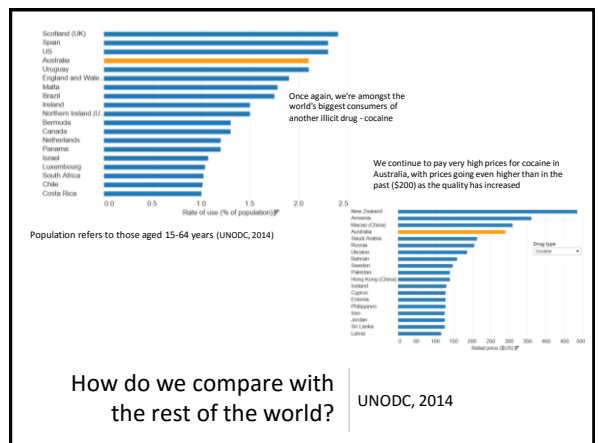
Community debate after recent spate of deaths

- pill-testing put forward as harm reduction strategy
- still unsure of cause of deaths – if MDMA overdose, pill-testing may not prevent




Cocaine

Use continues to increase but we rarely talk about this drug. What is happening?



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What is cocaine?

Sindikich, Breen & Burns (2015) 2015 Ecstasy and Related Drug Survey (EDRS), Australian Crime Commission (2015) Illicit Drug Data Report 2013-14

Cocaine is a powerful stimulant derived from the coca plant

- powder form, also sold in capsules but usually only for injectors
- \$250-\$450 per gram** (up to \$1000)

Short-acting drug - effects lasting around 40-45 mins

- 'coke', 'toot', 'blow', 'Charlie', 'nose candy', 'marching dust'
- perceived as a 'glamour drug', used by rich and famous and high flyers
- increases alertness, feelings of well-being and feelings of competence and sexuality
- also causes anxiety, paranoia and restlessness with large doses causing tremors, convulsions and significant heart problems

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Cocaine – in brief

Use continues to rise and appears to be more socially acceptable

- "it's cocaine, it's not really a drug!"
- glamorous image – 'lifestyles of the rich and famous'

Problems rarely discussed

- addictive nature of the drug**
- deaths do occur** (23 in 2009) but are rarely reported

Arrest rates for cocaine – all time high


- related to increased use of drug detection dogs
- celebrity arrests attract headlines but can reinforce the idea that it is a drug with few, if any, problems
- even school-based young people, are being 'busted' for cocaine use – how do they afford the drug?






DRUG BUST!

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Toronto Mayor Rob Ford GIVING CRACKHEADS A BAD NAME



YOU'LL NEVER WORRY ABOUT LIPSTICK ON YOUR TEETH AGAIN.

What about the future?

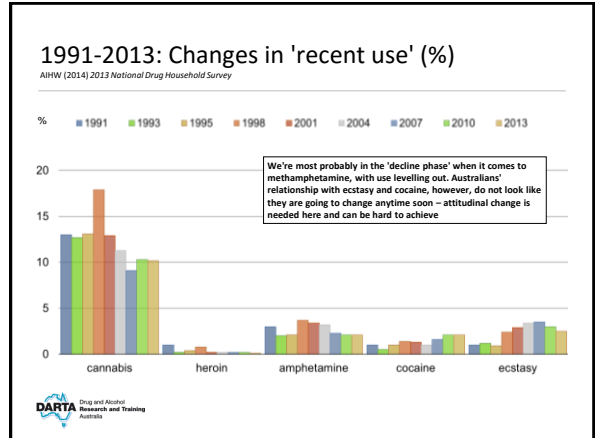
Remember the four phases?

Golub A. & Brownstein H. H. (2013). Drug generations in the 2000s: an analysis of arrestee data. *Journal of Drug Issues* 43, 335-56


Decline phase – "eventually, the use of an illicit drug tends to go out of favour. New conduct norms emerge that hold that use of a drug is bad or old-fashioned"

- in the mid 90s 'crackhead' became a dirty word in inner-city New York and youths avoided peers they suspected were users
- similar to what we are now seeing around 'ice users'

During this phase, fewer start using - however, overall use of the drug continues as some continue to experiment



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What about the future?


Unlikely to see dramatic changes in government response to illicit drugs

- Federal Government's response to Ice Taskforce's report did acknowledge policing alone will not 'fix the problem'
- allocation of money for prevention and treatment
- but there will be continued focus on tough policing**, particularly drug detection dogs
- more money allocated to roadside (or mobile) drug testing
- lots of talk about pill-testing – conservative governments unlikely to support

Use will continue but our culture of 'bingeing' (whether it be alcohol or other drugs) will also see some get into trouble

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As someone who works with young people, what can you do?



Be informed as possible about the drugs and their potential harms

- do not rely on the media or users themselves for your information
- challenge incorrect beliefs when appropriate

Ensure they know legal consequences of using illicit drugs

- possession and supply
- drug detection dogs
- roadside (or mobile) drug testing if they drive

Be aware of support networks and know when to 'hand over' to others

Take the time to talk to young people, listen to them and 'connect' and you are contributing to their resilience

For further information
or you are interested in more of what I have to say ...

For a PDF copy of this presentation or a list of references and supporting information, please go to my website - www.darta.net.au

Please feel free to contact me by email - p.dillon@darta.net.au or follow me on Facebook or Twitter (**Drug and Alcohol Research and Training Australia**) or go to my blogs - 'Doing Drugs with Paul Dillon' or 'The Real Deal on Drugs'



TEENAGERS, ALCOHOL, and DRUGS

What your kids really
want and need to know
about alcohol and drugs
PAUL DILLON