Illicit drug use – Summaries of drug use

Age Cohort	Younger
Surveys	Survey 2
Derived Variable	NumDrug
Definition	Number of illicit drugs ever used
Source Items	Question 62A: a, c to k[1]
Statistical Form	Categorical variable
Index Number	DRUG-074
Derived Variable	NumDrug12
Definition	Number of illicit drugs used in the last 12 months
Source Items	Question 62C: a, c to k[1]
Statistical Form	Categorical variable
Index Number	DRUG-075
Derived Variable	DrugPatt
Definition	Pattern of illicit drug use
Source Items	Question 62 A & C: a, c to k[1]
Statistical Form	Categorical variable
Index Number	DRUG-072
Derived Variable	DrugUse
Definition	Ever used illicit drugs
Source Items	Question 62 A: a, c to k[1]
Statistical Form	Categorical variable
Index Number	DRUG-073
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[1] See previous section (Individual Drugs) for Index Numbers.

The following descriptions are based on 'Prevalence of illicit drug use in younger Australian women, patterns of use and associated risk factors' Turner C, Russell A, Brown W. *Addiction* 2003;98:1419-1326

Number of drugs used

The number of illicit drugs ever used (y2NumDrug) and the number of illicit drugs used in the last 12 months (Y2NumDrug12) were calculated (see Table 1).

Table 1   Percent of women reporting use of different numbers of illicit drugs; ever used and in the last 12 months (n = 9 514)

Number of drugs used	Illicit drugs ever used			Illicit drugs used in the last 12 months		
	Number	Percent of all women	Percent of drug users	Number	Percent of all women	Percent of drug users
0	4 139	43.5		7 034	73.9	
1	3 249	34.2	60.5	1 534	16.1	61.9
2	781	8.2	14.5	386	4.1	15.6
3	464	4.9	8.6	285	3.0	11.5
4	352	3.7	6.6	174	1.8	7.0
5	257	2.7	4.8	65	0.7	2.6
6	146	1.5	2.7	24	0.3	1.0
7	63	0.7	1.2	9	0.1	0.4
8	37	0.4	0.7	2	0.02	0.1
9	5	0.1	0.1	0	0.00	0.0
10	21	0.2	0.4	1	0.01	0.04

Pattern of drug usage

Patterns of illicit drug use were determined by inspection of all the combinations of use reported among these ten drugs (ignoring whether the use was in the past or current). An arbitrary value of 10% of all illicit drug users was set as a threshold for a separate pattern of use. Two major patterns were identified:

- o   exclusive use of cannabis and
- o   use of multiple illicit drugs (may or may not include cannabis use).

Seventy-two women had used a single illicit drug other than cannabis. This was not a sufficiently large group to categorise separately. Aggregation with the largest pattern of use (cannabis alone) seemed inappropriate and these women were included in the multiple illicit drug use category. They comprise 3.3% of the multiple illicit drug use category and 1.3% of all illicit drug users. The illicit drugs they reported using were: Tranquillisers (32), Ecstasy/designer drugs (18), Amphetamines (14), LSD (6), Natural hallucinogens (1) and Inhalants (1).

Women within the two major patterns of illicit drug use were further categorised as current or past users. Exclusive cannabis users were categorised as current users if they had used cannabis in the last twelve months and otherwise as past users; multiple illicit drug users were categorised as a current users if they had used at least one illicit drug in the last twelve months. The variable y2DrugPatt (Table 2) summarises these patterns.

Table 2   Patterns of illicit drug use (n = 9 514)

	Number	Percent of all women	Percent of illicit drug users
Never used any illicit drug	4 139	43.5	
Ever used an illicit drug	5 375	56.5	
Exclusive cannabis user	3 177	33.4	59.1
o - *Past user*	*2 236*	*23.5*	*41.6*
o - *Current user*	*941*	*9.9*	*17.5*
Multiple illicit drug user	2 198	23.1	40.9
o - *Past user*	*659*	*6.9*	*12.3*
o - *Current user*	*1 539*	*16.2*	*28.6*

The SAS code for variables summarising illicit drug use at Survey 2 is:

```
/***  Calculate number of drugs EVER used, maximum 10   ***
     if sum (of q62A{*}) = 80 then y2numdrug = 0 ;
else y2numdrug = sum (of q62A{*}) ;
/***  Calculate number of drugs used in last 12 months, maximum 10   ***/;
do i = 1 to 10 ;
     if q62C{i} = 9 then intq62C{i} = 0 ;
     else intq62C{i} = q62C{i} ;
end ;
     if sum (of intq62C{*}) = 80 then y2numdrug12 = 0 ;
else y2numdrug12 = sum (of intq62C{*}) ;
/****************************************************************
***  5 groups of drug use among those completing full survey and  ***
***   illicit drug items (y2drugpatt).                         ***
****************************************************************/
if y2numdrug >= 1 then do ;
     * Use Marijuana ONLY ;
     if y2q62Aa = 1 and y2numdrug = 1 then do ;
              if y2q62Ca = 1 then y2drugpatt = 3 ;
          else if y2q62Ca = 0 then y2drugpatt = 2 ;
     end ;
     * Use any other drug alone or Multiple drug use ;
     else if y2numdrug12 = 0 then y2drugpatt = 4 ;
     else if y2numdrug12 >= 1 then y2drugpatt = 5 ;
end ;
else if y2numdrug = 0 then y2drugpatt = 1 ;
else if y2numdrug = . then y2drugpatt = . ;
************  y2druguse: Ever used illicit drugs   *************/;
if y2drugpatt=. then y2druguse=. ;
else if y2drugpatt=1 then y2druguse=0 ;
else if 2<=y2drugpatt<=5 then y2druguse=1 ;
```