

9 Hallucinogens

Introduction

The 2001 survey asked questions on the use of synthetic and natural hallucinogens (see Glossary for inclusions).

It was found that synthetic hallucinogens were more commonly used than natural hallucinogens. Greater proportions of Australians aged 14 years and over had used synthetic hallucinogens compared with natural hallucinogens, both in their lifetime (6.7% and 4.4% respectively) and in the last 12 months (0.9% and 0.5% respectively).

In this chapter, data are presented on the use of synthetic and natural hallucinogens combined.

The average age at which Australians first used hallucinogens was 19.1 years.

Use of hallucinogens

In 2001, over 1 million Australians aged 14 years and over had used hallucinogens in their lifetime (Table 9.1):

- Approximately 1% (175,300) of the population had used hallucinogens in the past 12 months. Males (1.5%) were twice as likely as females (0.7%) to have used hallucinogens in the last 12 months.
- About 33,000 Australians aged 14 years and over had used hallucinogens in the last month. Two-thirds of those who had used in the last month were male (21,700) and one third (11,500) were female.
- Hallucinogens had been used in the last week by 6,900 people.
- Australians aged 20–29 years were more likely than those in the other age groups to have used hallucinogens.

Table 9.1: Hallucinogens use, persons aged 14 years and over, by age, by sex, Australia, 2001

Period	Age group				Sex		Persons
	14–19	20–29	30–39	40+	Males	Females	
	(per cent)						
In lifetime	4.2	17.8	11.0	3.7	9.3	5.9	7.6
In the last 12 months	2.4	4.0	1.0	0.1	1.5	0.7	1.1
In the last month	0.4	0.9	0.2	–	0.3	0.1	0.2
In the last week	0.1 *	0.2	–	–	0.1	–	–
	(number)						
In lifetime	64,800	541,400	317,500	308,200	723,100	466,300	1,188,900
In the last 12 months	36,400	120,500	28,000	4,700	117,400	58,200	175,300
In the last month	5,800	26,400	4,600	–	21,700	11,500	33,200
In the last week	1,900 *	5,700	–	–	4,500 *	–	–

Note: Totals may not equal sum due to rounding.

Frequency of use of hallucinogens

The frequency at which the 175,300 recent users of hallucinogens used this drug varied by age and sex (Table 9.2):

- Seven in 10 (69.6%) had used hallucinogens once or twice a year.
- None had used hallucinogens every day, and only 0.5% used hallucinogens once a week or more.

Table 9.2: Frequency of hallucinogens use, recent users aged 14 years and over, by age, by sex, Australia, 2001

Frequency	Age group				Sex		Persons
	14–19	20–29	30–39	40+	Males	Females	
					(per cent)		
Three or more times a year	41.0	32.3	12.6 *	1.2 *	32.1	27.0	30.4
Once or twice a year	59.0	67.7	87.4	98.8	67.9	73.0	69.6

Note: Base equals recent users.

Form and quantity of hallucinogens used

Recent users of hallucinogens were asked what form of the drug they used (Table 9.3) and, on average, how many 'trips' they normally had on a day they used this drug:

- The most common form of hallucinogens used by recent users was tabs (81.1%).
- Magic mushrooms were another common form of hallucinogens, used by over half (55.5%) of recent users.

Table 9.3: Form of hallucinogens used, recent users aged 14 years and over, by sex, Australia, 2001

Form of drug	Males	Females	Persons
		(per cent)	
LSD/tabs	81.4	80.5	81.1
LSD/liquid	11.6	6.7 *	10.0
Magic mushrooms	61.0	44.5	55.5
Datura/angel's trumpet	4.7	5.8 *	5.1

Notes

1. Base equals recent users.

2. Respondents could select more than one response.

- On a day when hallucinogens were used, 96% of recent users had an average of two or fewer trips.

Source of supply of hallucinogens

Recent users were asked to indicate where they usually obtained hallucinogens (Table 9.4):

- The most common way for recent users of hallucinogens to obtain this drug was from a friend or acquaintance (63.3%).
- Almost one in four (23.2%) recent users of hallucinogens usually obtained this drug from a dealer.

Table 9.4: Usual source for obtaining hallucinogens, recent users aged 14 years and over, by sex, Australia, 2001

Source	Males	Females	Persons
	(per cent)		
Friend or acquaintance	59.6	70.6	63.3
Relative	2.3 *	1.7 *	2.1 *
Dealer	23.0	23.7	23.2
Other	15.1	4.0 *	11.3

Notes

1. Base equals recent users.
2. Respondents were asked to select one response only.

Usual place of use of hallucinogens

Recent users were asked to indicate the locations they usually used hallucinogens (Table 9.5):

- At a friend's house or in own home was the most commonly nominated location for use by both male (74.4%) and female (60.2%) recent users of hallucinogens.
- Two in five recent users used hallucinogens at private parties (42.9%) and at raves/dance parties (41.8%).

Table 9.5: Usual place of use of hallucinogens, recent users aged 14 years and over, by sex, Australia, 2001.

Location	Males	Females	Persons
	(per cent)		
In a home	74.4	60.2	69.7
At private parties	43.1	42.3	42.9
At raves/dance parties	42.5	40.4	41.8
At public establishments	25.2	32.8	27.7
At work or school/TAFE/university, etc.	2.2 *	2.3 *	2.2 *
In public places (e.g. parks)	31.8	22.5	28.8
In a car or other vehicle	11.0	8.1	10.1
Somewhere else	19.6	8.6	16.0

Notes

1. Base equals recent users.
2. Respondents could select more than one response.

Concurrent drug use with hallucinogens

Recent users of hallucinogens were asked if they used any other drugs (on at least one occasion) at the same time as this drug (Table 9.6).

- About three-quarters (73.6%) of recent users of hallucinogens had used alcohol at the same time as hallucinogens.
- Recent users almost as commonly used marijuana/cannabis as alcohol at the same time as hallucinogens (72.3%).

Table 9.6: Other drugs used with hallucinogens, recent users aged 14 years and over, by sex, Australia, 2001

Drug	Males	Females	Persons
		(per cent)	
Alcohol	72.9	75.2	73.6
Marijuana/cannabis	75.9	64.0	72.3
Heroin	–	0.6 *	0.2
Cocaine	3.8 *	3.3 *	3.6
Tranquillisers/sleeping pills ^(a)	1.2 *	–	0.9
Anti-depressants ^(a)	1.5 *	2.9 *	1.9
Pain-killers/analgesics ^(a)	1.3 *	–	0.9
Barbiturates ^(a)	1.2 *	–	0.8
Amphetamines/speed ^(a)	25.4	23.9	24.9
Ecstasy/designer drugs	29.4	14.0	24.7
Other	2.9 *	3.3 *	3.0
None of the above	3.9 *	1.9 *	3.3

(a) For non-medical purposes.

Notes

1. Base equals recent users.
2. Respondents could select more than one response.

Substitution of other drugs for hallucinogens

Recent users of hallucinogens were asked if they had used another drug when hallucinogens were not available (Table 9.7).

- Recent users of hallucinogens typically used marijuana/cannabis when hallucinogens were not available (30.7%).
- One-quarter (25.0%) of recent users of hallucinogens did not use another drug when hallucinogens were not available.

Table 9.7: Other drugs used to substitute for hallucinogens when hallucinogens not available, recent users aged 14 years and over, by sex, Australia, 2001

Drug	Males	Females	Persons
		(per cent)	
Alcohol	20.9	23.6	21.8
Marijuana/cannabis	35.8	20.8	30.7
Heroin	—	—	—
Cocaine	—	—	—
Tranquillisers/sleeping pills ^(a)	—	—	—
Anti-depressants ^(a)	—	—	—
Pain-killers/analgesics ^(a)	0.5 *	—	0.3 *
Barbiturates ^(a)	—	—	—
Amphetamines/speed ^(a)	3.2 *	3.9 *	3.4
Ecstasy/designer drugs	18.2	16.4	17.6
Other	0.9 *	1.5 *	1.1 *
None	20.5	33.9	25.0

(a) Used for non-medical purposes.

Notes

1. Base equals recent users.
2. Respondents were asked to select one response only.

Hallucinogens use by friends and acquaintances

All respondents were asked what proportion of their friends and acquaintances used hallucinogens. The proportions varied depending on the use history of the respondent (Table 9.8):

- Almost all (92.8%) of those who had never used hallucinogens had no friends and acquaintances who used hallucinogens, compared with 38.9% among those who had used in their lifetime.
- Of those who had used hallucinogens in their lifetime, over half (58.1%) reported that about half or fewer of their friends and acquaintances used this drug.
- Among recent users, 12.1% reported that all or most of their friends or acquaintances used this drug.

Table 9.8: Hallucinogens use by friends and acquaintances, persons aged 14 years and over, by use status, Australia, 2001

Proportion of friends	Use status		
	Never use	Ever use	Recent use
		(per cent)	
All or most	0.1	3.0	12.1
About half or less	7.0	58.1	83.1
None	92.8	38.9	4.7