

11 Use of hallucinogens

Hallucinogen use

The 1998 survey estimated that 3% of all Australians aged 14 years and over had used hallucinogens within the past 12 months. It also showed that:

- Males were twice (4%) as likely to report using hallucinogens than females (2%).
- Males were also more likely (13%) to report lifetime use compared with females (7%).
- The use of hallucinogens was lower among the older age groups (age 40 years and above).
- The highest proportion of recent users was in the 20–29 years age group, with nearly one in 10 (9%) reporting using hallucinogens.

Table 11.1 Lifetime and recent use of hallucinogens: proportion of the population aged 14 years and over, by age and sex, Australia, 1998

Age	Lifetime use (per cent)	Recent use
Males		
14–19	9.1	7.4
20–29	28.1	13.1
30–39	16.5	2.3
40+	6.1	0.6
All ages	12.8	4.1
Females		
14–19	11.2	6.8
20–29	15.7	5.7
30–39	8.5	0.4
40+	2.5	0.2 *
All ages	7.1	1.9
Persons		
14–19	10.2	7.1
20–29	21.9	9.4
30–39	12.5	1.3
40+	4.3	0.4 *
All ages	9.9	3.0

Type of hallucinogens used

Of those recent users of hallucinogens, the survey showed that nine in ten (90%) used tabs and a quarter (26%) used magic mushrooms. There appeared to be some age differences in the type of hallucinogens used.

Table 11.2: Type of hallucinogens used: proportion of recent users aged 14 years and over, by age and sex, Australia, 1998

Type	Age group				All ages
	14–19	20–29	30–39	40+	
	(per cent)				
Tabs	81.5	95.1	91.9	59.7	90.0
Liquid	4.3 *	2.8 *	4.7 *	22.1 *	4.2
Magic mushrooms	32.4	20.4	27.0	62.3	25.7
Datura/angel's trumpet	1.7 *	1.2 *	1.4 *	—	1.3 *

Note: Base equals all recent hallucinogens users.

Usual place of hallucinogen consumption

The 1998 survey classified hallucinogens into two groups – naturally occurring and synthetic (LSD). When recent users of hallucinogens were asked about their usual place of consumption the following was found:

- One in three (34%) users of naturally occurring hallucinogens reported clubs or restaurants as the usual place of consumption (Table 11.3).
- Nearly two in three (64%) female users reported clubs or restaurants as the usual place of consumption of natural hallucinogens compared with about one in four (24%) males.
- More than two-fifths (42%) of recent users of LSD reported clubs or restaurants as the usual place of consumption, with more female users consuming in clubs or restaurants than males (54% and 36% respectively).

Table 11.3: Where hallucinogens usually consumed, proportion of recent users aged 14 years and over, by sex, Australia, 1998

Place	Males	Females	Persons
Naturally occurring			
Own home, friend's house	24.8	16.5	22.7
Clubs, restaurants	23.9	63.7	33.9
School/ work	—	2.0 *	0.5 *
Other	51.3	17.8	42.8
LSD			
Own home, friend's house	20.9	15.0	19.1
Clubs, restaurants	36.0	53.9	41.6
School/ work	2.9 *	—	2.0 *
Other	40.2	31.0	37.3

Note: Base equals all recent hallucinogens users.

Frequency of hallucinogens use

Although the 1998 survey estimated that 3% of all Australians aged 14 years and over reported using hallucinogens recently, the data for the frequency of use show that hallucinogens use is less frequent than other drugs (Table 11.4 and Table 11.5). The survey showed that:

- Approximately 3% of users of naturally occurring hallucinogens and 9% of synthetic hallucinogens users reported using at least once in a month.

- Nearly two-fifths (39%) of users of naturally occurring hallucinogens, and slightly more (44%) users of LSD, reported that they used these hallucinogens only once or twice a year.

Table 11.4: Frequency of use: proportion of persons aged 14 years and over who have recently used naturally-occurring hallucinogens, by age, Australia, 1998

Frequency	Age group				All ages
	14–19	20–29	30–39	40+	
	(per cent)				
Every day	0.6 *	—	8.0 *	—	1.3 *
Once a week or more	—	—	—	5.4 *	0.3 *
About once a month	0.4 *	2.2 *	—	—	1.5 *
Every few months	11.1	18.1	10.2 *	—	15.0
Once or twice a year	24.0	42.0	25.9	94.6	39.4
Less often	63.9	37.7	56.0	—	42.6

Note: Base equals all recent naturally occurring hallucinogens users.

Table 11.5: Frequency of use: proportion of persons aged 14 years and over who have recently used synthetic hallucinogens, by age, Australia, 1998

Frequency	Age group				All ages
	14–19	20–29	30–39	40+	
	(per cent)				
Every day	—	—	—	—	—
Once a week or more	1.8 *	0.5 *	2.7 *	—	1.0 *
About once a month	13.1	5.2	10.8 *	—	7.5
Every few months	30.4	26.8	16.6	30.1 *	26.7
Once or twice a year	37.1	47.4	28.8	66.0	43.7
Less often	17.7	20.2	41.2	3.9 *	21.0

Note: Base equals all recent synthetic hallucinogens users.

Source of supply of hallucinogens

Of those Australians aged 14 years and over who reported using hallucinogens at least once in their lifetime, three-quarters (75%) reported obtaining their first dose from a friend or acquaintance (Table 11.6). The survey also showed that:

- Slightly more females (78%) than males (74%) reported obtaining their first dose of hallucinogens from a friend or acquaintance.
- A little over one in 20 (6%) lifetime users – both males and females – purchased their first dose of hallucinogens from a street dealer.

Table 11.6: First supplier: proportion of persons who have ever used hallucinogens, by sex, Australia, 1998

Supplier	Males	Females (per cent)	Persons
Friend or acquaintance	73.6	78.2	75.2
Spouse or partner	—	3.4 *	1.2 *
Street dealer	5.6	7.4	6.2
Other ^(a)	20.9	11.0	17.3

(a) Includes siblings, parents and stolen.

Note: Base equals all users of hallucinogens.

When data on source of supply for recent use of hallucinogens were analysed, it was found that nearly three-quarters (74%) of recent users obtained their drugs from a friend or acquaintance and more than one in ten (12%) obtained them from a street dealer (Table 11.7).

Table 11.7: Recent suppliers: proportion of recent hallucinogens users aged 14 years and over, by sex, Australia, 1998

Supplier	Males	Females (per cent)	Persons
Friend or acquaintance	72.9	76.3	73.9
Spouse or partner	—	0.6 *	0.2 *
Street dealer	11.8	13.3	12.3
Other ^(a)	15.2	9.8	13.6

(a) Includes siblings, parents and stolen.

Note: Base equals all recent hallucinogens users.

Multiple drugs use with hallucinogens

In 1998, of those Australians aged 14 years and over who used hallucinogens in the 12 months preceding the survey, nearly all had recently used alcohol (99%) and marijuana/cannabis (94%) (Table 11.8). The survey also showed that:

- Two-thirds (68%) of all recent hallucinogen users had used tobacco recently.
- Nearly three-fifths (58%) reported using amphetamines recently.
- Slightly more than two-fifths (43%) reported using ecstasy/designer drugs recently.
- One in five (21%) reported using cocaine recently.

Table 11.8: Polydrug use: proportion of recent hallucinogens users aged 14 years and over, by sex, Australia, 1998

Other substances recently used	Males	Females	Persons
	(per cent)		
Alcohol	97.9	99.9	98.5
Tobacco	65.9	68.4	67.6
Marijuana/cannabis	95.7	91.7	94.4
Pain-killers/analgesics ^(a)	20.5	29.3	23.4
Tranquillisers/sleeping pills ^(a)	14.9	23.4	17.6
Steroids ^(a)	—	0.7 *	0.2 *
Barbiturates ^(a)	2.2 *	4.1	2.8 *
Amphetamines ^(a)	58.6	55.4	57.5
Heroin	8.1	8.1	8.1
Methadone ^(b)	1.2 *	0.7 *	1.0 *
Cocaine	22.4	18.9	21.3
Ecstasy/designer drugs	42.0	45.2	43.1
Inhalants	10.2	20.0	13.2

(a) For non-medical purposes.

(b) Non-maintenance.

Note: Base equals all recent hallucinogens users.

The analysis of concurrent use of multiple drugs with hallucinogens showed that more than two-thirds of all recent users of hallucinogens also used alcohol (72%) and/or marijuana/cannabis (67%) concurrently with hallucinogens (Table 11.9).

Table 11.9: Concurrent polydrug use: proportion of recent hallucinogens users aged 14 years and over, by sex, Australia, 1998

Other substances concurrently used	Males	Females	Persons
	(per cent)		
Alcohol	72.9	69.2	71.7
Marijuana/cannabis	71.0	58.3	67.0
Other ^(a)	8.4	9.8	8.8
None of the above	13.4	16.9	14.5

(a) Includes heroin, cocaine, benzodiazepines, anti-depressants, barbiturates and pain killers/analgesics.

Note: Base equals all recent hallucinogens users.

Correlates of hallucinogens use

The data showed that certain socioeconomic characteristics were correlated with hallucinogens use. As with other illicit drugs, persons who were unemployed, were never married or possessed less education were more likely to use hallucinogens. Specifically, the survey showed that:

- Unemployed persons (5%) or students (6%) were more likely to use hallucinogens compared with employed persons (3%).
- Persons who were never married were nine times (9%) more likely to report using hallucinogens compared with presently married persons (1%).
- Australian-born persons (3%) were twice as likely to use hallucinogens compared with persons born in non-English-speaking countries (1.5%).

Table 11.10: Correlates of hallucinogen use: proportion of the population aged 14 years and over, Australia, 1998

Characteristics	Never used	Lifetime use	Recent use
		(per cent)	
Education			
No qualification	93.4	6.6	1.9
HSC or equivalent	87.2	12.8	5.4
Trade/diploma	86.7	13.3	3.5
Tertiary	87.6	12.4	2.1
Employment status			
Currently employed	87.8	12.2	3.4
Student	88.0	12.0	6.3
Unemployed	81.9	18.1	5.1
Retired/pension	96.0	4.0	0.7
Occupational status			
Upper (white)	89.0	11.0	1.8
Middle	89.3	10.7	3.3
Lower (blue)	90.4	9.6	4.0
Country of birth			
Australian born	89.4	10.6	3.2
Other English-speaking born	88.3	11.7	3.4
Non-English-speaking born	96.4	3.6	1.5
Socioeconomic area			
1st quintile	91.7	8.3	3.1
2nd quintile	92.3	7.7	1.7
3rd quintile	90.2	9.8	3.0
4th quintile	90.3	9.7	3.6
5th quintile	86.5	13.5	3.9
Geography			
Urban	89.3	10.7	3.3
Rural/remote	91.9	8.1	2.2
Marital status			
Never married	81.3	18.7	8.9
Widowed	99.4	0.6 *	0.1 *
Divorced/separated	91.7	8.3	1.5
Presently married	93.3	6.7	0.6