



Welcome

I am often asked for statistics on specific inhalant use. Unfortunately current figures around inhalant use are only very general in nature. This issue focuses on the most recent findings from the *National Drug Strategy Household Survey (NDSHS)*. Your contribution to the database, newsletter or the website is always welcomed - You can do this by sending an email to ruth.mahon@adca.org.au

Regards

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Excerpts from the 2010 Household survey

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2011. *2010 National Drug Strategy Household Survey report*. Drug statistics series no. 25. Cat. no. PHE 145. Canberra: AIHW.

Available from <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publication-detail/?id=32212254712&tab=2>

The *2010 National Drug Strategy Household Survey* polled a representative sample of the Australian population; 26,648 individuals aged 12 years and older, asking them a series of questions relating to their drug use patterns, attitudes and behaviours. Modelled on the 2007 survey, the 2010 survey was changed so that the term used for inhalants was changed to 'sniffing petrol/glue/aerosols/solvents' (p.199). Examples of inhalants were given as 'chroming, sniffing, solvents, aerosols, glue, petrol, laughing gas, whippets, nitrous, snappers, poppers, pearlers, rushamines, locker room, bolt, bullet, rush, climax, red gold, amyl and bulbs' (p.150). The data on inhalants is included in Chapter 11, Other illicit drugs.

Key findings:

Inhalants were used by 0.6% of the population in 2010, and, of those who had recently used inhalants, 34.7% did so once a month or more (p. 150).

Recent use:

Apart from a spike in 1998, there was relatively no change in the proportion of the population who had used inhalants between 1995 and 2007. Recent use of inhalants increased in 2010 and this was mostly due to a statistically significant increase of use by females (p.151).

Table 11.1: Recent (a) use of other illicit drugs and other drug-taking behaviours, people aged 14 years or older, by sex, 1995 to 2010 (per cent) (Edited to show inhalants only)

	Drug type	1995	1998	2001	2004	2007	2010
Males	Inhalants	0.6	0.9	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.7
Females	Inhalants	0.3	0.8	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.5 ↑
Persons	Inhalants	0.4	0.9	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.6 ↑

The use of inhalants was low in older age groups, with the highest proportion of users being aged 20–29 years (1.4%) followed by those aged 12–19 years (1.0%) (p. 153).

Frequency of use:

Among recent users of inhalants, 52.7% used once or twice a year and 34.7% used at least once a month, with males more likely than females to use inhalants more often (p.153).

Ease of obtaining illicit drugs:

Of people aged 14 years or older, just under half perceived inhalants (48.3%) and over-the-counter pain-killers/analgesics (48.0%) to be the easiest illicit drugs to obtain, followed by cannabis (36.5%) (p.166).

Age of initiation:

Among illicit drugs, cannabis had the youngest average age of initiation, at 18.5 years, followed by inhalants (19.5 years) and hallucinogens (19.8 years) (p.11)

In 2010, 12–15-year olds and 16–17-year-olds had their first drug experience with inhalants, with an average age of initiation of 9.7 years and 13.1 years respectively. In comparison, 12–15 year olds and 16–17-year-olds did not start smoking and drinking, on average, until they were 13.1 and about 14.6, respectively; however, caution should be used when interpreting these results due to the high relative standard errors (p.12).

Concurrent drug use (used at least once in the last 12 month):

Of recent inhalant users, aged 14+ , in 2010, 62% used cannabis concurrently, 41.6% used ecstasy concurrently, and 24.9% did not use any other illicit drug (p.20).

Table 2.11: Summary of drug use patterns, people aged 14 years or older, 2010

Drug	Drug of most serious community concern (per cent) ^(b)	Offered/had opportunity to use in last 12 months (per cent)	Ever used (per cent)	Age of initiation (years) ^(c)	Recent use ^(a)								Used with alcohol (per cent) ^(j)
					Males (per cent)	Females (per cent)	Persons (per cent)	Trend ^(d)	14–17 years (per cent)	18–19 years (per cent)	20–29 years (per cent)	Frequency (per cent) ^(e)	
Tobacco	15.4	45.6	42.2	16.0	19.9	16.3	18.1	↓	5.5	16.4	23.7	15.1	n.a.
Alcohol	42.1	87.5	87.9	17.0	83.6	77.5	80.5	↓	52.9	86.3	85.3	15.9	n.a.
Cannabis	4.5	17.9	35.4	18.5	12.9	7.7	10.3	↑	12.8	21.3	21.3	47.4	85.2
Ecstasy ^(g)	5.5	7.2	10.3	22.2	3.6	2.3	3.0	↓	*1.1	6.0	9.9	15.5	94.0
Meth/amphetamines ^(h)	9.4	3.9	7.0	20.9	2.5	1.7	2.1	≈	**0.3	4.0	5.9	24.9	88.2
Cocaine	6.1	4.4	7.3	23.3	2.7	1.5	2.1	↑	*0.3	3.2	6.5	12.8	96.2
Hallucinogens	0.9	3.7	8.8	19.8	2.0	0.7	1.4	↑	*0.7	4.9	4.6	8.2	n.a.
Inhalants	1.3	3.0	3.8	19.5	0.7	0.5	0.6	↑	*0.8	*1.8	1.4	34.7	n.a.
Heroin	11.4	0.9	1.4	21.4	0.3	0.2	0.2	≈	**0.1	**0.3	*0.4	63.2	n.a.
Pharmaceuticals ^(h)	2.2	21.4	7.4	23.7 ⁽ⁱ⁾	4.1	4.2	4.2	↑	2.3	5.0	5.6	47.1 ⁽ⁱ⁾	37.6 ⁽ⁱ⁾

(a) Used at least once in the previous 12 months.

(b) For alcohol, respondents were asked about 'excessive drinking of alcohol'. For inhalants, respondents were asked about 'sniffing glue, petrol, solvents, rush'.

(c) Age at which the person first used the drug.

(d) Significant difference between 2007 and 2010.

(e) Base equals recent users, percentage who used at least once a month, except for tobacco where 'daily' use is presented and alcohol where risky drinking at least once per week is presented.

(f) Used at the same time on at least one occasion.

(g) Included 'designer drugs' before 2004.

(h) For non-medical purposes.

(i) Did not include 'other opiates'.

(j) Only included pain killers.

* Estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution.

** Estimate has a relative standard error greater than 50% and is considered too unreliable for general use.

Looking for more statistics?

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2011. [Substance use among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people](#). Cat. no. IHW 40.Canberra: AIHW.

Or go to the NIIS Statistics page <http://www.inhalantsinfo.org.au/statistics.php>

National Inhalants Information Service

Inhalants Database

The NIIIS can supply you with copies of journal articles as well as loaning items including books, CDs, and DVDs. There is no charge for this service. For a full listing of all resources please visit www.inhalantsinfo.org.au/database. Please email your requests to info@inhalantsinfo.org.au

Items recently added to the database.

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Pre 2011

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