

Age & gender differences in cannabis use & beliefs in Australia 2004 to 2013

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Overview

- 2004 – 2013
 - Changes in prevalence
 - Age & gender differences
 - Changes in patterns of use and related harms
 - Changes in attitudes
 - Age & gender differences
 - Implications for prevention/intervention

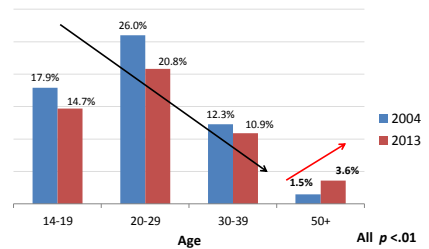
Data

- **National Drug Strategy Household Survey (NDSHS)**
 - Triennial nationally representative survey of AOD use, related harms, & attitudes
- **Comparison of 2004 & 2013 data**
 - 2004
 - 28,582 Australians aged 14 + years
 - 2013
 - 23,521 Australians aged 14 + years
 - Data for weighted for both data sets



Changes in prevalence*

- Significant ($p < .001$) decline from 2004 to 2014
 - 11.3% to 10.2%
 - Change not consistent across age groups



* Use in last 12 months

Data source: NDSHS

Age & gender change patterns

- Decline most pronounced among males aged 20-29 yrs (32.4% to 24.7%)
- Decline for males aged 14-19 yrs (18.4% to 17.3%) *not significant*
- Decline for females aged 30-49 yrs (8.2% to 7.8%) *not significant*
- Increase among 50+ yr olds similar for both males (2.1% to 4.9%) & females (1.0% to 2.4%)



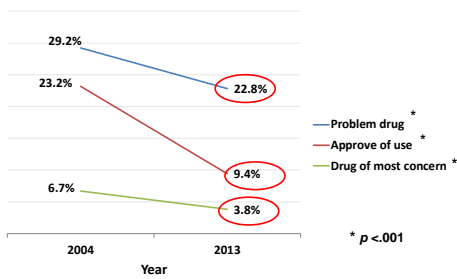
Changes in use patterns & harms

	2004	2013	Z/t score	Sig
Daily use ↓	16.4%	12.8%	3.65	<.001
Amount used (cones/joints) ↑	3.45	3.78	2.83	<.001
Dependence* ↓	14.5%	10.0%	4.98	<.001
Use in licensed premises ↓	9.1%	3.7%	8.21	<.001
Use in car ↓	20.9%	13.2%	7.46	<.001
Use at work ↓	3.5%	1.5%	4.74	<.001

* Tried to cut down but couldn't

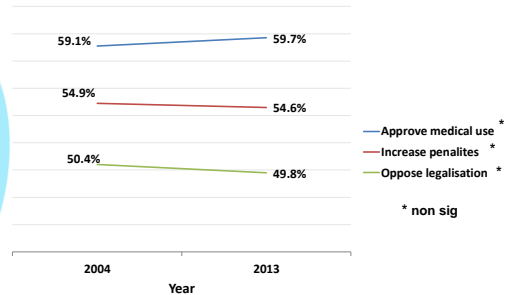


Changes in attitudes



No gender or age differences

Changes in attitudes



Significant age & gender differences

Age & gender changes in attitudes

Support for legalising medical use

- No change overall, but:
 - Sig rise ($p < .01$) among males (59.6% to 61.7%)
 - Mainly males aged 14-19 & 50+ yrs
 - Sig rise ($p < .001$) among 50+ yr olds (56.9% to 61%)
 - Rise larger for males compared to females
 - Sig decline ($p < .01$) among 20-29 yr olds (58.7% to 57.2%)
 - Mainly due to females (57.6% to 53.6%)
 - Sig decline ($p < .001$) among 30-49 yr olds (65.8% to 63%)
 - Mainly due to females (65.4% to 61.2%)

Support increased penalties for sale/supply

- No change over all, but:
 - Sig rise ($p < .01$) among 30-49 years olds (50.6% to 52.9%)
 - Mainly due to females (54.6% to 57.3%)
 - Sig decline ($p < .01$) among 14-19 years olds (51.5% to 46.6%)
 - Mainly due to males (48.7% to 43.6%)
 - Sig decline ($p < .05$) among 50+ year olds (64.3% to 62.4%)
 - Mainly due to males (51.4% to 50.4%)

Oppose legalisation of personal use

- No change overall, but:
 - Sig decline ($p < .001$) among males (48.4% to 45.8%)
 - Mainly due to 20-29 (37.1% to 31.2%) & 50+ (61.7% to 56.4%) yr olds
 - Sig decline ($p < .001$) among 50+ yr olds (61.7% to 57.8%)
 - Sig decline for both males & females
 - Sig rise ($p < .01$) among females (52.4% to 53.8%)
 - Mainly among 30-49 yr olds (45.5% to 50.7%)
 - Sig rise ($p < .001$) among 30-49 yr olds (31.7% to 46.5%)
 - Mainly due to females (45.5% to 50.7%)

Conclusions & implications

- Overall decline in use & related harms over last 10 years
 - Largely due use being less social acceptable?
 - Less likely to think cannabis is a drug problem/concern but also less likely to approve of use
 - Sig changes in attitudes of females aged 30-49 years
 - Rise in opposition to legal use (including medical)
 - Rise in support for increased penalties
 - Need for strategies that focus on making use less socially acceptable (e.g., tobacco smoking)?



Conclusions and implications

- High risk groups remain
 - 14-19 yr old males (no decline)
 - 20-29 yr olds remain high prevalence group
 - Despite decline from 28% to 20.6%
 - A need for targeted strategies
 - Young males
 - Increase in prevalence among 50+ yr olds
 - More than double (1.5% to 3.6%)
 - Cohort and/or self medication increase?
 - Prevalence increase associated with in rise in support for legalisation for medical & personal use



Thank You

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